Sacred Kingship and Royal Patronage in the Vie de la Magdalene: Pilgrimage, Politics, Passion Plays, and the Life of Louise of Savoy

Barbara Jean Johnston
"SACRED KINGSHIP AND ROYAL PATRONAGE IN THE VIE DE LA MAGDALENE: PILGRIMAGE, POLITICS, PASSION PLAYS, AND THE LIFE OF LOUISE OF SAVOY"

By

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For my parents,
my “Spring of Love and Charity”
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Writing a dissertation is a long and lonely business, and when finally it is completed, one tends to think that it burst unaided and full-grown, like Athena, from an overwrought brain. Of course nothing could be farther from the truth, and in my case at least, there are many who helped bring this dissertation into being and to whom I owe my undying gratitude.

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ABSTRACT

In 1516 Louise of Savoy, mother of the French king Francis I, undertook a pilgrimage to Provence to visit La Sainte-Baume, the grotto shrine of Saint Mary Magdalene, to whom she was particularly devoted. Accompanied by her son, daughter, and daughter-in-law, Louise made the pilgrimage to fulfill her vow to visit the shrine in exchange for the saint’s protection of Francis during the Battle of Marignano the previous year. After visiting the holy grotto and the nearby Church of Saint-Maximin, which houses the Magdalene’s relics, Louise and Francis made sizeable financial donations for the support and renovation of the shrine and abbey, as well as commissioning works of art for placement in the grotto as outward signs of their veneration of Mary Magdalene and gratitude for her protection.

Upon returning home Louise commissioned the Franciscan priest Francois Demoulins de Rochefort to create a manuscript depicting the life of Mary Magdalene as a personal book of devotion and a commemoration of the royal pilgrimage. Demoulins collaborated with the illuminator Godefroy le Batave to create the *Vie de la Magdalene* (Paris, B.N., ms. fr. 24.955). The diminutive manuscript is composed of four parts—the text, which includes both narrative and commentary; the illuminations, which include miniatures of the saint’s life as well as depictions of the shrine and relics; multi-lingual mottoes inscribed in the gold frames around the illuminations; and the colored frames with decorative motifs that surround the text.

While ostensibly a saintly *vita*, the *Vie de la Magdalene* is, in fact, a complex work that functions on a number of levels. Although much of the manuscript’s imagery and content aligns with major aspects of the medieval Magdalene legend, the *Vie* also has intriguing anomalies that do not have their source in traditional representations of Magdalenian hagiography. This dissertation examines the complexities of the *Vie de la Magdalene* to demonstrate how and why this *vita* differs from other accounts of the Magdalene’s story. It argues that Demoulins and Godefroy manipulated the narrative, illuminations, mottoes, and decorative motifs of the manuscript to reflect the personal and political concerns of Louise of Savoy and her children. For example, the author establishes thematic parallels between events in Louise’s life and the lives of both Mary
Magdalene and the Virgin Mary, just as he makes correlations between Francis and Jesus Christ as Christian kings who are the sons of devoted and courageous mothers. Another example is the mottoes, which are written in French, Spanish, Italian, German, Latin, and two forms of Greek. The inclusion of these specific languages reflects not only an interest in humanism at the French court but also Francis’s bid to become Holy Roman Emperor.

Equally important are the aspects of the Vie that stress Louise and Francis’s royal lineage as well as their perpetuation of the traditions, established by their regal ancestors, of devotion to Mary Magdalene and patronage to the Provençal shrine. A corresponding theme emphasizes the Magdalene’s role as unctrice in the anointing of Jesus as the first Christian “king,” and the significance of her actions to the sacré, the ceremonial anointing of French kings during their coronation. Using this theme of sacral anointing, Demoulins establishes a direct connection between Francis I, the newly crowned “Most Christian King” of France, and Jesus Christ, the “King of Kings.”

This study also demonstrates the manner in which the Vie de la Magdalene reflects the influence of three fifteenth-century French Passion plays. Demoulins incorporates into the Vie specific scenes, characters, text, and themes found in the plays, thereby increasing the dramatic and spiritual impact of the story for the manuscript’s reader. In addition, Godefroy’s design of certain miniatures mimics the traditional staging of these plays, and in particular, recreates the experience of viewing the scenes from a royal box, again emphasizing the regal station of the Vie’s owner, Louise of Savoy. The last portion of the dissertation is an iconographic analysis of the decorative motifs on the narrative frames and a catalogue of the Vie, including translations of the text and mottoes, and detailed descriptions of the roundel images.

This dissertation adds to the scholarship on the Vie de la Magdalene by examining the components of the manuscript as individual and interactive devices designed to stimulate the reader visually, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. Equally important, this dissertation reveals that the Vie de la Magdalene is replete with regal references intended to align Louise of Savoy and Francis I with their illustrious royal ancestors through their mutual devotion to Mary Magdalene and patronage to her shrine at La Sainte-Baume.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1516 Louise of Savoy (1476-1531), with her son Francis I of France (b.1494, reign 1515-1547), her daughter Marguerite of Angoulême (1492-1549), and Francis’s wife Claude of France (1499-1524) made a pilgrimage to the shrine of Saint Mary Magdalene at La Sainte-Baume near Aix-en-Provence. The pilgrimage was in fulfillment of a vow made to the saint by Louise, who asked the Magdalene to ensure the king’s safety and victory at the battle of Marignano the previous year. The sacred site of La Sainte-Baume is the location of the grotto where according to tradition, Mary Magdalene, “Apostle to the Apostles” and a patron saint of France, lived as a hermit for thirty years following her apostolate. Shortly after returning from the pilgrimage, Louise asked the Franciscan priest François Demoulins de Rochefort (active 1501-1526) to write and direct the production of an illustrated life of Mary Magdalene, to whom Louise was particularly devoted, for her personal use. The work was intended as both a commemoration of her visit to the holy site and a celebration of her piety. Demoulins collaborated with the illuminator Godefroy le Batave (active 1516-1526) to create the Vie de la Magdalene (Paris, B.N., ms. fr. 24.955), a manuscript depicting the life of the Magdalene in miniatures and narrative. Demoulins presented the manuscript to Louise in 1517.

The diminutive size of the manuscript, which measures 9.5 x 7.5 cm, gives it an extremely personal and intimate quality, as may be seen on the facsimile page, which is reproduced to the true dimensions of the manuscript (figure 1). It rests comfortably in the palm of the hand and could easily be carried or tucked in a sleeve or pocket, which undoubtedly was the intent. While ostensibly a book of devotion, the Vie de la Magdalene is, in fact, an extraordinarily complex work that functions on a number of levels and reflects a variety of influences. This study will examine the complexities of this manuscript and identify the various forces at work in its creation.

With this dissertation, I will demonstrate how and why the Vie de la Magdalene differs from other vitae that tell the Magdalene’s story. Although much of the manuscript aligns with major aspects of the Magdalene legend as understood in France in the early
sixteenth century, the Vie has a number of intriguing anomalous elements that do not have their source in traditional representations of the saint’s story. My thesis argues author and artist manipulated the narrative text, illuminations, and decorative elements of the Vie de la Magdalene to meet the specific personal and political concerns of its owner Louise of Savoy. Most particularly, I will demonstrate that many of the scenes, text, and decorative elements intentionally emphasize the lineage of the royal family, the long history of devotion among the French monarchy to Saint Mary Magdalene, and the importance of the saint to the concept of the sacral anointing of French kings. In addition, there are specific references that also allude to the personal agenda of the manuscript’s author, François Demoulins de Rochefort, and his relationship with the royal family.

Furthermore, I demonstrate the manner in which three medieval French passion plays, well known during this period in France and Flanders, directly influenced the iconography, design, and content of some of the roundels and narrative of the Vie de la Magdalene. The references include specific scenes and textual elements found in the plays that are incorporated into the Magdalene manuscript, as well the design of some of the miniatures which were intended to evoke the process of viewing the play from a royal box, thus subtly emphasizing the devotional experience of its royal patron.

Finally, I examine the complex iconography of the decorative elements in the frames surrounding the narrative text. I demonstrate that many of these elements are not merely decorative, but are in fact an intricate symbolic language developed by Demoulins and Godefroy to provide sub-textual commentary and expansion on the religious themes of the manuscript, as well as making personal references to Louise, her children, their royal lineage, and to Demoulins himself.

Author and Patron

François Demoulins de Rochefort was attached for many years to the court of Louise of Savoy, the countess of Angoulême. A Franciscan priest, humanist, scholar, author, and theologian, he was the friend of the Catholic reformer, Jacques Lefèvre d’Etaples. In 1501 Demoulins was chosen by Louise personally to tutor her children, the future French king Francis I and his older sister Marguerite of Angoulême, the gifted
poet, scholar, and protector of religious reformers who would become the Duchesse of Alençon and Queen of Navarre. Demoulins remained with the family for the next twenty-five years as a teacher, confidant, and consultant on intellectual and spiritual matters. His loyalty was rewarded with several important appointments. In 1517, Demoulins was made the Abbot of Saint Maximin in Micy-sur-Loire near Orleans, and in 1519, he was made the Grand Aumônier of France at Louise’s request. He also authored several manuscripts created specifically for the royal family. As I will show, his influence, opinions, ideas, and career aspirations, as well as his Franciscan spirituality, are evident throughout the Vie de la Magdalene.

An even greater influence on the manuscript was Louise of Savoy, the woman for whom it was created. Louise was the eldest child of Philip of Savoy, Count of Bresse (d. 1497) and Margaret of Bourbon (d.1483). Just seven when her mother died, Louise and her brother Philibert were sent to live at Amboise, the chateau court of their maternal aunt Anne de France, the daughter of Louis XI, sister of Charles VIII (reign 1483-98), and regent queen of France during her brother’s minority in 1483. At Amboise, Louise was well educated in both traditional subjects and the machinations of court life. She grew into a woman of keen intelligence and broad interests and, as the wife of Charles of Angoulême (1459-1496), Louise was an active patron of artists and writers, a practice that continued into her widowhood.

It was as a mother, however, that Louise of Savoy exhibited her greatest talent. In a day when most children of the aristocracy were raised by nurses and governesses, Louise was extraordinarily devoted to her children. She kept them beside her constantly, actively participated in their education and care, and protected them with great ferocity. Although she remained close to her daughter Marguerite all of her life, Louise was most devoted to her son Francis, whom she called “my Caesar.” Her ambitions for his success began even before his birth. In 1490, shortly after her marriage, Louise visited the hermit saint Francis of Paola, who lived in a hermitage in Le Plessis-les-Tours. She had gone seeking his assurance she would conceive a son and was told by the old man that she would give birth to a king.

From that moment, Louise was utterly committed to making this prediction a reality, and she fought for Francis’s advancement at court with a mixture of cunning,
skill, and ruthlessness. The prophecy was fulfilled in 1515 when her son acceded to the throne of France, and with that, Louise became the mother of the king. What Francis of Paola could not have predicted was that Louise herself would eventually become the ruler of France when her son appointed her regent during his two Italian campaigns, including the Battle of Marignano. As I will show, these and other events in Louise’s biography were tremendously influential on the design and the content of the manuscript.

The Vie de la Magdalene

As mentioned above, the manuscript measures 9.5 x 7.5 cm. which is slightly smaller than a standard deck of cards. Each page displays a small, framed roundel, approximately 4.4 cm. (1 ¾ inches) in diameter, which contains either text or miniatures done in grisaille with touches of color. The frames surrounding the illuminations are gold and inscribed with mottoes in several languages. Surrounding the narrative text are colored frames that contain decorative and symbolic elements. Most of these motifs are painted in gold, although white or silver is used on folio 6v. With the exception of a few inscriptions that are placed outside the roundels, there are no other elements on the pages. There are 109 folios in the manuscript, giving the book 218 pages of roundels. Sixty-nine of the roundels, folios 5r to 72r, contain illuminations that depict the life of the saint, her shrine, and relics. The remaining roundels, 1r to 4v and 72v to 108r, contain text alone, with the exception of folio 3v, in which a horizontal miniature of Saint George and the dragon, silhouetted in gold on black, is imbedded within the narrative.

The Netherlandish illuminator Godefroy le Batave was chosen to illustrate the Vie de la Magdalene. Little is known of Godefroy’s life or education, although it may be discerned from his name that he was Netherlandish, and his style indicates that he was either trained in or strongly influenced by the Antwerp Mannerist School. He was one of several artists, including Robinet Testard, who worked for the court of Angoulême. Godefroy created several manuscripts for Louise and her family, and most of these, including the Vie de la Magdalene, were collaborations with Demoulins. Evidence of their collaboration is found in the text of the manuscript, and it is obvious that Demoulins wanted Louise to know that Godefroy illustrated the manuscript under his guidance and
instructions, although portions of the narrative also indicate that the artist worked independently at times.  

The illuminations of the *Vie de la Magdalene* are created in a delicate and sophisticated style that contains a remarkable amount of detail for images of this minute size. Although most of the illuminations have touches of color to highlight details, the miniatures are done in a predominately grisaille technique that utilizes a combination of subtle tonal changes and hatching to achieve modeling and depth. The artist applied a light to medium gray ground inside the frame of the roundel, and painted the figures in darker tones of gray as if they were chiaroscuro drawings. He applied dark outlines to delineate form and detail, and highlights that brighten the uppermost planes of the forms. This gives a very effective simulation of light hitting the raised areas of a relief carving. Costumes, interiors, landscapes, and architectural elements are rendered with extreme care, precision, and variety. The same is true of the physical descriptions of the figures, and most have a graceful, animated, and expressive physicality. They are often quite emotional and relate this emotion effectively through their postures, gestures, and facial expressions.

The expressiveness of these figures and the scenographic design of the images imbue the illuminated scenes with a strongly theatrical character. One source for the theatrical quality of the images is found in religious dramas such as saint plays, miracle plays, and passion plays that were extremely popular throughout Europe at this time. Given the dramatic potential of the Magdalene’s story and her special role as a patron saint of France, it is not surprising that she was an important character in many of these dramas, such as the Passion plays of Angers and Arras. The influence of these plays, including specific scenes and actions of characters, is strongly evident in the Magdalene manuscript, as I discuss in Chapter 5.

The style of the manuscript’s illuminations is a fusion of Antwerp Mannerism with early Italian and Northern European Renaissance techniques and motifs. The style of the figures and their apparel is typically Northern, primarily Flemish, from the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. This is evident in the details of the costumes, the fluttering drapery, the slender, graceful figures, and the delicacy of the elongated hands, fingers, and feet. The architecture is a combination of Northern European and Italian
design, and many of the decorative motifs found in both the narrative frames and the
illuminations (folios 30v and 31r) are Italian Renaissance in style, or more correctly,
Italianate motifs that have been filtered through the Antwerp Mannerist school. In other
words, the *Vie de la Magdalene* is an entirely contemporary work created for a
sophisticated patron who appreciated such refinement and elegance in form and detail.

Throughout the manuscript, Godefroy used delicate touches of color to enliven
and enrich the grisaille scenes. These are merely accents, however, on the predominately
grey palette. Light blue and pale yellow are the most common colors (folios 9r and 10r),
but other hues include turquoise, golden yellow, dark pink, bright red, deep plum, brown,
and a medium green (folios 13r and 22r). The colors are used to highlight details of
costumes (folio 13r and 29r) and architecture (folio 19r), or to define the landscape
(folios 8r and 60r). Gold leaf is used primarily to indicate the halos, which are in the
form of a golden radiance rather than a disk. It is important to note that the only physical
characteristic on any figure that is emphasized by color is the Magdalene’s hair, which is
painted a shade of pale yellow (folio 14r). This hair and the various roles that it plays
throughout the life of the Magdalene and beyond is one of the most important thematic
elements of the *Vie de la Magdalene*. It is especially pertinent in reference to the
devotion of the French monarchy to Mary Magdalene and the tradition of sacral anointing
that is a subtext of this manuscript.

Simple gold frames 4 mm. in width surround the images. Within each frame is a
motto written in black roman majuscules that acts as a commentary on the interior scene.
For example, folio 7r depicts Martha, Mary, and Lazarus dining to the accompaniment of
two musicians who play pipes and a drum. The motto in the frame reads *LARMES ET
PLAISIR, PLAISIR ET LARMES*, meaning "Tears and Pleasure, Pleasure and Tears." The
fact that this roundel immediately follows the scene depicting the trio grieving over the
death of their parents is significant, for the motto tells us that life is made up of both
"tears and pleasure."

As Myra Orth has noted, the inscribed frames and grisaille tonality of the
illuminations give the roundels an appearance that is similar to the sculpted medals
popular with aristocracy at that time, especially the Italian aristocracy. An example is a
bronze medal made by Cristoforo Caradosso Foppa for Ludovico Sforza between 1488

6
and 1494 to commemorate his acquisition of Genoa (figure 2). A profile portrait of Ludovico is on the recto of the medallion along with an inscription in Latin. On the verso is a scene depicting Ludovico’s triumphal entrance into the city. The depiction of space and the definition of the highlights and shadows along with the Latin motto surrounding the edge of the scene are similar to the image roundels in the Vie.

Three medals Louise had struck for her family to commemorate Francis’s tenth birthday in 1504 testify to her knowledge of this type of medallion. These medals present the profile portrait of the individual on one side surrounded by his or her name and titles written in the same letterforms as on the roundels. On the reverse is the impresa of the individual. On Francis’s medal, for example, the young prince’s motto, Notrisco al buono, stingo el reo, “I feed on the good fire and extinguish the bad” surrounds his emblem, a salamander amid flames (figure 3). This is written in contemporary Italian in roman majuscules.

Even more significant as sources for the roundel forms of the Vie’s illuminations is a commemorative medal that was struck following Francis’s victory at Marignano. Although not dated, the fact that the young king is clean-shaven indicates that the medal was created sometime between 1516, when the battle occurred, and 1518, when his portraits show him with a beard. Thus, this medallion is contemporary with the manuscript. On the obverse of the medallion, Francis is shown in profile wearing a cuirass with a cloak buttoned on one shoulder (figure 4). Surrounding him is an inscription in roman majuscules identifying him as Francis I the victorious king of France. On the reverse is a scene of the battle, which, like the illuminations in the manuscript, is a masterpiece in miniature. Like the Vie, the scene is described in remarkable detail for the small format (36 mm.) and the highlights of the relief that help differentiate the visual elements resemble the white highlights on the grisaille ground of the Vie’s illuminations (figure 5). When compared to the miniatures in the Magdalene manuscript, the resemblance is obvious. The highlighted grisaille technique, the sculptural tonality of the figures, the minute detail, and the inclusion of mottoes in roman majuscules give the manuscript’s roundels a remarkably similar appearance to the medals, indicating that these commemorative medallions likely were a visual source for the illuminations of the Vie de la Magdalene, a topic that I discuss further below.
The Mottoes, the Text, and the Question of Language

The mottoes of the image roundels are written in seven different languages: Latin, French, German, Spanish, Italian, and both common and classical Greek. For those mottoes written in German, Spanish, and Greek, the language is identified in French above the top edge of the roundel, translated into Latin, and placed at the upper left of the page just to the outside of the roundel frame. The Italian mottoes are also translated into Latin, but their language is not identified above the roundel. The remainder of the page is completely undecorated with the exceptions of folios 4r and 93r in which a portion of text that comments on the narrative is written above or below the roundel. These commentaries often take the form of an aside, afterthought, or clarification of the narrative content.

The variety of languages used for the mottoes and their specific placement in the manuscript is an important but puzzling aspect of the Vie. It brings into question Louise’s education, as well as the underlying purpose of the various languages. Scholars disagree on which languages Louise was able to understand. Depending on the source, Louise read only French, or also Latin, Italian, and/or Spanish. On careful examination of the manuscript, however, several things can be determined.

Judging by the amount of Latin in the narratives as well as the mottoes, it is logical to assume that Louise had at least a basic understanding of that language. Marguerite of Austria (1480-1530), the intended child bride of the dauphin Charles VIII who was also raised at the court of Anne of France, was taught elementary Latin, and one may assume that Louise, as Marguerite’s playmate and a fellow aristocrat, would have received a similar education. Furthermore, the fact that the mottoes in German, Spanish, and Greek are translated into Latin rather than French would indicate that Louise read basic Latin, since it may be reasonably concluded that the purpose of a translation is to allow the reader to understand what has been written in a language they do not understand. Thus, since the mottoes are not translated into French, Louise must have read Latin. However her comment in folio 104r that, “The prayer of Francis Petrarch is in Latin and quite difficult to understand” also indicates that she was not entirely proficient with the Latin language, at least as it was used by fourteenth-century Italian poets.
In reference to Italian, Knecht notes that Louise not only understood Italian, but also taught it to Francis. This language was commonly used at the French court and among intellectuals at this time. As a testament to the commonality of this language among the French elite, the mottoes on the family’s medals were in Italian, as mentioned above. Furthermore, Louise’s familial home in Savoy was in an area that bordered Italy, and is today a part of the Italian Piedmont. It is reasonable to assume, therefore, that she had some knowledge of Italian. In addition, the mottoes in Italian on the manuscript are not identified in the same way the “foreign” mottoes are, which also implies that she understood that they were in Italian. The fact that they are translated into Latin, however, implies that Louise’s grasp of Latin was better than her understanding of Italian. Furthermore, the fact that the Spanish mottoes are identified as such indicates that they were considered foreign to Louise and not a language in which she was proficient, despite Knecht’s statement that she understood this language as well.

Therefore, the identification of the Greek, German, and Spanish mottoes by their language and their translation into Latin indicates that Louise had either no proficiency or only a phonetic literacy in these languages. The fact that the Italian is not identified but is translated indicates that she had a slightly better comprehension in that language but required assistance in the form of the Latin translations to ensure that the meaning of the Italian mottoes was not lost on her. Clearly, she possessed comprehension literacy in Latin, since that is the language of the motto translations as well as being included in the narrative and illuminations. However, as mentioned above, her comment about the difficulty of the poem by Petrarch also makes it clear that her understanding of Latin was basic; thus the majority of the text is written in vernacular French.

The variety of languages in the Magdalene manuscript and their translation, or lack thereof, is an element of the Vie that has never been addressed fully. Cynthia Hahn suggested to me that the inclusion of these languages was intended as an indication of the universality of the Christian themes of penitence and perfect love, which are major themes of the Vie. I agree entirely with this hypothesis, which is supported by the fact that the “foreign” languages, meaning Spanish, German, and Greek, appear in the manuscript at the precise time the Magdalene begins her evangelical mission. The fact that Italian is not included among the foreign mottoes on folios 51r to 72r reinforces the
argument that Italian was not a foreign language to Louise.

The first appearance of a foreign language in the manuscript is on folio 51r in which the motto is written in German. In this illumination, the Magdalene meets the risen Jesus in the garden and is instructed by him to tell his followers of the miracle of his resurrection. It is with this mission from Christ that Mary Magdalene began her role as *Apostola*, or “Apostle to the Apostles” and was the first to spread the news of Christ’s resurrection to the world. Thus, the inclusion of the foreign languages from this point in the story forward is a subtle way of emphasizing the evangelical role of the Magdalene, who carried the message of Christ not only to the Apostles but to the European continent as well. Equally important, the inclusion of the various languages indicates the universality of the Christian themes of love, penitence, and salvation that are essential aspects of this manuscript.

Furthermore, the large number of languages included in the *Vie de la Magdalene* allowed Demoulins to allude to his humanist erudition since he made pointed references to the fact that he wrote the manuscript and directed its production. The inclusion of not one but two forms of Greek reinforces this theory, since Greek, like Latin, was a humanist language studied at Francis’s court.33

The use of the different languages for the mottoes, especially those that Louise did not understand, raises the question of how much interaction she had with Demoulins during the reading of the manuscript. Due to their proverbial and sometimes cryptic form, each motto and the image on which it commented could have inspired a sermon in miniature to be discussed by Demoulins and Louise during the reading of the *Vie*. The very format of the mottoes, therefore, would provide Demoulins with the opportunity to utilize them as a didactic tool in an interactive devotional process, thus maximizing the manuscript’s potential as a devotional object. In addition, the conversational nature of the text seems to allude to a tutorial interaction between patron and author.

On closer inspection, however, the fact that much of the text is written in a dialectic form implies that Demoulins’s presence at Louise’s side was unnecessary, as the “tutorial” is taking place within the text of the book itself. This theory is reinforced by the fact that the narrative clearly indicates that the manuscript was written in part to answer questions about the Magdalene’s story that had been previously discussed,
questions that are answered in the dialogue between “Madame” and “Obeissance.” Furthermore, the use of French and Latin for the narrative and motto translations indicates that Demoulins intended Louise to read the manuscript without assistance, as these were languages she understood. Thus the process of active engagement between patron and author during the reading of the Vie was not necessary and whatever questions arose could be addressed at a later date.

One passage in particular puts to rest, in my mind at least, the question of whether Demoulins assisted Louise in the initial reading of this book. These are the excerpts found on folios 77r to 78r, in which the priest asks outright to be made a bishop:

Ah, and what will we do with the bishops, since the religious men who took a vow of poverty and other theologians do not care about it? Madame, since holy persons hold bishoprics in such scorn, tell the king that he should give one to his old schoolmaster. He would do well, for in Paradise there is only one poor Saint Francis, the simple confessor, and if by chance the poor Rochefort were canonized, you would be quite surprised to find that in paradise a Bishop St. Francis. This poor man is not asking for such a favor, but he would not refuse it if the king were to make him such a gift. However, if he knew that he only needs to ask, by my soul, he would take the risk.

It is unlikely that Demoulins would have been so bold as to sit next to the queen mother when she read this section for the first time, regardless of the intimacy of their relationship. Rather, the language of the text indicates that the priest intended this bid for career advancement to be read by Louise alone, knowing that she would discuss the matter with Francis and return to him with the answer he hoped to hear. It seems certain, therefore, that Demoulins wrote the Vie de la Magdalene for Louise to read alone initially and, if necessary, discuss the questions and issues raised at a later date.

Finally, as I discuss in Chapter 3, the inclusion of German, Italian, Spanish, and French in the Vie was an indication of the political climate in Europe in the years 1516-1517. In particular, the inclusion of these specific languages reflects the aspiration of Francis I to be elected to the office of Holy Roman Emperor. In 1516-1517, at the time the Vie de la Magdalene was being written, his chances seemed very good and Demoulins may have included these languages in Louise’s manuscript as a way of both commemorating this possibility and stroking her maternal pride.
Furthermore, it was also in March of 1517 that Francis signed the first Treaty of Cambrai with the German Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian and King Charles of Spain, which effectively ended the first Italian campaign. The inclusion of these specific languages may have been intended as a testament to the peace accord of the three nations, each of which was represented by their respective language. The Italian was included to represent the contested region as well as Francis’s own Italian ancestry, which gave him the claim to Milan in the first place. The occasion of the treaty as the stimulus for the inclusion of these specific languages in the *Vie de la Magdalene* may also explain the absence of English. Despite having diplomatic relations with France, Henry VIII was jealous of Francis’s Italian victory and had provided financial support for Maximilian against Francis when the emperor invaded northern Italy in March of 1516. Therefore, since England was not part of the Holy Roman Empire or a signatory of the Treaty of Cambrai, and moreover had proven an enemy of France, that language was not included among those commemorated as the “foreign” languages of the manuscript.

Further textual elements are found within the images themselves. These are used to establish the location of the scene, the names of its major participants, or an excerpt of their dialogue. These bits of information are written in Latin as well and usually appear on either a placard or a banderole, although some are free-floating above or beside the indicated place or person. In several images, specific structures such as houses and tombs are indicated, as these particular sites are pertinent to the story.

As mentioned above, each of the images has a companion roundel on the facing page that contains the narration of the scene. These are written in a highly legible roman miniscule book hand that is referred to as humanist script. The use of this script was unusual in French book production at this time and is an additional indication of the Italian influence on this manuscript. Furthermore, the text does not contain the historiated or decorative initials commonly found in French and Flemish manuscripts into the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In keeping with the classical tradition found in contemporary Italian manuscripts, plain 1-line roman majuscules in red or blue mark the first word of a page and the beginning of some sentences and sections. However, major breaks in the narrative are signaled with a paragraph sign that resembles a composite letterform of C and I. The same motif denotes the beginning of the mottoes in the
roundel frames, thus creating a visual unity between the various textual elements. Blue is used for the paragraph mark in the mottoes, although both blue and red are used in the text. The narrative is written in brown ink and is primarily in contemporary French, although there are large passages written in rubricated Latin. Most, but not all, of these Latin passages are scriptural in source.

The narrative roundels also have frames 5 mm. wide in various shades of blue, including the royal ultramarine, green, red, pink, lavender-gray, and yellow, as well as white and black. Within these frames are decorative designs painted primarily in gold in a wide variety of patterns and motifs. Some of these motifs are common in Northern European manuscript illumination and include elaborate linear patterns that vary in design from rectilinear chevrons and running scrolls to gracefully intertwining tendrils or filigree. As I discuss in Chapter 4, many of the motifs are obvious references to the royal family, such as wings, daisies, salamanders, and fleurs-de-lis, while others such as urns, garlands, swags, and bucrania found on folio 30v are further indications of the importation of Italian Renaissance motifs into France. Still others act as iconographic references to the episode described in the narrative and the illumination, a subject that I examine in Chapter 6. An important aspect of Demoulins’s use of symbolism in the frame designs is that it is often complex and interrelated, and functions on several levels at once. This complexity was intended to intrigue and challenge Louise as she read the manuscript by encouraging her to contemplate each motif from several points of view, a concept I discuss further in Chapter 6.

In addition to the pages that deal with the life of the Magdalene and her shrine, there are seventy-seven pages of text without corresponding images. These include the introduction and dedication pages and various commentaries on topics such as the translation of the Magdalene’s relics from Vézelay to Aix-en-Provence, and miracles performed by her. These roundels also include Demoulins’s request for a bishopric mentioned above, his anti-clerical commentaries on the religious orders, and a prayer written by Petrarch to the Magdalene.

One of the most important and timely aspects of the manuscript is a dialogue between “Madame” and “Obeissance” concerning the problem of the conflation of Mary Magdalene from several women in the Bible. The matter of the conflation was an
important hagiographic issue at the time, and before writing the *Vie*, Demoulins requested the assistance of his friend, the humanist and reformer Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, concerning the best manner in which to explain the questions surrounding the Magdalene’s identity to Louise. Because of this request, Lefèvre was inspired to write *De Maria Magdalena*, a treatise in which he challenged the Catholic Church’s orthodoxy on the identity of Mary Magdalene as Gregory the Great had established it centuries before. Lefèvre argued that the figure identified by the Roman Catholic Church as Mary Magdalene could not have been one person as Gregory had declared. Rather, Lefèvre insisted, there were at least three women--the anonymous anointing sinner, Mary of Magdala, and Mary of Bethany—who were combined into the single figure of Mary Magdalene for the convenience of the early Church. This heterodoxical view stimulated what became known as the "Quarrel of the Magdalenes" several years later. It is obvious in reading the *Vie de la Magdalene* that Demoulins is uncomfortable with the subject, and although he refers to this problematic issue on folios 4r, 100r, and 100v, he does not make a definitive statement. Clearly, Demoulins did not wish to offend the Catholic hierarchy of which he was a part, and yet, he felt compelled to present a differing opinion, albeit subtly and in an abstruse manner.

**Synopsis of the *Vie de la Magdalene***

The manuscript begins with Demoulins’s opening remarks to Louise, an explanation of her commission, and an introduction to the story of the Magdalene. The author includes the Magdalene’s genealogical chart and a brief overview of the major components of her story. It is important to note that above the roundel on folio 4r is a statement indicating that he presented the Magdalene’s story in accordance with the tradition of the Catholic Church. Demoulins then addresses the *vita* of the Magdalene more fully, beginning with the death of her parents and her inheritance of wealth and property, and her subsequent life of worldly pleasures. A recounting of her repentance and conversion follows this, as does Christ freeing her from demons and her famous act of contrition during the feast at the house of Simon the Pharisee. Demoulins includes the Magdalene’s siblings in the story, telling of Martha’s cure of the issue of blood, Christ’s visit to the house of Martha and Mary, and the death and resurrection of Lazarus.
Demoulins then recounts the Magdalene’s role as unctrice and her involvement in Christ’s ministry and Passion. This is followed by a series of quartered roundels that contain multiple scenes describing the Post-Ascension life of Mary Magdalene. These include the Magdalene’s evangelical work in Jerusalem, the expulsion of her group in the rudderless boat and their miraculous arrival in France, the conversion of the king and queen of Provence, their pilgrimage and the miracle of their child, and the Magdalene’s self-imposed exile to her grotto at La Sainte-Baume. Following this is the story of the Magdalene’s hermitic life, views of the shrine of La Sainte-Baume, and the last days of the Magdalene. The detailed depictions of her reliquaries that follow this section are among the most beautiful and intriguing illuminations in the manuscript, and their meaning and references to Louise and the royal family are discussed in Chapter 4. In folio 72v, Demoulins poetically indicates that he has completed of Magdalene’s story with the words, *Mors laborum finis*, or “Death ends labor.” These words are especially appropriate as they follow an illumination of the Magdalene’s skull.

The next section of the manuscript discusses the scriptural and literary sources of the Magdalene story, as well as containing Demoulins’s remarks about various religious orders and his request for preferment. This is followed by the troublesome question of the number of Magdalenes and a lengthy recitation, in both French and Latin, of the revelation made by an angel to a Franciscan hermit named Amadeo Menez da Silva concerning the holiness of the Magdalene, the number of Magdalenes, and the celebration of her feast day. Significantly, the revelation, which according to da Silva was given to him by the archangel Gabriel, identifies two women called Magdalene. The first is the woman who was the follower of Christ and the equal of the apostles, and the second was the repentant sinner who washed Christ’s feet with her tears. Both women are credited with anointing Christ with precious ointment. The revelation gives celestial support to those theologians eager to separate the three women of the Gregorian conflation, and its significance is evident by the fact that Demoulins repeated the revelation in French so that Louise could understand it with total clarity.

Following this revelation is the dialogue mentioned above between “Madame” and “Obeissance” regarding several issues concerning the Magdalene that apparently troubled Louise. The text is written in the form of an interrogatory, in which “Madame”
asks “Obeissance” various questions pertaining to matters that clearly had been brought up by Louise before the manuscript was written, including miracles resulting from the saint’s intervention, the cost of the ointment she used to anoint Christ, and the exact substances used to make that ointment. The nature of this “conversation” implies the author is responding to matters they had discussed previously, and that Demoulins was fulfilling his duty as both tutor and spiritual advisor by addressing these topics. The following folios, 94v and 95r, are especially interesting because of Demoulins’s scathing comments about the theologians of Paris and their greed for honors, a topic he reiterates elsewhere in the manuscript.

The manuscript concludes with poems, prayers, and Demoulins’s attempt to reconcile some of the questions discussed earlier. Included are two poems written by Coelius Sedulius, a fifth century Christian poet, concerning the Magdalene’s conversion and exorcism from seven demons. This is followed by Petrarch’s poem to the Magdalene, *Dulcis amica mea*, and the prayer Demoulins writes for Louise to invoke the Magdalene’s protection and intercession on behalf of her family, with a special request for the birth of sons for Queen Claude and Marguerite. Demoulins also gives his own opinions concerning the conflation of the Magdalene and her true character. These comments reveal Demoulins’s conflict about the Magdalene and his desire to convey what he perceived as the truth, yet remain in accordance with the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church. The final folio, 109v, contains the dedication to Louise: “Pour Madame,” which also has the astronomical symbols for Jupiter and Pisces above and below the inscription.

**Visual Sources of the Roundel Form in the Vie de la Magdalene**

The use of the roundel form as the exclusive element in the page design of the *Vie* is one of the most unusual aspects of this manuscript. Roundels often appear in French, Netherlandish and Italian manuscripts, and were used as vehicles for portraits of donors or religious persons or around illuminations. Two examples are the books of hours produced by the Bedford Master and his followers, in which the roundels contain miniatures (figure 6), and Italian manuscripts like the *Bible of Federigo da Montefeltro*
The roundels in the *Vie de la Magdalene* differ significantly in one very important way. In both the Northern devotional books and Italian manuscripts the roundel is invariably incorporated into the larger decorative composition of the page. In the *Vie de la Magdalene*, however, the roundel is an autonomous design element that dominates the space of the page. Proportionally the roundels encompass over half of each page, and only twenty-seven of the 218 roundels have any text written outside the circular frame, with most of this ancillary text used to identify the language of the foreign mottoes. None of the additional text challenges the dominance of the roundel on the page, and no other decorative elements, such as marginalia, are used. With such emphasis placed on the roundel as a singular, dominant design element in the *Vie*, one must ask why the artist and author chose to use this format so prominently. As with most inquiries that surround this manuscript, the answer is multivalent.

By its very nature, the roundel is an emphatic form that was used to distinguish the image within from the elements surrounding it. Since antiquity, the roundel has been used to emphasize the importance of a particular portion of a composition, focusing attention on the most significant figure or element in a visual program. In the medieval period, the roundel was incorporated into the design of stained glass windows, an art form with which the manuscript shares both a didactic and devotional purpose. Within the larger decorative scheme of the windows, glaziers used medallions to highlight the narrative images, which otherwise might be lost amid the dazzling beauty and complexity of the overall design. Although the medallions take many shapes, roundels are among the most common. Its form contrasted strongly with the rectilinear shape of the window, thus creating a “bull’s eye” effect, as seen in the analogical window from west portal of Saint Denis (figure 8). This was especially true in the thirteenth century when increasingly complex designs and iconographic schemes made the circle’s emphatic form popular with the glaziers. One of the best examples is found in the apsidal glazing of the cathedral of Laon in which a large Marian rose window and the three lancets below have roundels as predominant design motifs (figure 9).

Two of the most popular themes for stained glass windows in the twelfth and
thirteenth centuries were Passion and hagiographic cycles. Not surprisingly, Mary Magdalene is featured prominently in windows depicting these themes in numerous French churches and cathedrals, especially from the Burgundian region where the Magdalene’s shrine at Vézelay was located.\textsuperscript{54} The church of Semur-en-Auxois, for example, has three windows dedicated to Mary Magdalene, including one that uses circular medallions exclusively to frame the scenes (figure 10). Textual elements are also components of many windows, most often appearing as a few words that identify the saint and the main characters of the scenes. However, as we see in the Saint Margaret window from the Church of Saint Margaret in Ardagger, Austria, full inscriptions were sometimes included around the narrative medallions, forming a textual framing device very similar to that found in the \textit{Vie} (figure 11). Like those in the manuscript, the inscriptions are in Latin and identify the figures, places, and actions in the scene. Thus, these inscriptions work with the images to fulfill the didactic and spiritual purpose of the windows, as do the inscriptions in the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene}.

Another aspect of stained glass windows that is reflected in the \textit{Vie} is the wide variety of ornamental patterns that are used as decorative borders or filler elements. These include knot patterns and foliate motifs like \textit{rinceaux}, trefoils, and quatrefoils, as well as abstracted designs of pearled fillets, chevrons, zigzags, and undulating lines with bosses or dots in the negative spaces. There are also obviously symbolic or heraldic motifs like fleur-de-lis, which are used as a border or diaper pattern in royal windows. These motifs and many others are also found in the frames of the narrative roundels in the \textit{Vie}, thus reinforcing the visual association between the manuscript and early Gothic stained glass windows.\textsuperscript{55} The influence of stained glass Magdalene cycles on the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene} is an important topic I discuss further in Chapter 3.

Many art forms were influenced by the design, techniques, and motifs used in stained glass windows. Manuscripts such as a \textit{Bible Moralisée}, c.1220-1300, (Vienna, Ostereichisches Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2554, folio 1 recto) borrowed the simplified illustrations and circular medallion format for its illuminations (figure 12). Devotional objects also reflect the influence of stained glass, such as the locket in the collection of the Walters Art Museum (Walters 44.590) (figure 13).\textsuperscript{56} Created in northern France in c.1470 and made of "basse-taille", silver covered with translucent enamel, the petite locket
(3.65 cm in diameter) was used as a pater noster, a device to aid in daily prayers. Rock crystal protects the delicately sculpted reliefs that depict three scenes of the Passion. The jewel-toned enamels and the roundel form of the locket mimic stained glass medallions, and the abstracted patterns on the frames, which are drawn from the vocabulary of stained glass decoration, complete the effect.

Like the locket, the narrative frames of the Vie also borrow some of their decoration from stained glass. Thus, the use of these patterns in the roundel frames of both the locket and the manuscript, as well the use of the roundel form itself, may have been intended to allude to French stained glass as the common visual source, an association that is enhanced by the didactic and devotional role shared by the three art forms.

However, the locket itself is a potential inspiration for the Vie de la Magdalene. The diminutive size and preciousness of the manuscript’s roundels, as well as their bordered design and placement on each page are aspects that are highly reminiscent of an open locket, an appearance that is enhanced by the grisaille effect of the illuminations. Like the illuminations in the Vie, the tiny scenes of the Walters locket are remarkable for the amount of detail the artist has depicted, including landscape elements, folds in the drapery, textures of hair and beard, and facial expressions. Furthermore, the narrow frames surrounding the two interior scenes of the locket are decorated with the same undulating line and “sunrise” motif used on the frames of folios 3r, 80r, and 104v in the manuscript. In addition, the running scroll motif that surrounds the Lamentation on the exterior of the locket resembles a very similar pattern on folios 4r, 94r, 96r, and 101r. The proportion of the locket’s enameled relief panels to the frames is also very similar to that in the Magdalene manuscript. This similarity may have been intentional, for such lockets were created as devotional devices for aristocratic ladies in Flanders and France in the fifteenth century and was probably something that Louise would have recognized.

I believe, however, that another type of object was even more influential on the design and presentation of images in the Vie de la Magdalene. These are the individual painted glass roundels that were widely produced in the Netherlands between c.1475 to the mid-sixteenth century. Many of the major artists living in the Lowlands and Germany created designs for these roundels, including Lucas van Leyden, Jan Gossaert,
and Hugo van der Goes. Working from these designs, glass-painting workshops mass-produced the grisaille images, which were painted in tonal shades of black or brown on colorless glass and highlighted with silver stains to create various tones of yellow, amber, and copper. The roundels were used as part of the fenestration of religious, civic, and governmental buildings, as well as private homes. The subjects depicted on the roundels varied widely. Single iconic or devotional images, such as patron saints, the Crucifixion or Pietà, as well as secular images of vanitas themes and allegories were common, but the majority of the roundels were created in narrative series, with Old and New Testament stories being the most popular. Passion cycles were extremely popular and were often expanded to include scenes that were usually omitted from earlier iconographic treatments of this subject, such as the roundel of 1514 from the North Lowlands that illustrates the moment when Christ is led away from Herod Antipas (figure 14).

Like this one, all the roundels originally had borders but most were destroyed when the glass was removed from the window. Many were inscribed in Latin using a Gothic script but plain glass and ornamental borders were common as well. A roundel from a series depicting Susannah and the Elders has both an inscribed inner border and a decorative outer border, with an arched vine or tracery motif in gold on black (figure 15). These borders and their presentation are very similar to many of the frames surrounding the narrative roundels in the Magdalene manuscript, which are predominantly black and gold, such as in folios 2v and 74r, and have comparable motifs.

When compared with the glass roundels, the illuminations in the Vie de la Magdalene are strikingly similar in various ways. Naturally, the rounded shape, richly tonal grisaille quality, touches of yellow, and the inscribed and decorative borders immediately refer to the painted roundels. However, other aspects are also similar and suggest a visual association between the manuscript and several of these artists or workshops. The foreground composition and shallow space of the roundel depicting Christ being led away from Herod are found in the manuscript’s illuminations that illustrate the pre-conversion life of the Magdalene (folios 5r-7r and 9r-13r). There is also a similarity in the overlapping of figures, such as the soldiers on the left in the painted roundel that is found, for example, in folio 9r, which shows the Magdalene dancing, and folio 13r, in which she is freed from seven demons.
The illumination of the Magdalene dancing on folio 9r also bears a strong similarity to a painted roundel that shows the same subject, men and women dancing (figure 16). The S curve of the woman’s body and her down-turned head, as well as her costume with its fluttering sash and exaggerated headdress are also very similar to the manner in which the Magdalene is depicted in the dancing scene of the Vie. The costume of the Magdalene’s dancing partner is different from that of the woman’s partner in the dancing roundel, but this appears to have been intentional as Godefroy wanted to show the exaggerated codpiece of the Magdalene’s lover, thus emphasizing the sexual aspect essential to the story. However, the head and wildly plumed hat of the man in the roundel is the same in the Magdalene’s paramour in the seduction illumination on folio 11r.

Furthermore, the placement of the figures in the space as well as the overall composition is also comparable, as is the inclusion of a second pair of dancers behind the man and woman. In the roundel, however, the second man is dressed in a fool’s cap, but in the Vie, the fool is placed in a more prominent position in the right foreground of the scene. Again, this appears to have been a conscious choice on the artist’s part so that the figure is not overlooked and the full meaning of the message of the scene is recognized. That meaning also unites these two images, for the subject of the painted roundel is very similar to that of the dancing scene in the Vie—the dangers of worldliness and vanity. The painted roundel is part of a larger series that depicts the misadventures of a figure known in the Netherlands as Sorgheloos, a latter day Prodigal Son who seems to have originated in the late fifteenth century with the amateur theatrical groups known as rederijkers kamers, or rhetoricians’ societies.  

Like the Magdalene, he lives a life of feasting, dancing, and other worldly pleasures before such excesses leave him destitute. Unlike the youth in Christ’s parable, however, Sorgheloos is not accepted back into the good graces of family and friends but lives the remainder of his life in abject poverty. This scene depicts Sorgheloos dancing with Weelde, or Wealth, in the company of his fair-weather friends. This tale of folly, worldliness, and lost virtue was well known throughout the Netherlands and produced in large series of prints as well as roundels, so the chances of Godefroy knowing this theme are quite good and his comparison of it with the foolishness of Mary Magdalene would have been a natural association. Given the
similarities between folio 9r and the Sorghealoos roundel, it seems likely that he knew of this particular design and it informed his creation of the illumination for the Vie. The date of roundel is approximately 1520, which is roughly contemporary with the manuscript, but since these designs were used for years, it is possible that there was an earlier series of roundels using this design of which he was aware. It is also possible that a third design inspired both the illumination in the Vie and the painted roundel.

The artist of the roundel mentioned above is not known, but one artist with whom Godefroy shares stylistic qualities is Jan de Beer, an Antwerp painter who registered with the Guild of Saint Luke in 1490 and seems to have spent his entire career in that city. As Godefroy does not appear in France until c. 1515 and is believed to have trained in Antwerp, it is possible that he knew of Jan de Beer’s work and incorporated certain aspects of it into his designs as well as seeing later works by this artist. In particular, a chiaroscuro drawing of Christ at Emmaus done by de Beer as a roundel design has several characteristics strongly similar to illuminations in the Vie (figure 17). The expressive hand gestures and dynamic interaction of the figures, which again overlap and are placed in the foreground, are found in many of the illuminations of the manuscript, such as folios 14r and 15r. More specifically, the cloak of the apostle on the right, which wraps across his body and flutters behind him, is similar to that seen in folio 13r. The long deep folds of the Christ’s robes wrap around his body and contrast with the more agitated clusters of folds in the Magdalene’s dress as it crumples on the floor beneath her knees. The miniature landscape in the background is likewise comparable to the tiny landscape elements found on folio 8r, which depicts the property inherited by the siblings. Furthermore, the posture of the apostle on the right, who stands with his left leg stiff and straight out, bears a strong resemblance to the posture of Christ in folio 13r and the man on the right in folio 29r. In another roundel design by Jan de Beer, depicting Saint Luke and the Vision of Zacharias, the curved posture and truncated action of a figure caught in the act of kneeling on the right is echoed in the postures of Martha in folio 18r and the Virgin in folio 47r (figure 18).

Although these drawings date from about 1520, they are close enough in date and style to suggest that Godefroy was aware of this artist’s work and incorporated specific elements in his designs for the Magdalene manuscript. Whether Godefroy designed
roundel designs himself is unknown, but several factors indicate the influence of this art form on his style. His use of the roundel format in the *Vie* as well as the grisaille technique and white highlights strongly mimics the chiaroscuro drawings of the roundel designers, and the touches of yellow throughout suggest that this popular art form was a model for the illuminations and borders of the *Vie de la Magdalene*.

Finally, another possible source for the *Vie de la Magdalene* is the cycle of circular Passion prints of Lucas van Leyden and Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen, both of whom designed drawings that were widely used for silver-stained roundels in the early sixteenth century. Van Leyden’s Passion series dates from 1509 and van Oostsanen’s prints date from between 1511 and 1514. Both artists placed their circular compositions within banded frames filled with ornamental motifs. The roundel images are powerful compositions of the last days of Christ, depicted with great complexity, delicate gradations of tone, and a vibrant energy—qualities that are reflected in many of the illuminations of the *Vie de la Magdalene*. It is the frames, however, that are the most intriguing in relation to the Magdalene manuscript, for both artists have used motifs and arrangements that appear in the *Vie* as well.

Van Leyden’s frames have the same design repeated throughout the series, a motif of flowering foliated scrolls that begin at the bottom with a terminal element of leaves and undulate up the side of the frame to the mid point (figure 19). A second leafy scroll flows down from the top to meet it. Four putti, two on each side, stand, sit, or climb on the scrolls as they look upward to the banderole at the top that displays the inscribed date. Similar foliated or flowering scroll designs are found on the frames of the narrative roundels on folios 46v and 49v of the manuscript, and folio 42v has figures intermingled with the scrolls, although due to the resurrection symbolism of the frame, these are more adult in proportion than the childlike putti. However, the appearance of these frames is very similar to those in van Leyden’s Passion series, an appearance that is reinforced by the inner band used on both the print and the illumination to separate the frame from the image within the roundel.

Van Oostsanen’s frames are even more interesting when compared to the *Vie*. Depending on the date of the series, the artist used three different types of borders. Two of these designs, in particular, are comparable to similar designs on the *Vie*. The first
has the symbols of the Passion entwined with foliated scrolls or held by putti (figure 20). The second also has foliated elements and the Arma Christi, but these objects are in cartouches placed around the frame and joined by the leaf patterns (figure 21). The instruments of the Passion alternate with oval cartouches containing portraits of Old and New Testament figures. These elements—cartouches, foliated scrolls and leaf patterns, the Arma Christi and other symbolic motifs—appear in numerous frames of the *Vie de la Magdalene*.  

Although the frames in the *Vie* do not exactly copy those used by van Oostsanen for his round Passion series, they contain many of the same elements placed in similar arrangements and, thus, appear to have this series of prints as a visual source.

In the *Vie de la Magdalene*, the collaborative team of Demoulins and Godefroy le Batave utilized the roundel shape in both traditional and innovative ways. Building upon the classical and medieval traditions, they used the roundel’s emphatic shape to convey the spiritual, political, and personal content of the Magdalene’s story to Louise throughout the manuscript. However, unlike their precedents who used the roundel primarily as a vessel for pictorial content, the creators of the *Vie* used it for narrative content as well. Thus, both the written message and visual message are contained in two facing roundels on otherwise empty pages. Framed and paired in this manner, the roundels become a cohesive didactic unit that generates a dynamic interaction between the components as the reader moves visually from image to motto to narrative and finally to decorative frame. It is a highly functional arrangement designed to give power and equal importance to both the textual and visual elements of the manuscript.

Yet the roundels are not exact pairs. There are distinct and intentional differences between the types of frames that surround the narrative roundels versus those that surround the image roundels. As I have indicated above, the reason for this is the visual association with the devotional locket, the commemorative medallion, and the painted roundels. The placement of the manuscript’s roundels on the page and many of the decorative patterns on the narrative frames allude to the devotional locket, while the Latin majuscule inscriptions on the image roundels refer to the commemorative medallions, and the grisaille tonality, compositions, pictorial devices, and highlights of color reference the painted roundels. As a culturally aware woman of her day, Louise would have understood the devotional and commemorative purposes of these objects and made
the associations when she looked at the Magdalene manuscript, which was itself both a devotional and commemorative object.

**Symbolic Significance of the Roundel Form in the Vie de la Magdalene**

As I have noted, the *Vie* differs from other manuscripts that use the roundel as a motif in that both the image and the text are placed within this circular form. Since ancient times the circle has been associated with cosmic order and divine wisdom. This concept was expressed in many religious books of the medieval period, such as the thirteenth-century *Bible Moralisée* from Vienna mentioned above. On the first pages of the manuscript, the artist depicted the story of Creation from Genesis, showing God using a compass to create the universe within a sphere (figure 22). The story continued in the roundels on the facing page in which He performs the various acts that create the physical world, using circles to indicate and frame His thoughts and actions. A fourteenth-century English book of hours (B.L. Egerton, ms 2781, folio 1v) depicts the creation of light and the celestial spheres as concentric rings moving from the outermost edge of the universe to the earth at the center of these circles, again utilizing the roundel to indicate divine order to the cosmos (figure 23.) Even more specific to the time and location of the *Vie de la Magdalene* is a manuscript from Bruges, the *Chronologie Universelle* (Collection of Peter Dubrowsky, Fr. F. v. IV. 12, c. 1480), which depicts God in a circular heaven creating the sun, moon, stars, and Earth with the animals and Adam all placed in a large roundel (figure 24).

The association of the circle as symbolic of divine wisdom and cosmic order was reinforced in the late fifteenth century with the study of Neoplatonic philosophy that accompanied the arrival of humanism in France. Undoubtedly, Demoulins as a humanist and Neoplatonist was aware of the symbolic significance of the roundel and chose it as the vehicle of the sacred message of the Magdalene manuscript. The roundels used in the *Vie* are quite literally the containers of divine wisdom—the wisdom to be found in the *vita* of Mary Magdalene and the gospels that were its origin.

In addition, the circle, which has no beginning or end, was symbolic of eternity and divine love. Both concepts are present in the Christian message of eternal life for the
faithful through the infinite love of Jesus Christ, a message pronounced in the *Vie de la Magdalene*. Furthermore, ancient philosophers and Renaissance humanists alike considered the circle the most perfect of shapes. Thus it was associated with the perfect love of Christ, a love continually reiterated in the Magdalene manuscript and, given visual expression in folio 48r, which depicts the Crucifixion. As Christ hangs from the cross, the Magdalene clings to its base, gazing at him with rapt expression. In the gold frame that surrounds the image are four letters placed at the cardinal points: A M O R. This refers to both the Magdalene’s perfect love for Christ as well as Christ’s perfect love for all men. 74 The Magdalene, placed at the exact center of the composition, is the personification of the flow of love between God and man through his Son. As Myra Orth noted, Demoulins put into visual form a passage drawn from the second oration on Marsilio Ficino’s *Commentaries on Plato’s ‘Symposium,’* “Love is the circle of good, revolving from good to good perpetually.” 75 This theme of divine love runs throughout the *Vie*, making Demoulins’s choice of the roundel especially fitting as a conveyer of this message.

One final intriguing possibility for the use of the roundel in the *Vie de la Magdalene* is the form of Jewish mysticism known as the Cabala. There was a revival of interest in Judaic studies among European Christians in the late fifteenth century, as well as an interest in various forms of mysticism and occult sciences, including astrology, alchemy, and the Cabala. 76 Interest in the Cabala in particular was inspired by the publication of Johannes Reuchlin’s *De arte cabalistica* in 1517, the same year the *Vie de la Magdalene* was produced. The following year the French humanist and Neoplatonist Symphorien Champier devoted a chapter of his book *Pronostics ou prêssage des prophètes, des astrologues et des médecins* to the Cabala, and at Francis’s request, Jean Thenaud, a Carthusian monk, wrote two treatises on the Cabala to help the king understand this esoteric and arcane form of mysticism. 77

Judging from her entourage, Louise appears to have shared her son’s interest in the Cabala. Agrippa of Nettesheim, who was one of the major exponents of Cabalistic study in sixteenth-century France, became a part of Louise’s court circle for a time. 78 Furthermore, Demoulins also had an interest in Judaica and emphasized his knowledge of Judaism several times in the *Vie*. Especially pointed are his comments that the
Magdalene, her family, and friends were all Jews, and makes it very clear, in folio 21v for example, that he has been careful to present Hebrew custom and ceremony with great accuracy and in accordance with tradition. In addition, Anne-Marie Le Coq has demonstrated that Demoulins was influenced by the Cabala in the creation of *Libellus Enigmatum*, which is contemporary with the Magdalene manuscript. The circle was an important aspect of this book, as Demoulins used concentric circles on the pages he created for the royal family in this book, symbolizing each family member, in this case Louise, with an animal placed within radiating circles that are labeled with the virtues of the person (figure 25).

As Le Coq points out, the association of the Cabala with the roundel form is, in fact, very similar to that of the Neoplatonists. The circle or sphere represented the Godhead and the divine wisdom that emanated from that source. The creators of the *sefirot* or “Tree of Life” used roundels to represent this emanation of divine wisdom (figure 26). The *sefirot* consists of ten circles or *sefirah*, each of which represents an attribute that moved out from God into the cosmos in successive emanations during creation. These attributes make up all matter in the world. On the *sefirot*, the attribute of each *sefirah*, such as wisdom, judgment, mercy, beauty, will, and understanding, is inscribed on the inside of a circle. An example of a *sefirot* from 1601 has *sefirah* resembling the frames and inscribed mottoes surrounding the image roundels of the *Vie* (figure 27). The attributes represented by the circles of the *sefirot* are the intermediaries between knowledge and matter and represent the patterns and relationship that are fundamental to all being. To understand these relationships perfectly is to understand the presence of God in the world and the divine plan of cosmic order. By understanding each *sefirah* and how it relates to all the others, the Cabalist gradually comes to understand the mind of God with the supreme goal of experiencing infinity itself.

Although the *Vie de la Magdalene* is not a Cabalistic text, the influence of this theology on the manuscript is possible given the time and place of its creation. As I mentioned above, Anne-Marie Le Coq proposes that the Cabala’s themes of wisdom, mercy, understanding, divine love, and the gradual comprehension of God’s presence in the world were influential to Demoulins as he wrote the *Libellus Enigmatum*. Furthermore, scholars such as Myra Orth suggest that Demoulins’s use of the roundel in
the *Vie* is a reference to Neoplatonic symbolism, as mentioned above. It is, therefore, entirely possible that the roundels in the Magdalene manuscript are also a reference to a second system of arcane knowledge studied in the French court during Demoulins’s tenure there—the Cabala. Both Neoplatonism and the Cabala endeavor to understand the mind of God, and use the circle or sphere as the representation of that divine wisdom, love, and understanding. Certainly, Demoulins realized the importance of the roundel form to both philosophies and chose the circle as the perfect vehicle to carry the message of the Magdalene in the *Vie de la Magdalene*. It is through her gradual knowledge of God’s presence in the world, of his divine wisdom, will, mercy, and understanding, and, finally, of his infinite love as embodied in Christ, that Mary Magdalene and, ultimately, all Christians are saved.

It is my conclusion, therefore, that the reasons for the use of the roundel format in the *Vie de la Magdalene* were many. The manuscript’s petite size and intricate delicacy intentionally mimic the carved and enameled *pater noster* lockets popular with aristocratic women in Northern Europe at this time and likewise have a devotional purpose. The Latin inscriptions in roman majuscules found on commemorative bronze medallions struck for Italian and French aristocrats in the late fifteenth century inspired the gold-framed mottoes placed around the manuscript’s illuminations. The grisaille images reflect the influence of silver-stained roundels, as well as the circular Passion series of Lucas van Leyden and Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostsanen. The borders of the silver-stained roundels and the prints also inspired the design of the frames of the narrative roundels and the motifs within them. As I discuss in Chapter 2, the hagiographic cycles of the Magdalene’s life found in stained glass windows of several French churches may have influenced the inclusion of some of the scenes in this *vita*. Finally, I suggest the spiritual association of the circle with divine wisdom and perfect love, two of the major themes of the manuscript, stemmed from the study of Neoplatonism and the Cabala that was fashionable with the French court at the time the *Vie de la Magdalene* was being produced. Together, these sources inspired the creation of a manuscript that is unlike any other in the history of book arts.
Scholarship

There is only one source of which I am aware that discusses the Vie de la Magdalene in any depth and that is Myra Orth's 1976 dissertation, “Progressive Tendencies in French Manuscript Illumination 1515-1530: Godefroy le Batave and the 1520's Hours Workshop.” This work deals with the manuscripts created by Godefroy for Louise of Savoy, and discusses each work individually. In direct reference to the Magdalene manuscript, she also discusses the fact that the work inspired the "Quarrel of the Magdalenes" and gives a very brief overview of the basic iconography of the roundels. The dissertation is, however, more concerned with the style of Godefroy le Batave and his association with the 1520s Hours Workshop of manuscript illuminators. Thus she examines the stylistic associations between the various manuscripts themselves and other works of art.

As I mentioned above, she also examines the influence of concepts such as Neoplatonism and humanism on the Magdalene manuscript. Orth does not address, however, the elements of the manuscript that have a direct political or personal reference to the patron or author. In her discussion of the Lazarus roundels, for example, she notes that there are a large number of them, but gives no indication as to why there is such an emphasis on this particular episode of the Magdalene's life. Neither does she examine the influence of mystery plays or deal with the intricate symbolism of the narrative frames.

Furthermore, Orth's discussion of the individual roundels of the Magdalene manuscript is limited to indicating the visual sources for a particular image as found in previous works by Godefroy, as well as the work of other artists such as Albrecht Dürer and Lucas van Leyden. With the exception of a few images, Orth does not discuss in depth how the individual images compare to traditional iconographic depictions of the various scenes. She states that a detailed study of the individual images would be too time-consuming in terms of the context she had chosen for her dissertation, which included all of the manuscripts by Demoulins and Godefroy rather than just the Vie.

In a later article Orth discusses the events surrounding the creation of the last images of the manuscript, which depict the shrine, grotto, and various relics. In this article she examines the history of the shrine’s depiction by various Northern European artists, most particularly the circle of Antwerp artists centered around Joachim Patinir,
whom she finds to have been influential in Godefroy’s illustration of landscapes within the manuscript. Orth also discusses the importance of the relics, especially the skull of the Magdalene, which some religious orders believe reveals a patch of skin where Christ touched Mary on her forehead during the meeting in the garden. Demoulins adamantly rejects this belief on folio 71v of the Vie and he cites gospel text as proof of its fabrication. In addition, Orth briefly discusses the manipulation of images illustrating the skull reliquary in favor of Louise and her family. Originally, a figure of Anne of Brittany, Louise’s long time rival, knelt in adoration before the relic. However, in two print created during Louise’s lifetime, Anne’s figure is replaced by representations of Francis I kneeling before the saint’s relic.

Orth deals with the Magdalene manuscript once more in an article focusing on another text by Demoulins, the Petit Livret faict a l'honneur de Madame Sainte Anne, dated 1518-1519. This work is, in essence, a defense of Lefèvre, who also reduced the Holy Kinship of Saint Anne from twenty-three persons to the essential four—Saints Anne and Joachim, the Virgin Mary, and Christ. Orth discusses the fact that the precedent for this deconflation was established by Demoulins and Lefèvre with their works on the Magdalene.

The Magdalene’s representation in the visual arts continues to fascinate scholars. Recent scholarship on the subject includes Marjorie Malvern and Marina Warner, whose books discuss the Magdalene’s origins and evolution over the centuries in both art and literature. However, neither mentions the Vie. Martha Mel Edmunds discusses the iconography of the reclining Magdalene in the grotto of La Sainte-Baume and refers to the Vie’s roundel depicting the sculpted image of the Magdalene in the grotto. Her main concern is determining when the sculpture was placed in the grotto and its iconographic sources in both literature and medieval imagery.

Herwig Guratzch briefly discusses the Lazarus roundels as a small part of his extensive study of the iconography of Lazarus in Netherlandish art from 1400 to 1700, but without giving a reason for the inclusion of the theme aside from its importance to the Magdalene’s vita. Marie Holban and A. Hufstader discuss the text of the Vie as the source of Lefèvre’s treatise on the Magdalene and the subsequent "Quarrel of the Magdalenes," as does Susan Haskins who mentions the manuscript in the same context.
Francis Rigolot expands on the iconography of the Magdalene's skull in his 1994 article, in which he briefly discusses the *Vie* in the context of its influence on the writings of Louise's daughter, Marguerite of Navarre. In novella 32 of her book *Heptameron*, Marguerite relates the story of an unfaithful wife forced by her vengeful husband to drink out of her dead lover's skull. Rigolot examines Marguerite's visit to the Shrine of La Sainte-Baume with her mother and the impact of the relic of the Magdalene's skull on the imagery she conjures in her story. Finally, Anne-Marie Le Coq’s analysis of the iconography developed around Francis I, *François Ier Imaginaire: Symbolique et politique à l’aube de la Renaissance française*, mentions the Magdalene manuscript, but her comments are limited to a few paragraphs that refer the *Vie de la Magdalene* in passing or in conjunction with another manuscript.

These sources fail to examine the *Vie de la Magdalene* in its entirety or to address the reasons for the unusual elements present within the *Vie*, elements that give this work its unique quality. My dissertation corrects this lacuna by studying the manuscript in scrupulous detail, identifying the unusual or enigmatic features of this work, and determining the reasons these anomalous aspects were included. It is essential to address these topics of investigation in order to have greater understanding of the manuscript as both a devotional and historical object. It is the goal of this dissertation to add to the scholarly literature on the *Vie de la Magdalene* by providing the most in-depth and focused study to date.

**Statement of Goals and Summary of Chapters**

Ultimately, it is the goal of this dissertation to examine the manuscript in two specific ways. The first is through an analysis of the work itself, the second through a series of questions to be answered. To fulfill the first goal, I analyze the Magdalene manuscript in detail and discuss the four components: the images, the narratives, the mottoes, and the decorative frames that surround the narrative text. Each component is studied both singly and in comparison with the other components. This portion of my work includes translation of the mottoes and the narrative text, analysis of the illuminations and their reference to Magdalenian hagiography, and identification of the
symbolic and decorative motifs on the narrative frames. The result is the catalogue of the *Vie de la Magdalene* that appears in the appendix of the dissertation.

To achieve the second goal, understanding the thematic complexities of the manuscript, a series of questions must be addressed. These questions deal with the manuscript’s iconography, design, content, patronage, historical significance, authorship, and the interrelationship between these subjects. Through the course of my research, I have endeavored to answer these questions, as detailed in the following chapter summaries.

In Chapter 2 I examine the manuscript in terms of its adherence to the hagiographic tradition of Magdalenian iconography, especially in Northern Europe. I demonstrate the various ways in which the *Vie de la Magdalene* compares with other literary *vita* of the Magdalene by examining three traditional sources of the saint’s story. These are the canonical gospels of the New Testament and two medieval books, the *Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voragine and *De vita Beatae Mariae Magdalena* by the Pseudo-Rabanus Maurus. These three literary works had the greatest influence on the *Vie de la Magdalene* and by comparing them, I demonstrate both the manner in which the *Vie* borrows from its predecessors and how it differs from their example. I then examine the reasons for the variations of the Magdalene’s story as it is related in the *Vie* and why specific scenes were chosen for inclusion while others were rejected.

In this chapter I also examine the various representations of Mary Magdalene in European art from the medieval period through the fifteenth century to establish iconographic precedents for the illuminations in the *Vie de la Magdalene*. Examples include Magdalenian cycles in stained glass from French churches, fresco cycles from several Italian churches, the early panel by the Magdalene Master found in the Galleria dell’Accademia that depicts the saint and scenes of her life, Lucas Moser’s Magdalene altarpiece from Tiefenbronn, Germany, and the great *Altar of Mary Magdalene* carved by Tilman Riemenschneider for the Church of Mary Magdalene in Münnerstadt, Germany.

In Chapter 3 I examine the origins of the Magdalene’s cults at Vézelay in Burgundy and La Sainte-Baume in Provence, and the veneration of her relics by the French monarchy, many of whom made pilgrimages to these sites. I discuss the controversy surrounding the authenticity of the two shrines, and the social and political
ramifications that resulted with the shift of devotional attention from Burgundy to Provence. In particular, I discuss the Magdalene’s shrine at La Sainte-Baume and the devotion of monarchs such as Saint Louis of France and the Angevin princes Charles of Salerno and Renè of Anjou, who established and promoted the Magdalene’s Provençal cult. These three sovereigns had familial and political ties to Louise and Francis that are emphasized in the Vie de la Magdalene using thematic and visual motifs, including heraldic devices, personal symbols, references to royal pilgrimages, and illuminations representing the Magdalene’s shrine and relics. These aspects of the manuscript unite Louise and Francis with their regal ancestors in a mutual devotion to Mary Magdalene, accentuating the unique relationship between the saint, the Angevin and Valois dynasties, Francis and Louise, and the French monarchy in general. Through my analysis of these relationships, I bring to light the tradition of Magdalenian devotion established by these earlier rulers, consciously perpetuated by the current king and his mother, and celebrated in the text and images of the Vie de la Magdalene.

In this chapter I also discuss two other themes found in the Vie. The first is the intercession of saints in the conception of kings, a subject that has direct relevance to the birth of Francis 1st, who was, according to legend, conceived through the intervention of Saint Francis of Paola. Second, I examine the association between the Magdalene’s role as the anointer of Jesus Christ as the King of Kings, a prominent theme in the Vie, and the sacral anointing of French kings, a ceremony known as the sacre, during their coronation. In particular I discuss the significance of this theme as it relates to Francis 1st and how the association between the two kings is emphasized in the Vie de la Magdalene. I conclude this chapter by examining the devotion of Louise and her family to Mary Magdalene, their acts of veneration at La Sainte-Baume, and references to the devotion of the royal family found in the text and illuminations of the Vie de la Magdalene.

In Chapter 4 I demonstrate that the life of Louise of Savoy significantly influenced the creation of the manuscript in several ways. The first example is Demoulins’s inclusion of emblems, devices, and other symbolic motifs associated with Louise and her family, as well as those that refer to Francis’s recent victory at the Battle of Marignano. The second is the inclusion of scenes from the lives of Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary that mirror aspects of Louise's life. The inclusion of these scenes
served two purposes; first they elevated the manuscript from a simple book of saintly devotion to one that provided Louise with a source for *imitatio sancti*, a saintly life on which to model her own actions. Second, these scenes, along with portions of the text, established an aristocratic connection between Louise, Francis, the Virgin Mary, and Jesus Christ that intentionally paralleled the French king and his mother with the King of Kings and his Holy Mother, thus increasing Louise’s appreciation of the *Vie* on a personal, emotional, and spiritual level.

In this chapter I also discuss the spiritual importance of the theme of pilgrimage to the shrine at La Sainte-Baume and its presentation in the manuscript. I argue that the illuminations of the shrine, which move chronologically from the broad expanse of the wilderness surrounding the grotto to its innermost heart, intentionally provided Louise with a virtual pilgrimage that allowed her to re-experience the processional nature of the pilgrim’s path. Thus, through contemplation of each image and her remembrance of the actual shrine, she was able to reap the spiritual benefit of the pilgrimage whenever she read the manuscript. In addition, I examine how the ideas, opinions, ambitions, philosophies, and spirituality of François Demoulins de Rochefort likewise affected the content and style of the manuscript.

In Chapter 5 I discuss the influence of religious theater on the *Vie de la Magdalene*. I address the manner in which the Passion and mystery plays of this period influenced the content of the story, the design of the roundel images, and the depiction of the characters in the scenes. The Magdalene’s story was a favorite theme of medieval religious theater due to its inherent drama, emotion, and emphasis on love and repentance. Passion plays popular in France and Belgium during the fifteenth century, such as those by Eustache Mercadé, Arnoul Gréban, and Jean Michel, include lengthy sequences describing the Magdalene’s worldliness, conversion, and religious life, as well as the Raising of Lazarus and the Resurrection of Christ. As I will show, the influence of these plays is one explanation for the inclusion of certain scenes in the *Vie de la Magdalene* as well as the strongly theatrical quality of many of the manuscript’s illuminations, which become, in essence, miniature scenes from these religious dramas. In addition, I discuss Godefroy’s choice of compositional angles for many of the illuminations, angles that mimic the elevated views the royal family and their courtiers
would have had of dramatic productions from their raised theater boxes, thus reinforcing the regal associations found throughout the manuscript.

In Chapter 6 I continue my analysis of the various motifs found in the frames of the narrative roundels, in this case discussing motifs that do not have royal or personal significance to Louise and her family. Although one may assume that the primary function of these designs is decorative, a careful examination reveals that the many of the motifs relate in some way to prominent themes found in the manuscript. I argue that these symbolic elements comprise an intricate iconographic language that functions on several levels at once. When understood in conjunction with the other components of the manuscript, these motifs provide a subtext to the illuminations and narrative, thereby reinforcing the themes found within these components, and providing the reader of the *Vie de la Magdalene* with a richer intellectual, spiritual, and personal experience.

In Chapter 7 I conclude by reexamining the *Vie de la Magdalene* in light of the new information discussed in the previous chapters. I reiterate the manner in which the manuscript is traditional in its presentation of Magdalenian iconography as well as innovative in its manipulations of imagery and content—innovations devised to meet the specific concerns and interests of the manuscript’s patron, Louise of Savoy, and its author, François Demoulins de Rochefort. Most importantly, I clarify how the *Vie de la Magdalene* functioned as a highly personal reflection of its patron, her family, and their place within the history of the French monarchy at the time of the manuscript’s creation.

Following Chapter 7 is a catalogue of the manuscript in which I analyze every image and motif for its formal, representational, and symbolic significance. In addition, each textual element has been translated and the relationship between word and image established where applicable. This is the first time that such a detailed analysis has been undertaken with the *Vie de la Magdalene*, and I believe that it will be of value to the scholarship of this remarkable little book and French Renaissance manuscripts in general.
Notes

1. The pilgrimage was part of the journey taken by the women to meet with Francis on his return from Italy. They left Amboise on 20 October 1515, stopping for various celebrations and entries in the cities and towns along the way. They spent Christmas in Tarascon and arrived at La Sainte-Baume on 31 December 1515 where they made their first visit to the shrine of Mary Magdalene. A second visit was made by the royal party, which now included Francis, on the return trip to allow the king to partake in the devotional experience. For a detailed account of the trip, see E. Baux, V.-L. Bourrilly, and Ph. Mabilly, “Le voyage des reines et de François 1er en Provence et dans la vallée de Rhône Decembre 1515 - Février 1516,” Annales du Midi 16 (1904): 21-42. See also Myra Orth, “Progressive Tendencies in French Manuscript Illumination: 1515-1530: Godefroy le Batave and the 1520’s Hours Workshop” (Ph.D. diss., New York University, 1975), 298; R. J. Knecht, Renaissance Warrior and Patron: The Reign of Francis I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 83. By the end of the fifteenth century a pilgrimage to La Sainte-Baume had become a common practice for the kings and queens of France. See Katherine Ludwig Jansen, Making of the Magdalene: Preaching and Popular Devotion in the Later Middle Ages (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 307-32; Susan Haskins, Mary Magdalene: Myth and Metaphor (New York, New York: Riverhead Books, 1993), 286-89; François Rigolot, "Magdalene’s Skull: Allegory and Iconography in Heptameron 32," Renaissance Quarterly 47 (Spring 1994): 57-73.

2. Both Haskins and Rigolot mention that Louise was especially devoted to Mary Magdalene. See Haskins, 245; and Rigolot, 57. Demoulins’s name is also spelled Du Moulin, Du Moulins, Demoulin, and Desmoulin. The author refers to himself as Rochefort in the manuscript.

3. The manuscript is also known as Vie de sainte Magdalene and La vie de la belle et clere Magdalene. See Rigolot, 73. For Godefroy le Batave, see Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 166-84; and Myra Dickman Orth, "Godefroy le Batave, Illuminator to the French Royal Family, 1516-1526," in Manuscripts in the Fifty Years after the Invention of Printing, ed. J. B. Trapp (London: Warburg Institute, 1983), 50-61.

4. Myra Orth suggests that the manuscript was given to Louise in April 1517, although others have theorized that it was presented to her in November. See Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 301-02.


6. These include Chappelet de vertus, early sixteenth century (Paris, B.N., ms. fr. 1892); Dialogue sur la folie du jeu,1505 (Paris, B.N., ms. fr. 1863); Traité sur les vertus cardinales, 1509 (Paris, B.N., ms. fr. 12.247); Ad maximum principem Franciscum Valesiorum Ducem Francisci Molini Pictonis Odes Monocolos, 1512 (Paris, B.N., ms. lat. 8396); Libellus enigmatum, after 1512 (Paris, B.N., ms. lat. 8775); Interprétation Psaume 26, 1516 (Paris, B.N., ms. fr. 2088) also known as Dominus illuminatio mea;
7. Charles, the son of King Louis XI of France, was born in 1470. He became Charles VIII when his father died in 1483, but at thirteen years old Charles was considered too young to rule. His sister Anne of France shared the regency with her husband Pierre de Beaujeau until Charles turned fourteen and was eligible to assume the crown. However, Anne remained the power behind the throne during her brother’s reign. See Knecht, 1-3; and Pauline Matarasso, *Queen’s Mate: Three Women of Power in France on the Eve of the Renaissance* (Aldershot and Burlington: 2001), 15-16, 18-21, 23-24, 26, 33.


9. Matarasso, 113; Knecht, 3.

10. For a description of Louise’s involvement in the courtly machinations that brought Francis to power and kept him there, see Matarasso, 198-205, 254, 268-69.

11. Knecht, 71, 200-49. Louise served as regent twice, first in 1515 and again in 1522-1526 when Francis was captured during his second Italian campaign.

12. As I note in Chapter 6, I have determined that a second hand was responsible for approximately five of the decorative frame motifs. These frames, although mimicking the motifs used by Godefroy, lack the refinement and finesse of his work. This is especially evident on folio 85v in which the depiction of the dragons in that frame is considerably different from that elsewhere in the manuscript.


15. This fact is noted specifically in folio 30 in which Demoulins states that he instructed the artist to create the same scene three times. However, Godefroy’s own involvement in the design and content of the images apparently was considerable, as noted in folio 37. Demoulins indicates that Godefroy’s choice to place the tomb of Lazarus above ground was troublesome to him at first because it did not fit with the biblical descriptions of the tomb. Demoulins states, however, that after doing some research, he determined that Godefroy’s choice was historically correct. See folios 30 and 37 in the catalogue of the manuscript in this dissertation for these references and John 11:38 for a description of the tomb as cut from rock.

16. For an analysis of the style of the manuscript, see Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 174-84, 298-323.


18. Giovan Pietro Briago used the portrait side of this medallion as the model for the portrait of Ludovico Sforza in the frontispiece of Giovanni Simonetta’s Sforziada. See Thomas Kern, ed., Renaissance Painting in Manuscripts: Treasures from the British Library (New York: Hudson Hills Press, 1983), 111. This medallion is found in the Department of Coins and Medals in the British Museum, London.

19. Knecht, 10. Godefroy and Demoulins used the portrait medallion motif in a later manuscript, Commentaries de la guerre galique (vol. 1: London, B.L., Harley, ms. 6205, f. 3), which was created for Francis I to commemorate the victory over Massimiliano Sforza following the battle of Marignano. On folio 3 there is a large three-quarter portrait of Francis by Jean Clouet and below it is a smaller one of Julius Caesar. See Knecht, 77-78.

20. These are in bronze and are located in the Cabinet de médailles at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.


22. Classical Greek is referred to as Grec artificial in the manuscript.

23. There are three mottoes in German, four in classical Greek, and seven in common Greek. Three of the mottoes are in Spanish including folio 66v, which curiously is not identified as that language, and nine of the mottoes are in Italian.

24. Matarasso, 37, indicates that the girls at the court of Anne de France were taught basic Latin and Knecht, 6, notes that Louise taught Francis Italian and Spanish.
25. Matarasso, 37.

26. This is a reference to a trip Petrarch took to the holy grotto in the autumn of 1337 while the poet was living in Provence but still in the employ of the Colonna family. Cardinal Colonna asked Petrarch to accompany a “person of importance” on a visit to La Sainte-Baume, where they spent three days and nights in the grotto. Petrarch was so moved by the experience that he wrote a poem to the penitent Magdalene, which is included in folios 101r to f. 104r of the Vie. See Ernest Hatch Wilkins, Life of Petrarch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 18; and Jansen, 283-84.

27. Knecht, 6.

28. Matarasso, 35, notes that Louis XI both read and spoke Italian and that his son Charles VIII was likewise educated in the language, although not in Latin which was considered too taxing for his delicate constitution. Knecht, 123-125, notes that there was an established Italian presence at the court of Francis I by 1515.

29. Knecht, 6.

30. According to Paul Saenger, phonetic literacy is “the ability to decode texts syllable by syllable and to pronounce them orally” although without comprehending the precise grammatical meaning of the text. Comprehension literacy “was the ability to decode a written text silently, word by word, and to understand it fully in the very act of gazing upon it.” See Paul Saenger, “Books of Hours and the Reading Habits of the Later Middle Ages,” The Culture of Print: Power and the Uses of Print in Early Modern Europe, ed. Roger Chartier (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 239-69.

31. Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 250. Orth indicates that the mottoes are written in various languages but does not give a reason for the variety.

32. This suggestion was made to me by Dr. Cynthia Hahn at the beginning of my work on the manuscript during her class on saints’ lives at Florida State University.

33. Greek was taught in Paris as early as 1476 and students of the language included Erasmus of Rotterdam and Guillaume Budé. Budé was Francis’s secretary and one of the most accomplished of the French humanists. He studied Greek with Janus Lascaris, an Italian Hellenist who began organizing the library at Blois and guided Francis in acquiring one of the finest collections of Greek manuscripts in Western Europe. See Knecht, 146-54. In addition, the inclusion of Greek as one of the languages in the Vie de la Magdalene may have been an intentional reference to the importance of Mary Magdalene in the Eastern Orthodox Church, which regards her with great reverence. The Eastern Orthodox Church, however, does not accept the Gregorian conflation supported by the Roman Catholic Church; rather, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and the Anointing Sinner are honored as three separate entities. See Haskins, 24, 87-91, 104, 245-47. Lefèvre promoted the dissolution of the Gregorian conflation
shortly after the Vie de la Magdalene was completed and Demoulins’s own ambivalence about the question of the number of Magdalenes is obvious throughout the manuscript. I suggest that the inclusion of Greek among the languages used for the mottoes was due not only to its importance as a humanist language currently studied at the French court, but also as a subtle but timely reference to the Eastern Church’s stance on the separate identities of the three women united in the Gregorian conflation.


37. Knecht, 62-63. Louise and Francis were descendents of the Milanese Visconti family, which gave him claim to Milan. In addition, Claude was also descended from the Visconti, doubling Francis’s right to the city.

38. Ibid.

39. The humanist Poggio Bracciolini, among others, is credited with developing this “humanistic script.” Roger S. Wieck notes that “because of [its] association with antiquity, humanistic script was used for classical and humanistic texts all over Italy throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.” See Roger S. Wieck, Late Medieval and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts 1350-1525 in the Houghton Library (Cambridge: Harvard, 1983), 68.

40. This roman hand is commonly found on Italian manuscripts beginning in the mid-fifteenth century. At the time of the production of the Vie de la Magdalene, the most common type of script for Flemish and French manuscripts was Gothic. See Kern, 181. There are a very few examples of the humanist script in French manuscripts from this time, such as a Book of Hours from the Pierpont Morgan Library (New York, ms. M. 0085), but this style of script does not become common in French devotional texts until after 1520. Presumably, the Morgan horae, like the Vie, is an early example of what would become a common trend after the influx of Italianism into France. See Roger S. Wieck, Painted Prayers: The Book of Hours in Medieval and Renaissance Art (New York: George Braziller, Inc., 1997), 31.


45. “Tout ce qui sensuit est selon la tradicion de l'église jusques a la fin de histories.”

46. Amadeus or Amadeo Menez da Silva (1430-1482) was a Franciscan brother born in Portugal but active in Spain and Italy. After pursuing a military career, Amadeo entered the monastery of the Hieronymites of Guadelupe in Castilla. Several years later he was accepted in the monastery at Assisi as a “converso,” but his extreme asceticism and criticism of the other friars resulted in his expulsion. He was sent to Milan where he was given permission to adopt the hermitic lifestyle in an abandoned hospital. He developed a following among lay and religious followers, and eventually was convinced by his order to leave his hermitage to become a priest. He gained the protection of Bianca Maria Visconti, the Duchess of Milan, who supported his career as an itinerant preacher in Lombardy. Bianca also used him on diplomatic missions and as a legate to Pope Pius II. He also gained the support of the Franciscan minister general, Francesco della Rovere, later Pope Sixtus IV. In 1460 Amadeo was given permission to join the monastery at Santa Maria da Bersanora, where his presence inspired the establishment of new Franciscan communities in Lombardy and Milan. Following the election of Sixtus IV, Amadeo went to Rome to become personal counselor to the pope and acquired several additional communities for his congregation. He returned to Milan shortly before his death on 10 August 1482. Amadeo Menez da Silva is believed to be the author of *Apocalipsis Nova*, an apocalyptic politico-religious prophecy supposedly based on revelations made to Amadeo by the Archangel Gabriel during a period of hermitic seclusion in the Janiculum hills outside Rome. Although I have not determined this as fact, it is possible that the revelation in the *Vie de la Magdalene* is from this work. For more information, see Bert Roest and Maarten van der Heijden, *Franciscan Authors, Thirteenth to Eighteenth Century: A Catalogue in Process*, accessible at: [http://users.bart.nl/~roestb/franciscan/franauta.htm#_Toc427590360](http://users.bart.nl/~roestb/franciscan/franauta.htm#_Toc427590360). The web site lists the locations and editions of the *Apocalipsis Nova*, including a sixteenth manuscript in the Bibliothèque National in Paris (Paris, B.N., Lat. 3326), as well as primary and secondary literature on Amadeo Menez da Silva. See also John Moorman, *A History of the Franciscan Order from Its Origins to the Year 1517* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 488-489.
47. Cælius, or Caelius, Sedulius was a Christian poet of the fifth century who lived and worked in Italy during the reigns of Theodosius the Younger and Valentinian III. His principal work is a poem in five books entitled *Carmen paschale et Hymni duo*, which is a summary of the Old and New Testaments. It was printed in Spanish about 1494 (Valladolid: Pedro Giraldi and Miguel de Planes) and in Italian in 1501 (Venetiis: Apud Aldum, 1501). Both versions are in the Department of Printed Books at the Pierpont Morgan Library. See Johann Huemer, *De Sedulii poetae vita et scriptis commentatio* (Vienna, 1878), Jacques-Paul Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 19 (Paris: 1844-1855), and A. D. McDonald, “The Iconographic Tradition of Sedulius,” *Speculum* 8 (April 1933): 150-56.

48. “If she was attributed the name of sinner, I think it was wrong. Madam, I composed this book in accordance with the observance of the Church not wanting to ignore its commands. However, it seems to me that I am not harming anyone if, instead of one saint, I name three who have the power to intercede before God on your behalf, to keep you in his grace.”

49. Certainly the use of the medallion did not disappear in the fifteenth century, as Orth points out in her discussion of the roundel in the *Vie*. She notes that the Medallion Master was named for his use of this form, although these roundels are set within squares and text is included beneath the illuminations. In the Petau-Rothschild Hours the reader views the illuminations through apertures in the previous page. See Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 306-07. The *Bible of Federigo da Montefeltro* was created in Florence by four Italian illuminators between 1476 and 1478. The illuminators are Francesco di Antoinio del Chierico, Francesco Rosselli, Attavante degli Attavanti, and Biagio d’Antonio, and the scribe was Hugo de Comminellis da Mezieres. The roundel is used in several ways in this manuscript. Gilded roundel frames surround heraldic devices on the title page while simple colored circles containing illustrations are worked into the large foliated borders on the narrative pages. A third use is made in the form of laurel wreaths that surround realistic portraits of Federigo and his wife Battista Sforza. The same laurel wreath motif appears on folio 107r of the *Vie*, although in this case it surrounds narrative text. See *Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana: Liturgie und Andacht im Mittelalter*, eds. Joachim M. Plotzek and Ulrike Surmann (Stuttgart: Belser Verlag, 1992), 328.

50. The only other manuscript from this period of which I am aware that uses the roundel as an autonomous compositional form is the *Dominus illuminatio mea* (Paris, B.N., ms. fr. 2088), a manuscript of just ten pages that was also created by Godefroy le Batave and François Demoûlins. It was completed late in 1516 and immediately precedes the Magdalenæ manuscript, which was completed in 1517. The work was commissioned by Louise for Francis, and like the *Vie* was created following, or possibly during, the pilgrimage to Provence. See Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 283-85, 293-96. The miniatures in this work are also contained within roundels with frames inscribed in Latin. But unlike the *Vie*, the narrative text is free-floating on the page above and below...
the image roundel and is not placed in a companion roundel. The result is an untidy page design and awkward relationship between word and image, problems that were successfully resolved by the use of the paired narrative and image roundels in the *Vie*.

51. On twenty-five of these pages, the text placed outside the roundels is the identification of the foreign language used for the mottoes and the translation of that language into Latin. As I have noted elsewhere, this translation is placed between the roundel and the book’s gutter to make it as inconspicuous as possible. The remaining two pages with text outside the roundel are very interesting in terms of the purpose of the additional text. The first example, which is found on folio 4, is Demoulins’s comment that all the information related in the Magdalene’s *vita* is in keeping with the tradition of the Church. This comment is placed prominently above the narrative roundel so that it will be recognized as the declarative statement that it is. The second inscription, which is placed below the roundel on folio 93, appears to be both an afterthought and a slight scholarly retraction on Demoulins’s part. The roundel is in the section containing the dialogue between “Obeissiance” and “Madame,” in which Louise questioned the number of people in the boat with the Magdalene when she was set adrift. Demoulins lists five others in his response but apparently thought better of it. He wrote below the roundel that there may have been others with the Magdalene when she was at sea, but nothing that he found in books satisfied him of this: “Il peut etre que il y avoir plus grand compagnie avec ques Magdalene quand elle fut mise sur la mer, amis je n’en trouve riens en livre qui me plaise.”

52. In particular, the Hadrianic reliefs on the Arch of Constantine are set within roundels to emphasize them among the larger sculptural scheme. Recognizing the significance of the form, Early Christian and Byzantine artists adopted the roundel as a compositional device for mosaics and wall paintings, as in the catacomb of Saints Peter and Marcellinus in Rome in which the image of the Good Shepherd is placed in a roundel at the center of the ceiling painting of Jonah and the Whale. In Ravenna, the Baptistery of the Orthodox has a large roundel of the Baptism of Christ at the center of a complex dome mosaic filled with saints, apostles, and other religious motifs.

53. Louis Grodecki and Catherine Brisac note that the circle was especially important in the windows of early Gothic structures such as Chartres, which exhibited more complex and inventive glazing than that found in twelfth century structures. See Louis Grodecki and Catherine Brisac, *Gothic Stained Glass 1200-1300* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1985), 17.

55. These designs, however, also appear on manuscript illuminations, devotional jewelry, and other objects, and thus are part of the larger visual vocabulary of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Northern Europe.

56. Grodecki and Brisac, 28.

57. The locket measures 5.75 cm x 5.65 cm, and, as in the manuscript, the tiny scenes are remarkable for the amount of detail the artist included, such as landscape elements, folds in the drapery, textures of hair and beard, and facial expressions. The scenes are Christ’s Entry into Jerusalem and Doubting Thomas on the interior of the locket, and the Lamentation on the front, with the Virgin holding Christ on her lap in the manner of a Pietà.

58. Orth suggests the manuscript’s visual reference to a locket, although she does not include an example for verification. See Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 306.

59. Orth briefly mentions the influence of silver-stained roundels on the format of the Vie. See Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 307. Timothy B. Husband notes “production must have reached proto-industrial proportions by the second decade of the sixteenth century.” Although roundels were the most common form, some of the designs were created on rectangular glass panels as well. See Timothy B. Husband, The Luminous Image: Painted Glass Roundels in the Lowlands, 1480-1560 (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995), 10-11.

60. The designers of the roundel images typically did not paint the glass panes themselves. Rather, the roundels were produced in glass-painting workshops from the artists’ drawings, although a few artists, such as Dirck Vellert and Dirck Crabeth, created roundels using their own designs, and other artists, such as Hugo van der Goes, established workshops for the production of roundels from their drawings. For information on the production process of glass roundels, see Husband, 10-14. For the workshop of Hugo van der Goes, see Husband, 50-68.

61. Husband, 10-11.


63. Husband, 90.

64. Husband, 180. De Beers is listed as dean of the guild in 1515 and died there some time before 1536. Orth notes the influence of Jan de Beers on the first illumination of the birth of the Magdalene: “Progressive Tendencies,” 177, 312.

65. See note 13 above for sources on Godefroy’s training.

67. Husband, 100-101. The third and latest design has narrow borders on either side of a wider band that appeared to be textured metal. Widely spaced along this inner border are snails, shells, bells, scrolls, and studded diamonds, with a cartouche with the date of 1517 at the bottom and the crowned arms of Amsterdam at the top. It has no resemblance to the frames in the Vie de la Magdalene. This roundel was placed in a rectangular format with an inscription in a cartouche beneath the framed image and decorative elements filling the spandrels and corners.

68. These include 5v, 6v, 15v, 20v, 26v, 36v, 42v, 58v, and 102r, in various arrangements.

69. Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 308. Orth notes that it was common to put text in roundels on the colophon pages of Italian manuscripts in a manner similar to the narrative texts of the Vie, but this does not seem to apply to devotional text. In this case, however, it might be assumed that the roundel is used as an emphatic form to draw the reader’s attention to the book’s production information.

70. Tamara Voronova and Andrei Sterligov, Western European Illuminated Manuscripts: 8th to 16th centuries (London: Sirrocco, 2003), 246. The same manuscript uses roundels for portraits of Christ’s ancestors on the Tree of Jesse that runs throughout the manuscript: Voronova and Sterligov, 249, 251.

71. In addition to reading the Latin texts of Plato, Plotinus, etc., the Parisian humanists were studying the philosophical writings of leading Italian humanists such as Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. The latter visited Paris in 1485. For a discussion of the establishment of humanism in Paris in the late fifteenth century, see Knecht, 146.

72. Knecht, 150; Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 139.

73. Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 6, 137-39. Orth notes the association between the roundel form and the Neoplatonic symbolism of divine wisdom, pietism, and perfect love in Godefroy’s work.


75. Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 131-32. Orth notes that while Demoulins was not an accomplished Neoplatonist, he was influenced by many ideas in this portion of Ficino’s philosophy, which appear as recurrent themes and images in Demoulins’s writing and Godefroy’s images. Orth also addresses the Neoplatonic implication of
Demoulins’s manuscripts, including the Vie de la Magdalene, throughout the second chapter of “Progressive Tendencies,” 63-166.

76. Knecht, 149-51. Using the methods developed by Judaic cabalism, Christian cabalists studied the Bible hoping to confirm the Christian mysteries and prove that the Jewish prophets and theologians were, in essence, Christians even before Christ’s coming.

77. Orth “Progressive Tendencies,” 130, and fn. 127. These treatises are Cabale Metrifiee, 1515-19 (Paris, B.N., ms. fr. 882), and Traité de la Cabale, 1521 (Paris, Ars., ms. fr. 5061). Orth notes that both treatises were “enormous, ambitious works written for François I to explain the Kabbala as well as Pythagorean systems of numbers, the anagrams of Rabanus Maurus, and Neoplatonic and Hermetic theories.” The latter treatise was written at Francis’s request to clarify the earlier treatise. Knecht, 150, notes that Thenaud did not approve of Francis’s interest in the Cabala, and both works were intended as subtle statements against Cabalistic study and in support of Catholic mysticism. For further information on the works of Thenaud and Francis’s interest in the Cabala, see Le Coq, 301-08, 399-409.


79. This occurs in folio 21v of the Lazarus roundels: “The custom of the Jews was to bind and wrap the body of the dead with linen and to put a well-folded prayer shawl on the head as a sign of future resurrection. The beautiful Magdalene, who was a Jew, did that for her brother.” Other references are placed throughout the Lazarus series.

80. Le Coq, 409-10.

81. Ibid., 410.

82. The sefirot is a diagram that is used by teachers of the Cabala to help their students visualize the intellectual and spiritual journey they are taking as they progress through the levels of understanding. See Yaacov David Shulman, The Sefirot: Ten Emanations of Divine Power (Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1996), xv-xvii, xxi-xxiii, and passim; Avram Davis and Manuela Dunn Mascetti, Judaic Mysticism (New York: Hyperion, 1997), 178-204; Gershom G. Scholem, On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), 100-105 and passim; Sanford L. Drob, Kabbalistic Metaphors: Jewish Mystical Themes in Ancient and Modern Thought (Northvale, New Jersey and Jerusalem: Jason Aronson, Inc.), 36-52.
83. Drob, 36-38; Davis and Mascetti, 183; Shulman, xvi-xviii.

84. Le Coq, 410. Surprisingly, Le Coq does not make the association that these same themes run through the Vie de la Magdalene, which was created at approximately the same time.


86. See note 1 above.


94. See note 43 above and Haskins, 245.

95. Rigolot, 68-69.

96. Le Coq, 80, 409-10, 423. Le Coq refers to the Vie de la Magdalene by its other name, Le vie de la belle et clere Madeleine.

(Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1989.) The latter work, known in Latin as *De vita Beatae Mariae Magdalena et sororis eius Beatae Marthae*, was originally attributed to the medieval author Rabanus Maurus but is now attributed to an anonymous author known as Pseudo Rabanus Maurus. For this dissertation, I will refer to the text by the translator/editor’s name, Mycoff.
CHAPTER 2

MARY MAGDALENE IN LITERATURE AND THE VISUAL ARTS

Accounts of the life of Mary Magdalene evolved from the original Gospel texts and subsequent commentaries by the doctrinal fathers of the early Christian Church into a popular medieval legend read as devotional literature and performed as narrative presentations.¹ The episodes of her life provided five specific phases to the Magdalene legend as it was known in Northern Europe during the medieval and Renaissance periods. It begins with the accounts, based largely on scripture, of Mary’s pre-conversion life when she was transformed from sinner to penitent, and her subsequent role as a disciple of Jesus, witness to the Crucifixion, and the “Apostola” who announced the news of Jesus’s Resurrection.² Following the Ascension of Jesus, apocryphal stories describe the Magdalene’s voyage to Provence and the conversion of the king and queen of Marseilles; her thirty-three years of hermitic seclusion, death, and burial; and her posthumous miracles and the translation of her relics. Over the centuries, the authors who recounted her story chose to reject or emphasize various elements within these five sections to meet their particular needs. Of these authors, Demoulins has given one of the most complete recitations of the Magdalene’s life in the Vie de la Magdalene, incorporating both scriptural accounts and apocryphal legends in his work.

Although a fascinating topic, it is not the purpose of this dissertation to elucidate a complete history of Magdalenian iconography, for other scholars have taken on that daunting task in admirable fashion.³ My mission is to relate the Magdalene legend as Louise of Savoy would have known it by analyzing the primary sources of Magdalene hagiography in France during the early sixteenth century. In the process I will compare that material to the Vie de la Magdalene in order to determine the manner in which the Vie aligns or diverges from the other versions of the Magdalene’s vita.

To achieve this end I will use three literary sources as models for comparison. The first is the New Testament, obviously the most important source as the foundation on which later Magdalene vitae developed.⁴ The Gospels introduce us to three women—the Anointing Sinner of Luke, the demoniac and witness Mary of Magdala, and the virtuous
Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus. Each of the Evangelists relates in various ways the involvement of these three women with Jesus Christ during the period of his ministry and Passion. After the Ascension and Pentecost, however, they are not mentioned again. The confusion over the exact identity of the woman known as Mary Magdalene and her relationship with the other women in the Gospel accounts began early in the history of Christianity and today remains a significant issue due to the vital role she played in Christ’s Passion and Resurrection.\(^5\)

The confusion and resultant discourse was addressed in the sixth century when Gregory the Great united these three women into the single figure known as Mary Magdalene, and the conflation remained the orthodox view of the Western church for centuries.\(^6\) Like his contemporaries, the Dominican monk Jacobus de Voragine accepted the Gregorian conflation when he wrote *The Golden Legend*, a late thirteenth-century collection of saints’ lives.\(^7\) In his entry on Mary Magdalene, the second of my three sources, Voragine expanded on the biblical accounts of the saint to codify the legendary life of the Magdalene as it had developed in the medieval period.\(^8\) The *Golden Legend* is particularly important to the *Vie de la Magdalene* because it is the primary source for the episodes concerning the Magdalene’s life in Provence. As I discuss in Chapter 3, the Provençal legend is a crucial aspect of the *Vie* due to the associations between Mary Magdalene and the French monarchy that is an essential subtext of the manuscript.

The third literary source I examine is *The Life of Saint Mary Magdalene and of Her Sister Saint Martha* (hereafter referred to as the *VBMM* for its abbreviated Latin title, *Vita Beatae Maria Magdalene*) a twelfth-century account of the lives of the Magdalene and her sister written by a Cistercian author known today as the Pseudo-Rabanus Maurus.\(^9\) Highly descriptive and deeply emotional, the *VBMM* provided the creators of the *Vie* with specific narrative and pictorial elements that assisted them in producing a work of thematic, visual, and psychological richness. As I will demonstrate, Demoulins and Godefroy carefully chose what they needed from these three literary sources, and in different ways each had a direct and substantial impact on the narrative content, imagery, themes, and iconographic elements of the *Vie de la Magdalene*. 

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In this chapter, I will also examine some of the earlier representations of the Magdalene’s *vita* to establish visual and thematic parallels between these works and the *Vie*. Included in my analysis are art works of the medieval and early Renaissance periods such as French stained glass windows of the saint’s life, Italian fresco cycles, the panel by the Magdalene Master in the Uffizi, and two altarpieces by Lucas Moser and Tilman Riemenschneider. These works provide a comparison to the themes and images presented in the Magdalene manuscript, a comparison that will help explain the choices made by Demoulins and Godefroy in the production of the *Vie de la Magdalene*.

**Mary Magdalene in the Gospels**

In the scriptural passages that form the foundation of the Magdalene legend, each Evangelist gives a slightly different version of the saint’s involvement in the story of Christ. There are, in fact, as many as four women in the Gospels associated with Mary Magdalene and many of these accounts are similar, thus causing the confusion that continues to this day. The Gospel of Luke 7:36-50 mentions a sinful woman who, in an act of repentance, washed Jesus’s feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, and anointed them with perfumed ointment during a meal at the house of Simon the Pharisee. However, the Gospel of John 11:1-2 and 12:1-3 refers to Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, as the woman who anointed Jesus’s feet. To add to the confusion, the Gospels of Matthew 26:6-13 and Mark 14:3-9 tell of a woman who anointed Jesus’ head while he dined at the home of Simon the Leper. Finally, the Gospels of Luke 8:2 and Mark 16:9 mention Mary Magdalene as the woman from whom Jesus exorcised seven demons. All four Gospel writers concur, however, that Mary Magdalene was a witness to the Crucifixion, that she was one of the women who saw the risen Christ and, most important, that she was given the honor of announcing his Resurrection to the other Apostles.¹⁰

These multiple identifications were a consistent source of confusion and argument within the Catholic Church. In particular, debate arose among the early writers concerning the identification of Mary of Magdala as the “anointing sinner” in the Gospel of Luke.¹¹ In 591, the controversy inspired the sainted pope Gregory the Great to
conflate the four women into the single personage of Mary Magdalene. In his thirty-third homily, in which he addressed the Gospel of Luke 7:36-50, Gregory attempted to settle the issue by proclaiming, “We believe that this woman [Mary Magdalene] whom Luke calls a female sinner, whom John calls Mary, is the same Mary from whom Mark says seven demons were cast out.”12 Despite the authority of this declaration, the conflation was protested for centuries and in 1519 led to the controversy known as “The Quarrel of the Magdalenes” that I discuss in Chapter 3. Most early Christian and medieval theologians, however, accepted the conflation as orthodox, as did the faithful.

As I mentioned above, the scriptural texts convey the major aspects of the Magdalene’s story and formed the foundation for the legendary Magdalenian iconology that developed in the succeeding centuries. In the following synopsis of these texts, I will not differentiate the various women mentioned in the Gospel accounts, but rather present the conflated image of Mary Magdalene as the French church accepted her during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries and as Louise would have known her story. This form reflects Demoulins’s comments on folios 4r, 78r, 80v, 107v, and 108r of the Vie de la Magdalene, in which he states that he presented the story, “... in the tradition of the Church.” As I discuss in Chapter 3, however, portions of the text reflect Demoulins’s uncertainty over the persistent conundrum of the number of Magdalenes, as well as his attempts to present alternative views to Louise while cloaking his statements in the mantle of Catholic orthodoxy.

According to conflated scriptural accounts, Mary of Magdala, known as Mary Magdalene, was a sinful woman whom Jesus freed from possession by seven demons, aspects of her story that we find on folios 8v to 13r of the Vie de la Magdalene.13 As a result, she rejects her wanton lifestyle and she goes to meet Jesus at the house of Simon the Pharisee where he is dining, a scene depicted on folios 13v and 14r.14 Overcome with humility and the desire to repent, the Magdalene kneels at Jesus’s feet, washes them with her tears, dries them with her hair, and anoints them with a scented ointment. Although Simon ridicules her for being unclean and warns him against her, Jesus recognizes the sincerity of Mary’s penitence. As we see in folios 14v and 15r, Jesus defends her against Simon’s remarks, chastising him for failing to demonstrate similar expressions of
hospitality and generosity to Jesus as his guest. Turning to the Magdalene, Jesus tells her that her great love has saved her and her sins are forgiven. After this act of repentance Mary Magdalene becomes a devoted disciple and beloved friend of Jesus, as does her sister Martha and her brother Lazarus. She is among the women who travel with Jesus and the other disciples to care for them during the period of Christ’s ministry, as Demoulins shows us on folios 43v-44r.

In Luke 10:38-42 Jesus defends the Magdalene a second time, in this case from her own sister. Martha and the Magdalene invite Jesus and his followers to a meal at their house. While Martha prepares and serves the meal, Mary sits reverently at Jesus’s feet, contemplating his words. Overburdened with her responsibilities, Martha complains about her sister’s inactivity, but Jesus again defends Mary by saying that, “She has chosen the best part, which shall not be taken from her.” This important episode establishes the roles of the active and contemplative Christian, and on folios 18v to 20r, Demoulins includes it in the manuscript in an identical manner.

One of the most important parts of the Vie de la Magdalene is the series of roundels that deal with the death and Resurrection of Lazarus. Demoulins devotes folios 19v to 43r, which is twenty-four of the sixty-nine illuminated roundel pairs, to this episode from the Gospel of John 11:1-45. The story is important for several reasons. First, Jesus’s miraculous raising of Lazarus was a foreshadowing of his own death and Resurrection. Second, it also foretells of the raising of all members of the Christian community at the Last Judgment. Third, this miracle and the resultant shift in public sentiment toward Christ set into motion the events of the Passion.

According to John, Lazarus became ill at the siblings’ home in Bethany and Martha and the Magdalene sent a message to Jesus, who was across the Jordan, saying simply, “One whom you love is ill.” However, Jesus did not return to Bethany until Lazarus had been dead four days. As he explained to the disciples, he intentionally delayed his return so that he could perform a great miracle that would convert many. During this time, the sisters were consoled in their mourning by their friends and relations.
When Martha learned that Jesus was on the road outside of Bethany, she went to meet him and asked why he had not come sooner to prevent Lazarus’s death. Jesus assured her that her brother would live again, after which Martha professed her faith in him and was sent to retrieve Mary. The Magdalene, accompanied by the mourners, hurried to the place outside of town where Jesus was waiting for her. Falling to her knees, Mary wept so piteously that Jesus also began to weep. He assured the sisters that their brother would live again and asked to be taken to Lazarus’s tomb. As Jesus prepared to call Lazarus from the crypt, Martha reminded him that her brother had been dead for four days and by now would stink of decay. Jesus gently rebuked her for her wavering faith and called Lazarus by name to come out of his tomb. The revived man appeared at the entrance to of the crypt still wrapped in his winding cloth, which Jesus instructed those in attendance to remove. Lazarus was recognized, fully alive, and showing no signs of decay. As Jesus had foretold, the miracle converted many of those who witnessed it or heard of it second hand. However, it also caused the distress of others, and their complaints to the temple priests began the series of events that brought about Jesus’s arrest.\textsuperscript{21}

Again, Demoulins relates this portion of the Magdalene’s story in a nearly identical manner. There are, however, two differences between the Gospel narrative of the Lazarus episode and its depiction in the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene}. In folios 21v to 24r, Demoulins includes the funerary preparations and the burial ceremony of Lazarus, episodes not mentioned in the scriptures in any form. However, as I discuss in Chapter 3, these events had a personal association for Louise and, thus, were included in her manuscript. Furthermore, folios 24r and 25r as well as folios 38r to 43r depict Lazarus’s resting place as a carved sarcophagus within a mausoleum, rather than the cave with the stone door mentioned in the Gospel of John 11:38. As I discuss below, these deviations result from the influence of another text, the \textit{VBMM}.

The second anointing of Christ is among the most important of the Gospels’ Magdalene episodes in reference to its inclusion in the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene}, and also the most confusing due to the conflicting accounts. In the Gospel of John 12:1-8, Christ joins the siblings for a meal at their house in Bethany shortly after the Resurrection of
Lazarus, where a second anointing takes place. As Martha serves the meal, Mary anoints Christ’s feet with precious ointment and wipes them with her hair, repeating the episode in Luke that takes place at the house of Simon the Pharisee. In John’s telling, however, it is not Simon but Judas who ridicules Mary for her honorific gesture. The waste of the expensive material, the cost of which might have fed the poor, appalls Judas, who was the keeper of the group’s purse. Jesus defends Mary once more, saying that her actions are in preparation for his burial.

Matthew and Mark relate a similar scene that takes place in the house of Simon the Leper. In both accounts, however, it is not Mary Magdalene but an anonymous woman who anoints Jesus’s head with the costly ointment. Here, too, the waste of money disturbs the disciples, but again Jesus defends her actions as preparation for his burial. Significantly, both Matthew and Mark note that Jesus proclaimed to the assembled company that the woman’s act of kindness will immortalize her.

In folios 44v and 45r of the Vie, Demoulins unites these versions by inscribing the name of Simon the Leper on the plinth of the house but having Martha serve while the Magdalene, identified by an inscription, pours ointment on Christ’s head. As I discuss in Chapter 3, the inclusion of this second anointing scene in the Vie de la Magdalene, and particularly, the specific identification of the Magdalene as the anointing woman is extremely significant to the overall purpose of Louise’s manuscript. This scene establishes the precedence for the sacral anointing of Christian kings, a vital component in the coronation ceremony of many monarchs, including the French monarchy. The representation of this concept in the Vie de la Magdalene—a manuscript created for the mother of the French king—was essential to emphasize the subtext of the book. By including the second anointing and identifying the Magdalene as the unctrice, Demoulins was intentionally referring to two ideas important to Louise and Francis. First, this episode from the Gospels is the scriptural precedence for Francis’s sacral anointing as the “Most Christian” king of France. Like Christ, Francis’s head was anointed with ointment from the “Holy Ampulla” during a ceremony known as le sacre. Second, Demoulins’s conflation of the two gospel accounts, identifying the Magdalene as the woman who anointed Christ’s head, indicates his awareness of the special relationship
between the Magdalene and French monarchy, especially the House of Anjou from which Louise and Francis were descended. The conflated version presented by Demoulins visually reinforces this association for Louise and acts as a testament to the Magdalene’s role as patron saint and protector of the Angevin dynasty, most particularly Louise and Francis.

The only episodes on which the Gospel writers agree regarding Mary Magdalene’s involvement in the story of Christ are the Crucifixion and Resurrection. Matthew 27:55, Mark 15:40, and John 19:25 all mention her by name as a witness to the Crucifixion, and Luke implies her presence in 23:49 by stating that, “all his acquaintance, and the women that had followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.” Demoulins chose the Gospel of John as the major source for the Crucifixion scene on folios 47v and 48r. The Magdalene’s placement at the foot of the cross is most similar to this account, which states that Mary Magdalene and the others “stood by the cross of Jesus” rather than witnessing the Crucifixion from a distance, as in the other Gospel accounts.

In reference to the Entombment, the Gospels of Matthew 27:61 and Mark 15:47 specifically name Mary Magdalene as among the women who witnessed Jesus’s burial, and Luke 23:55 again alludes to her presence by saying, “and the women that were come with him from Galilee, following after, saw the sepulcher, and how his body was laid.” On folio 49r Demoulins also includes Mary among those who accompany Christ’s body to the tomb, but rather than identifying the Magdalene with an inscription, he allows her attribute, the ointment vessel, to testify to her presence.

Although, curiously, John does not mention any women attending Christ’s entombment, all four writers state unequivocally that Mary Magdalene was among the women who discovered the empty sepulcher, were told by an angel or angels that Jesus had been resurrected, and ran to tell the Apostles of the miracle.26 In Matthew 28:9, Mark 16:9, and John 20:14-17, Mary Magdalene sees the risen Christ in person, but in Luke 24:1-11, two angels tell the women of the Resurrection, although they do not see Jesus until he appears to the disciples as a group.
The Gospel of John 20:1-18 is the most famous and complete version of the episode, and the one that most specifically includes the Magdalene. Bewildered and distraught with grief at finding the empty tomb and seeing the angels, Mary goes into the garden located beside the sepulcher. She sees a man walking whom she mistakes for a gardener, and when she approaches him, he asks why she is crying. Tearfully Mary tells the man what has occurred and asks if he knows the location of Jesus’s body. The stranger then calls her by name and at that moment, the Magdalene realizes that she is standing before the risen Jesus. She falls to her knees and reaches to embrace him, but is told, “Noli me tangere,” “Do not touch me” because he has not yet ascended “to my Father.” Jesus instructs her to inform the disciples of what has happened, that the promise he made to them has been fulfilled, and that he will meet them in Galilee. Mary does as Jesus asks, but the Apostles refuse to believe her.

As he did elsewhere in the Vie de la Magdalene, Demoulins presents a synthesis of the various versions of the Resurrection in folios 49v to 52r of the manuscript. In the illumination on folio 50r, the Magdalene and another woman stand at the exterior of the tomb to the left of the scene. Here, too, the Magdalene is identified by her attribute of the ointment vessel rather than an inscription. The inclusion of only one other woman with the Magdalene indicates that the Gospel of Matthew 28:1, in which “the other Mary” accompanies the Magdalene to the tomb, inspired this aspect of the scene. However, in the illumination the second woman asks the Magdalene, “Who will roll the stone away from the door of the sepulcher?” This quote is from Mark 16:3 and is not found in the other three Gospels. The women do not question who will move the stone in the Gospels of John and Luke, and in Matthew 28:2 an angel appears who rolls the stone from the opening.

On the right side of this illumination, which is designed as a simultaneous narrative, the Magdalene is in the tomb speaking with the angels. This, again, is an elision of two Gospel accounts of the event. In Luke 24:4, the holy women go into the tomb and see “two men” standing near them wearing “shining apparel.” In John 20:11-12, the Magdalene was weeping alone outside the tomb when she “stooped down, and looked into the sepulcher . . .” to see two angels sitting at the head and foot of the
sarcophagus. Demoulins integrated these accounts quite effectively, placing the Magdalene alone inside the tomb with two angels dressed in white, one seated at the foot of the coffin and the other standing at the head. In accordance with Matthew 28:6, Luke 24:6 and Mark 16:6, the angels say to her, “He is not here, he is risen.” This exchange is not found in John 20:13, however, as the angels ask her only why she is weeping. In the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John the angel or angels are seated, but in Luke, the angels are standing. It is clear that in conceiving the design for this illumination, Demoulins instructed Godefroy to use both postures for the angels, who seem to speak to the Magdalene simultaneously, thus providing a perfect synthesis of the four evangelical accounts.

Folio 51r depicts the meeting of Mary Magdalene and the risen Christ in the garden. For this image, Demoulins chose not to create an elision of the Evangelists’ accounts of the event but rather, to take his imagery exclusively from John 20:11-17. In this illumination, the weeping Magdalene is walking from the tomb to an area covered with foliage where she sees a man dressed in a worker’s tunic and hat, and holding a spade, whom she presumes is a gardener. She asks him to tell her, “Where you have laid him. . .” while Jesus, bearing the stigmata, says, “Do not touch me.” All of these details conform to the recitation of this moment from John’s account of the Resurrection. Folios 51v to 52r continue John’s Gospel with the scene in which the Magdalene fulfills Jesus’s request and runs to tell the disciples of the miracle. In this illumination, she enters the room where they are gathered and repeats the words of John 20:18, saying, “I have seen the Lord.” The fact that she is alone when she enters the room and utters this specific statement indicates that the Gospel of John is the only source for this illumination. In this scene and the previous one in the garden, Demoulins allows the Magdalene’s famous words and actions to identify her rather than an inscription or an attribute.

This scene is the last specific reference to Mary Magdalene by name in the New Testament, although the first two chapters of the Acts of the Apostles imply that she was among the disciples in the days following Christ’s Resurrection. Acts 1:3-14 relates how Jesus appeared to his Apostles and closest followers after his Resurrection, and spent forty days preaching to them to prepare them for the great task that lay ahead. Acts 1:9-
14 says that this group of original followers all witnessed Jesus’s Ascension and specifically mentions that the women were included in the prayers and meditations of these days: “All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.” Demoulins included these scenes in folios 52v and 53r of the Vie, in which Mary Magdalene, Martha, and Lazarus are identified by inscriptions as among those who witness the Ascension of Christ from Mount Olivet.

The next illumination, which depicts Pentecost, is one of the most beautiful, elegant, and sophisticated of all the many images in the Vie de la Magdalene. This episode is found in the Acts of the Apostles 2:1-4 and again the Magdalene’s presence is implied: “And when the days of the Pentecost were accomplished, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty wind coming, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fires and it sat upon every one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they began to speak with diverse tongues, according as the Holy Ghost gave them to speak.” This scene is depicted in a nearly identical manner in folio 54r of the Vie de la Magdalene. The illumination is set in a great hall of classical design with the city beyond visible through the open doors. The Apostles, disciples, and holy women are seated around the Virgin, who occupies the center of the composition and holds an open book on her lap. With their mouths agape and their hands in gestures of wonder and reverence, the figures look up in amazement as the Dove of the Holy Spirit hovers above them. Radiant with divine light, the Dove emits golden rays and the beams become the “tongues of fire” that dance above the heads of the assembled.

In this illumination, Godefroy created the scene that demonstrates his remarkable skill as a miniaturist. He clearly depicts each member of the group with specific physical features and convincingly alludes to the cavernous space of the hall, as well as providing delicate architectural details and a description of the city outside the open door. The most beautiful element, however, is the Dove of the Holy Spirit, whose gently curving shape mimics the arched entrance to the nave against which it is silhouetted. Godefroy has carefully defined the Dove with white highlights and black outlines against the grisaille
tonality, and one can clearly see the swelling breast and delicate plumage of the bird. Just 44 mm. in width, this illumination is a virtuoso performance of the miniaturist’s art.

The Pentecost episode is a pivotal moment in Magdalenian iconology. Medieval writers expanded on the story to provide a basis for the continuation of the Magdalene’s story beyond the specific accounts related by the Evangelists. In particular, they relied on her implied presence at Pentecost as a means to include her among those involved in the foundation of the early church. The implication was particularly important for the French church, as it provided the scriptural basis for the successive episodes of the Magdalene’s legend, including her evangelical mission in Jerusalem, her voyage to France and conversion of the king and queen of Marseilles, and the establishment of the Christian Church in pagan Provence. Demoulins was no exception and on folios 52v-53r of the Vie, he includes Mary Magdalene, now clearly identified with an inscription, among Christ’s disciples who are present at Pentecost. The flame that appears above her head indicates that she, too, has received the divinely inspired gifts of language and eloquence that will become intrinsic aspects of the story of her evangelical life in France that was developed by medieval authors.

**Additional New Testament Episodes Presented In the Vie de la Magdalene**

Three episodes from the New Testament included in the Vie de la Magdalene do not mention Mary Magdalene or anyone else depicted in the manuscript. The medieval writers incorporated them into the Magdalene’s story, however, and they appear in Demoulins’s manuscript as well. These episodes are the curing of the woman with the issue of blood, the woman who declares to Jesus, “Blessed is the womb that bore thee,” and the episode in which Jesus and the disciples go into the wilderness near Ephraim after the raising of Lazarus.

In Matthew 9:20-22 an unnamed woman, who had suffered twelve years with an issue of blood, witnesses Jesus’s miraculous healings and believes that she, too, will be healed if she touches even the hem of his garment. When she does this, Jesus turns to her and tells her that her faith has healed her, and at that moment, she is instantly cured.
Mark 5:25-34 and Luke 8:43-48 are more dramatic in their telling of the story and nearly identical in their accounts. Both writers indicate that Jesus was surrounded by a throng of people, and that he felt “virtue go out of him” when he was touched by the woman.\textsuperscript{35} When he asked who had touched him, a woman, trembling with fear, knelt at Jesus’s feet, and declared to the crowd that her condition had healed immediately on touching the hem of his robe. Both Mark and Luke point out that the woman had spent all her money on ineffectual physicians, but that merely by touching his garment, Jesus’s virtue cured her.

Although the Gospel writers do not identify this woman, Voragine in the *Golden Legend* associates her with Martha, the sister of Mary Magdalene. The author of the *VBMM*, however, states clearly that she is not Martha of Bethany, but another woman named Martha from Caesarea Philippi.\textsuperscript{36} Demoulins vacillates between these three versions and does not initially identify Mary’s sister Martha as the woman cured of the issue of blood, but rather, in the narrative on folio 15v, states only that “a woman named Martha” suffered from this condition. The inscriptions on the folios 16r and 17r, however, indicate that the Magdalene is the figure standing beside the woman named Martha. These inscriptions, with the accompanying narratives, make it clear to the reader of the *Vie* that the suffering woman is Marthe of Bethany, the sister of Mary Magdalene.

The second episode occurs in Luke 11:27-28, when Jesus is curing the ill and possessed by casting out demons. An anonymous woman raises her voice above the din of the crowd to say, “Blessed is the womb that bore thee and the paps that gave thee suck,” to which Jesus responds, “Yea rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God, and keep it.” In the *Vie*, Demoulins has Martha’s servant Marcella speak these words, thus introducing her as a character in the story. Her introduction and identification as one of the faithful is important because she appears later as among those who accompany the Magdalene to Provence.

Folios 43v and 44r include the third episode in this category. The narrative and illumination depict the scene from John 11:54 in which Jesus goes with the disciples into the countryside near Ephraim because he could no longer walk “openly among the Jews.” Although this passage does not mention them, Demoulins instructed Godefroy to include Lazarus, Martha, and the Magdalene in the large group of people accompanying Jesus.
The sisters prepare a meal in the foreground while Lazarus stands to the left with two other men watching Jesus preach to the crowd. The siblings are, in fact, the only three figures specifically identified with inscriptions in the illumination, indicating that the purpose of this scene is to demonstrate that Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were among those who traveled with Jesus during his ministry.

Two other episodes bear mentioning in this section because they are based on scriptural events although they are not actually mentioned in the Gospel accounts. On folios 45v and 46r, Demoulins depicts John’s announcement of the arrest of Jesus to the Virgin, Mary Magdalene, Lazarus, Martha, and the other holy women as they wait at Martha’s house in Bethany. In folios 46v and 47r, Demoulins includes an unusual scene in which the group goes to the house of Herod to try to obtain information about Jesus’s whereabouts. These two episodes are not found in the New Testament, but, as I discuss in Chapter 5, are based on scenes in French Passion plays.

Obviously, the *Vie de la Magdalene* is heavily indebted to the Gospel writers’ references to Mary Magdalene and the other religious figures associated with her. Not surprisingly, the text and illuminations, for the most part, align closely with the biblical accounts of the Magdalene’s involvement in the story of Christ. However, it is important to note that in accordance with the Gregorian conflation, Demoulins rejects the Evangelists’ equivocation over the identity of the woman and refers to all of them as Mary Magdalene. As mentioned above, he states at several points in the manuscript that his telling of the story is in keeping with the traditions of the Church. It is obvious in reading these statements, however, that despite his declarations of conformity with Catholic orthodoxy, the question of the number of Magdalenes and the association of the saint with the Anointing Sinner is far from settled in Demoulins’s mind. As I discuss in Chapter 3, his couched attempt to present alternative views of this issue is indicative of the polemical nature of the Magdalene controversy at this time.
The Golden Legend by Jacobus de Voragine

The *Legenda Aurea* or *Golden Legend* is the second major source of Magdalenian iconography and within it are the details and episodes that give richness to the foundation established by the Gospel texts. About 1275 the Dominican friar Jacobus de Voragine wrote *The Golden Legend*, a collection of saints’ lives that became one of the most widely read books of the medieval and Renaissance periods. Not surprisingly, its influence on the *Vie de la Magdalene* was enormous and the manuscript presents many of these episodes in a similar manner.

There are, however, points of divergence including the origins of the Magdalene’s name, which is how both authors begin their *vitae*. Voragine gives a spiritual interpretation of the name “Mary Magdalene” from its Latin and Hebrew roots, while in folio 2v Demoulins states simply that the Magdalene received her name from “a little castle near Bethany on the Mount of Olives.” Voragine does not mention that the term “Magdalene” is associated with a fortified town until later in the narrative.

Like Demoulins, Voragine states that Mary was the daughter of Syrus [sic] and Eucharia and the sister of Martha and Lazarus. He notes that she was of “royal lineage,” a detail that, oddly, Demoulins does not include in a manuscript intended for the mother of a king. Both authors agree that the three siblings inherited great wealth and property. Lazarus acquired a large section of Jerusalem, Martha inherited their hometown of Bethany, and the fortified city of Magdala went to Mary, thus giving her the cognomen of Magdalene. This information is found on folio 7r of the *Vie*, which is placed opposite the companion illumination on folio 8r. The miniature contains an extraordinary landscape in which all three cities are depicted in the distance. In the foreground three figures, possibly Lazarus and his sisters, appear to be surveying the vista, as if trying to comprehend the vastness of their inheritance.

Voragine’s next statement is not repeated in the *Vie*, however. He writes that Martha, due to her prudence, was made the steward of her siblings’ properties after Lazarus began a military career and Mary gave herself over to a life of sensual pleasure. Voragine notes that all three sold their property after the Ascension of Jesus Christ and gave the money to the Apostles. In folios 54v and 55r Demoulins mentions only the
Magdalene’s generous donation of her wealth to the Apostles, possibly to emphasize the Magdalene as the central character of his story.

The most interesting diversion between the two manuscripts is the account of the Magdalene’s pre-conversion life. Voragine spends little time on the Magdalene’s worldliness, saying only that she was very beautiful, that she “abandoned her body to pleasure” and as a result was known only as “the sinner.” Demoulins, however, devotes folios 6v to 11r to the subject, and he and Godefroy describe in detail the Magdalene’s life of wealth, banquets, dancing, hunting, and romantic involvements. This portion of the Vie de la Magdalene is intended to provide a strong contrast between the wanton lavishness of the Magdalene’s pre-conversion life, and the humility and selflessness of her post-conversion period, most particularly her ascetic existence in the holy grotto at La Sainte-Baume. As I discuss in Chapter 5, the origin of the worldly portion of the Magdalene’s life as depicted in the Vie is found in the Passion plays popular in France just prior and during the period in which the Vie de la Magdalene was created. The Golden Legend, by comparison, does not delve as deeply into the Magdalene’s vanity and therefore does not achieve the same degree of contrast between the saint’s pre- and post-conversion life. Thus the theme of the Magdalene’s profound spiritual evolution from sinner to saint is described more effectively in the Vie de la Magdalene than in Voragine’s version of the story.

In reference to her conversion, Voragine states that while Jesus was traveling through the countryside preaching, Mary had a divine revelation that he would be dining at the home of Simon the Leper and went there to meet him. She kept herself apart from the disciples, but approached Jesus with great humility and contrition, washed his feet with her tears, wiped them with her hair, and rubbed them with an ointment made of costly spices and perfumes. When Simon expressed his astonishment that Jesus allowed “a woman of evil life” to touch him, Jesus reproached him for his “proud righteousness,” saying that all Mary’s sins had been forgiven, “because she had loved much.” This episode is repeated in a similar fashion in folios 11v to 15r of the Vie, although Demoulins does not mention the divine inspiration that drew the Magdalene to
Simon’s house. In folio 11v he writes only that the Magdalene was moved to repentance when she heard Jesus preaching.

Voragine then gives a highly condensed version of the major episodes of the Magdalene’s post-conversion life based on the Gospel accounts, including the death and Resurrection of Lazarus and the events of the Passion.\(^44\) In reference to the relationship between the Magdalene and Jesus, Voragine emphasizes how much he loved her and that “there was no grace that he refused her, nor any mark of affection that he withheld from her.” Both Voragine and Demoulins agree that Christ’s acts of love and kindness to the Magdalene included freeing her from possession by seven demons, accepting her into his company, and defending her against all critics, including Simon the Pharisee, Judas, and her sister Martha. Voragine notes that Jesus loved Mary so dearly that he could not see her weeping without also being moved to tears and that “for love of her” he restored Lazarus to life. As noted above, Demoulins describes this episode in similar terms in the Vie. However, Voragine also claims that Jesus was motivated by his love for Mary when he cured Martha of the issue of blood and chose Martha’s servant Martilla, whom Demoulins calls Marcella, to utter the blessing mentioned in Luke 11: 27-28. Although Demoulins includes both these episodes in the Vie, he does not mention that they were motivated by Christ’s love for the Magdalene. Furthermore, Demoulins identifies Martha as Christ’s host for supper and not the Magdalene, as Voragine claims.

Voragine also moves quickly over the Magdalene’s involvement in Jesus’s Passion, mentioning only that she “had the honor of being present at the death of Jesus,” that she stood at the foot of the cross, and that it was she who prepared to anoint his body after his death.\(^45\) He states that she stayed at the tomb “when all the disciples went away,” and was the first to see the risen Jesus who “made her apostle to the Apostles.”\(^46\) He does not mention the Apostles’ rejection of the Magdalene’s announcement of Christ’s Resurrection, however, or her presence at Pentecost or the Ascension.

In contrast, Demoulins includes the same Gospel-based episodes in the Vie but he presents them in detail, including and expanding on many of the elements that Voragine omitted or diminished in his account, such as her involvement at the Resurrection. Demoulins devotes much of the narrative and many of the richly detailed illuminations of
the *Vie de la Magdalene* to this portion of the Magdalene’s story, such as the twenty-nine roundels in the Lazarus series and folios 43v to 56r, which present the events of the Passion, Ascension, and Pentecost. In addition to their scriptural importance, these scenes were included in the *Vie* to allow Demoulins to introduce essential participants in the story, to emphasize important themes and moments, and to provide the manuscript with an accessible emotionalism and humanity.

By far, the majority of the *Golden Legend* deals with the legendary, post-ascension aspects of the Magdalene’s life. Unlike his scanty recitation of the Gospel episodes, Voragine relates this portion of the story in detail. Demoulins’s version, found on folios 54v to 59r and 66v to 67r of the *Vie*, is similar in this respect if one takes into account both the narrative and the illuminations that accompany the text. It is important to note that although the narrative may not include all of the particulars found in Voragine’s version of the story, the missing details are usually included in the companion illumination. For example, in the episode in which the king and queen of Provence leave for their pilgrimage, the *Golden Legend* states that the Magdalene placed the sign of the cross on their mantles for protection. Although Demoulins does not include this detail in his narrative on folio 56v, Godefroy depicts the pilgrims with large gold crosses on their cloaks in the companion illumination on folio 57r. Another example is the found on folio 57r, in which Godefroy depicts the great energy and violence of the storm at sea that Voragine states caused the premature birth of the queen’s child, although Demoulins mentions only that the queen gave birth during the trip and died.

The differences between the two versions of the Provençal legend are relatively minor, however, and were probably necessitated by the limited space available to Demoulins for the narrative text, a factor that forced him to relate the tale with greater economy than Voragine. Godefroy’s meticulously detailed illuminations speak volumes, however, and undoubtedly were designed to complement Demoulins’s narrative by providing the dramatic elements that, given the popularity of the *Golden Legend*, would have been well known to Louise. Using tripartite and quadripartite illuminations, Godefroy illustrates the Magdalene’s life in Provence with great vivacity and enthusiasm.
Voragine introduces the Provençal legend by telling the reader that the disciples began their evangelical mission to the world fourteen years after the Passion and Ascension of Jesus. Before he began his mission, Peter entrusted Mary Magdalene to the care of the disciple Maximinus. Soon after, anti-Christian dissenters forced the Magdalene, Maximinus, Lazarus, Martha, Martilla, Sidonius, and other Christians onto a rudderless boat, hoping that they would die at sea. God guided the boat safely to Marseilles where the group was forced to take shelter under the porch of a temple. When the pagans came to worship at the temple, the Magdalene began preaching the Christian message and through her eloquence, beauty, and calm demeanor she turned them from the worship of idols.

When the king and queen of the province came to the temple to sacrifice to the idols in the hope of conceiving a child, the Magdalene’s preaching deterred them as well, although they refused to provide food and shelter for the group. For two nights the Magdalene appeared to the queen in her dreams, chastising her for living in wealth and comfort while the disciples of Jesus suffer from hunger and exposure. She threatened the queen with divine wrath if she did not ask her husband to attend to the needs of the group. The queen hesitated however, fearing her husband’s response to this request. On the third night the Magdalene appeared to the queen again, “her face aflame with just ire,” and she “upbraided the woman for the hardness of her heart.” The woman awoke terrified and found that her husband was also trembling because he, too, saw the vision of the Magdalene and heard her words. They decided to fulfill the Magdalene’s request, and from that point the king and queen welcomed the Christians and provided them with food and shelter.

As she was preaching, the ruler asked the Magdalene whether she could provide proof of the faith that she professed, to which she replied that this faith was proven everyday by miracles and by the preaching of Peter, the bishop of Rome. The king and queen told the Magdalene that they would obey her if she will intervene with God to give them a son, which she did. The queen soon became pregnant, but the king remained doubtful of the truth of the Magdalene’s claims and decided to go to Rome to see Saint Peter. Despite the advanced nature of her pregnancy and her husband’s concerns about
her safety, the queen pleaded to go with him and the king reluctantly agreed. They entrusted their kingdom to the care of the Magdalene, who blessed them and placed the sign of the cross on their mantles to protect them from the Devil.⁵⁴

During their sea voyage however, a terrible storm blew up and its ferocity caused the queen to give birth prematurely to a living son but she died in the process. The king’s grief was compounded by his fear that the child would die without a mother but the sailors were afraid that the storm would not subside until they threw the queen’s body overboard. The king convinced them, however, not to dispose of her body, stating that she might not be dead but unconscious from the pain of labor.

A hilly island became visible nearby and the king persuaded the sailors to place his wife’s body on the island, along with the child, because the idea of them being devoured by sea creatures was unbearable to him. The ground was too hard to dig a grave, however, so the king spread his cloak in a sheltered area of a hill, placed the queen’s body on it, and put the baby on his dead mother’s breast. In his anguish, the king railed against the Magdalene and the circumstances that caused him such grief, but then relenting, he asked the saint to intercede and protect his wife’s soul and his son’s life. Wrapping his dead wife and his living child in his cloak, he returned to the ship to continue his journey.

After arriving in Rome, the king met Saint Peter, who asked him why he came. The king related the pitiful story, but Peter assured him that God would restore his wife and child to life.⁵⁵ They traveled to Jerusalem in where Peter showed the king the places in which the events of Jesus’s Ministry, Passion, and Ascension occurred. After receiving religious instruction from Peter for two years, the king began the return voyage to Provence.

By divine intervention, the wind blew the ship toward the island where the king had left his wife and child and he convinced the sailors to allow him to go ashore. He found his son playing on the beach, alive and well under the Magdalene’s protection, but the frightened child ran back to his mother’s body. The king followed, and when he found his family, the child was suckling at his mother’s breast, and the queen had not decayed with death, but seemed merely to be asleep. The grateful king embraced his
child, proclaimed that he knew the Magdalene would protected them, and that she had the power to restore the queen to life. At that moment, she opened her eyes and told her husband that the Magdalene had, indeed, protected her during her labor and her time on the island. The queen assured her stunned husband that she was well and, in fact, her spirit had accompanied him to Jerusalem and, with the Magdalene as her guide, she saw all the things that he had seen.

The king and his family returned to the ship and soon arrived in Marseilles. They found the Magdalene preaching with her disciples and, kneeling in adoration, they told her what occurred. Saint Maximinus baptized the royal family, and the king declared that all the people of his land would become Christians. The citizens of Marseilles tore down the pagan temples and built Christian churches in their place. Lazarus was made the bishop of Marseilles, and the Magdalene and her followers went to Aix, where they converted the people of that area and performed many miracles.

After Saint Maximinus became the bishop of Aix, the Magdalene retired to a mountain cave where she spent the last thirty years of her life in spiritual contemplation. In the wilderness, she had “neither water nor herb nor tree, whereby she knew that Jesus wished to sustain her with naught but heavenly meats, allowing her no earthly satisfaction.” Each day, at the seven canonical hours, angels carried her heavenward so that she could hear the divine music. Then, “being filled with this delightful repast, she came down to her grotto, and needed no bodily food.”

Living near the Magdalene’s grotto was a hermit priest. One day, “Our Lord opened his eyes and made him to see the angels entering the grotto, lifting the saint into the air, and bearing her back after the space of an hour.” The priest ran to see whether the vision was real, but as he came near Mary, he found that he was prevented from coming closer. The hermit realized that he was witnessing a sacred mystery and asked Jesus to reveal whether this person was a human being. After he asked three times, he heard the Magdalene’s voice, although she was not visible. She asked him if he had read in the Gospels of the famous sinner who washed Jesus’s feet with her tears, dried them with her hair, and was pardoned of her sins. When the priest replied that he has heard of the woman, the Magdalene identified herself as that sinner, told him of her angelic visits,
and said that she knew her death was imminent. She asked the hermit to tell Maximinus that she would appear to him in the oratory of his church early on Easter morning, “led thither by angels.”

The priest told Maximinus what occurred and early on Easter morning, the bishop found the Magdalene in the oratory surrounded by angels. A dazzling sight, she was elevated “two cubits” above the ground “with her arms extended” and her face radiant.\(^5^9\) Maximinus was hesitant to approach her in this state, but she urged him not to be afraid, and in the presence of the priests and other members of the clergy, he gave her Last Communion. The moment the Host entered her body, the Magdalene collapsed and died on the altar, and her soul “took its flight to the Lord.”\(^6^0\) The perfume of her sanctity filled the oratory for seven days, and Maximinus buried her with great ceremony, commanding that he, too, be buried near her after his death. After this portion of the legend, Voragine provides the reader with an alternate version of the Magdalene’s death, in which the priest found the saint in her grotto, clothed her in a cloak, and escorted her to the church, where she died after receiving communion.\(^6^1\)

In the \textit{Vie} this post-Ascension portion of the Magdalene’s story is told in two sections. On folios 54v to 59r, Demoulins and Godefroy concentrate on the Magdalene’s preaching in the Holy Land, her generous donation of her wealth to the Apostles, the voyage of the group to Marseilles, the story of the king and queen of Provence, the Magdalene’s retreat to the wilderness, and her angelic elevations. The elevation is an essential aspect of the Magdalene’s story in the \textit{Vie} and is depicted on the bottom right portion of folio 59r, in which she is shown radiant and surrounded by the angels. Godefroy has carefully described the top of the grotto cliff at La Sainte Baume from which, according to the legend, the Magdalene was elevated. The inclusion of the cliff in this illumination sets up the next portion of the manuscript, folios 59v to 66r, in which Godefroy depicts the grotto shrine in detail. Demoulins then returns to the Provençal legend and on folios 66v to 68r, tells of the Magdalene’s last days at the grotto, including the participation of the hermit and Maximinus in the Magdalene’s death and burial.

As I mentioned above, a comparison of the illuminations and narrative of the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene} with the text of the \textit{Golden Legend} indicates that Demoulins relied
heavily on this source for his version of the Provençal legend, although he does not mention Voragine or the book by name. He even quotes Voragine in folio 58v in that during her elevation she was “raised two cubits above the ground by the hands of angels.” However, in several of the folios Demoulins pointedly refutes certain aspects of Voragine’s version, although he does not mention the friar by name, stating only that, “Some say . . .” In folio 57v, for example, he states that he does not believe Saint Peter took the king to Jerusalem to complete his pilgrimage, which is a portion of the Magdalene legend Voragine emphasized. In folio 66v, Demoulins states that he does not believe the saint went to Aix to receive the Eucharist, but “that Maximinus went to La Baume and that after the Magdalene died, he had her body carried to Aix, and he ordered a beautiful tomb for her.” Accordingly, Godefroy included a scene on folio 68r in which Maximinus, after being told the Magdalene’s message by the hermit, witnesses the elevation of the Magdalene. In the next scene, he is shown giving communion to the Magdalene outside the grotto. She kneels before him clothed only in her long hair. This depiction of her death is similar to the alternate version in Voragine’s narrative of the story, although Demoulins insists that the Magdalene received Last Communion in the grotto and died there before her body was taken to Aix for burial. This interpretation is reinforced by the illuminations on folio 68, which show the Magdalene’s draped coffin being carried in a solemn procession through the wilderness in the upper right frame, and being lowered into a stone sarcophagus within the city walls at the bottom of the roundel.

Voragine follows his recitation of the Magdalene’s life in Provence with a discussion of the construction of the monastery of Saint Marie Madeleine at Vézelay by Gerard, Duke of Burgundy, and the miraculous events surrounding the discovery of the Magdalene’s relics in Aix and their translation to the monastery in Vézelay. Voragine then recounts the various miracles performed by the Magdalene and concludes her vita by addressing the question of whether she was the prospective bride of John the Evangelist, who deserted her to follow Jesus. Voragine adamantly refutes this legendary account, which claims that the Magdalene, in her anger and rejection, abandoned herself to a life of sinful pleasure.
Of the information found in the *Golden Legend* concerning the Magdalene’s relics and miracles, Demoulins includes the story of the construction of the monastery at Vézelay and the miracles accompanying the translation of the Magdalene’s relics from Aix in folios 73r to 74v. However, in folio 75r he expresses doubt about this portion of the story by stating that he found a book that declares this was a foolish and hypocritical legend. In folio 88r Demoulins, like Voragine, rejects as “foolish gossip” the legend of the Magdalene as the bride of John at the Marriage of Cana, and in folios 96v and 97r he also relates two of the miracles Voragine included in the *Golden Legend*. The first is the miracle of the knight who died without having confessed but revived temporarily so that he might receive Last Rites. The second concerns a clerk of Flanders named Stephen, who turned from a life of sin to a life of virtue after having a vision of the Magdalene when he visited the holy grotto.

Despite the minor divergences and shifts in emphasis, there are no substantial differences between the *Golden Legend* and the *Vie de la Magdalene* concerning the Provençal legend, the discovery of the Magdalene’s relics, and her posthumous miracles. It is obvious that the *Golden Legend* was Demoulins’s source for this portion of the *Vie de la Magdalene*, especially in reference to Godefroy’s illuminations. The remarkable details of the miniatures demonstrate the artist’s profound knowledge of this popular book, which is itself extraordinarily visual in its descriptive power.

**The Life of Saint Mary Magdalene and of her Sister Saint Martha**

**By the Pseudo-Rabanus Maurus**

This *vita*, known as the *VBMM* for the abbreviated Latin title *Vita Beatae Maria Magdalena*, has been a source of controversy for some time. For centuries this version of the Magdalene’s *vita* was attributed to the Carolingian author Rabanus Maurus and was believed to have been written in the ninth century. In 1953, however, Victor Saxer proposed a later date and Cistercian authorship for the *VBMM*, an idea supported in part by David Mycoff in 1989. Saxer stated that the *VBMM* is “stamped with the spiritual doctrine of St. Bernard,” and was certainly, “composed in a milieu pervaded by the spiritual teaching of the mystical doctor.” Mycoff concurred, stating that “Cistercians
or those greatly influenced by Cistercian spirituality (the Franciscans) played a major role in preserving and transmitting the work, that they were its primary audience, and that they considered it worthy of being included along with some of the masterpieces of Cistercian spiritual writing.” He concluded that, while Cistercian authorship could not be proven, “the vita was composed in the late twelfth century by an anonymous compiler deeply influenced by the spirituality of Saint Bernard.” Today, the unknown author is known as Pseudo-Rabanus Maurus. This Cistercian attribution is extremely relevant to the Vie de la Magdalene, as Demoulins, both a Franciscan and a scholar, surely would have known of this text and used it as a source for his Magdalene vita. As I will demonstrate, there are several passages and details in the VBMM that are extremely similar to those found in the Vie de la Magdalene, thus providing undeniable evidence of the influence of this important manuscript.

The author of the VBMM emphasizes in the prologue that he based his life of the Magdalene on the scriptural evidence of the four Gospels and not on “modern tradition newly invented,” thereby promoting his text as “authentic testimony” rather than apocrypha. However, as Mycoff points out in his commentary on the VBMM, the manuscript was also influenced by the writings of early Christian authors such as Saints Augustine, Ambrose, and Jerome, the Venerable Bede, Odo of Cluny, and Vincent of Beauvais. Mycoff notes that the resemblance between the VBMM and the writings of these authors, particularly Augustine, often “goes beyond a correspondence in thought to verbal echoing, although the verbal parallels are seldom precise.” The statement is important in reference to Demoulins’s appropriation of ideas and passages from the VBMM for the Vie de la Magdalene, in that he too employs both correspondence of thought and verbal echoing in similar episodes. In some cases, the passages Demoulins appropriated from the VBMM are virtually identical in form, meaning, and placement within the narrative. For example, the motto on folio 11r, “A Balance Between Beauty and Chastity is Rare,” is similar to the passage of the VBMM, “Beauty is rarely allied with chastity.” Both excerpts are taken from episodes that deal with the Magdalene’s worldly life. However, Mycoff’s comment that the “verbal parallels are seldom precise” is also relevant to the Vie, in that other passages in the Magdalene manuscript
present “verbal parallels” with the VBMM by borrowing ideas, themes, and key phrases without precisely mimicking the exact language, such as the comparison between Eve and Mary Magdalene that I discuss below.

Furthermore, despite its statement to the contrary, the VBMM also contains many of the legendary aspects found in the Golden Legend, and these are reflected in the Vie. However, the VBMM is much more detailed in description and eloquent in form than the Golden Legend, which is often terse in its narrative of major events such as the death and Resurrection of Lazarus, to which it assigns only a few words. The detailed narrative style of the VBMM is conducive to illustration and enabled Demoulins and Godefroy to enrich the Vie de la Magdalene in a similar fashion and using similar elements.

The author of the VBMM begins typically with the origins of Mary Magdalene and her siblings, noting that they were born in Bethany of noble parents. Their mother Eucharia descended from the kings of Israel, and their father Theophilius, a man of noble lineage, was “a governor and prince of all Syria.” The author notes that Theophilius eventually became a disciple of Jesus and renounced his worldly power to follow him. In the Vie Demoulins agrees that Eucharia was their mother and that the family was wealthy and owned several properties, but he gives “Syrus” as the name of the Magdalene’s father, perhaps implying his origins in Syria. However, Demoulins does not refer to their aristocratic lineage, Syrus’s position and titles, or his association with Jesus. In fact, their father is long dead before Mary Magdalene and her siblings meet Jesus in Demoulins’s version of the story.

The three siblings are described in the VBMM as well educated and possessing physical beauty, gracious manners, eloquence, and integrity, all of which were indications of their innate nobility and royal heritage. As in the Vie, they inherited vast wealth and properties, including a large portion of Jerusalem, Magdala, Bethany in Judea, and another town called Bethany that was located across the Jordan in Galilee. Martha is indicated as the eldest of the three. She never married, was renowned for her virtue and kindness, and was chosen by her younger brother and sister to administer the family’s wealth wisely.
Typically the Magdalene is described in the *VBMM* as extremely beautiful, sweet, gracious, and of noble heart, and “all graces shone in her form and beauty, so much so that she was said to be a masterwork of God.” However, her beauty, youth, wealth, and love of pleasure led her to a life of carnality in which she “lost her innocence and destroyed the innocence of others,” ultimately ruining her beauty and corrupting her soul. The author emphasizes that the Magdalene did not linger in this sinful state, but that she recognized herself to be spiritually corrupt and destitute of all divine virtues,” and that she “hurried to return to grace.” Her conversion began with self-awareness of her sinfulness, an important element of the *VBMM* that is not emphasized in other *vitae* including the *Golden Legend* and the *Vie de la Magdalene.* According to the author, the Magdalene was inspired “to know herself,” to remember who she was and the divine gifts she had received, and to see what she had now become.

Another unusual aspect of this *vita* is the theme of the Magdalene’s possession by seven demons. The author writes that as she went to meet Jesus weeping with contrition, he, in fact, was drawing her to him. He came to her first, and “by his perpetual interdict” drove out the seven demons, and replaced them with the seven gifts of the Spirit. This occurred before the Magdalene met Jesus through what Mycoff refers to as “prevenient grace,” which comes before all human efforts to acquire it. This *vita*, therefore, does not contain the famous scene of the Magdalene kneeling before Jesus as he drives the seven demons from her soul, as depicted in folio 13r of the *Vie de la Magdalene.* In the *VBMM*, this spiritual process takes place before the Magdalene meets Jesus or hears him preach.

The scene at the house of Simon the Pharisee is largely in accordance with the scriptural account. The story then tells of Jesus and the Apostles going from town to town preaching, attended by the “noble women” including the Magdalene who is called *premiceria*, the first servant and special friend of Jesus. He performs many miracles, including curing a woman named Martha of an issue of blood, although, as I mentioned previously, the author notes that this Martha was from Caesera Philippi, and therefore was not Martha of Bethany, Mary’s sister. This differs from both the *Golden Legend* and
the *Vie de la Magdalene*, which indicate that the woman cured of the issue of blood is Martha of Bethany, sister of Mary Magdalene.\(^90\)

The major scenes of Jesus’s ministry are presented in the *VBMM* as they are in the scriptural accounts, although more eloquently and with details and episodes not mentioned in other exegetical sources.\(^91\) Much more than Demoulins or Voragine, the author of the *VBMM* emphasizes Mary and Martha’s hospitality and generosity to Jesus and his disciples, noting that the group stayed at the sisters’ various homes during their travels around Galilee and Judea, and that they supplied the group with whatever was needed from their own funds.\(^92\) Although these are subtle changes, the author of the *VBMM* gives the sisters a more prominent role in Christ’s ministry than previously depicted. The reiteration of Martha’s hospitality also emphasizes her participation in the story, an understandable inclusion given the dual theme of the *VBMM*, which concerns the lives of both sisters.

It is in describing the death and Resurrection of Lazarus that the strongest influence of the *VBMM* is evident on the *Vie de la Magdalene*. Like Demoulins, the author spends a great deal of time retelling this episode, which, as noted above, Voragine mentions very briefly in the *Golden Legend*. While the concern of the author of the *VBMM* with each phase of Lazarus’s story is reflective of the Gospel accounts, there are, however, specific and unprecedented inclusions in the *VBMM* that are also found in the *Vie*, indicating its direct influence on Demoulins’s presentation of the Lazarus episodes in the *Vie de la Magdalene*.

The author begins the section, as in the scriptural accounts, with Lazarus on his sickbed and the sisters sending a brief message to Jesus that their brother is ill. He states that the message, “Behold, your friend is sick,” is enough to bring Jesus back to Lazarus’s side, for “he will not easily desert one he is so fond of.”\(^93\) This passage is similar to the motto on folio 33r of the *Vie*, which reads “Our true love does not abandon you in adversity.” Accordingly, the image within the roundel depicts one of the scenes in which Jesus has returned to the house of Martha and Mary Magdalene after Lazarus’s death, and thus, had not deserted his friends in their time of need.
Throughout this episode the author of the VBMM emphasizes the grief of the sisters, who are described as weeping so piteously that they were “blinded by tears,” wailing funeral laments and rending their garments.\textsuperscript{94} Regardless of their sorrow, however, the sisters “performed the burial rituals as was fitting: they carried out the body with pomp and ceremony and enclosed Lazarus in a marble tomb, drenching the stone which closed it with their tears.”\textsuperscript{95} In keeping with this description, Demoulins adopted a very similar depiction of Lazarus’s burial rites for the narrative and illuminations on folios 21v to 26r. In the narrative of folio 21v, for example, he writes that Lazarus was buried “in the custom of the Jews,” and the companion illumination on folio 22r shows a grimacing man directing the sisters as they bind their brother’s body for burial, with Martha wailing in the process. An important element of this scene is the folded prayer shawl placed on Lazarus’s head in preparation for his future Resurrection, a necessary aspect of Jewish funeral rituals that Demoulins mentions in the text. Thus, despite their grief, the sisters have “performed the burial rites as was fitting” and with the lamentations mentioned in the VBMM. Folio 22r also shows other mourners in the room weeping and grieving as the sisters bind the body, reflecting the VBMM’s statement that, “There came to Bethany to console the sisters, many noble people of Jerusalem, who were present at his funeral.”\textsuperscript{96}

The next two roundels, folios 22v and 23r, concern the funeral procession, which is depicted in the illumination with the “pomp and ceremony” mentioned in the VBMM. Two figures and two priests dressed in elaborate vestments walk before the coffin, one carrying a scroll or book; this is presumably a Jewish religious text. Four men carry the coffin, which is draped in a plum colored fabric with gold embroidery. Martha and the Magdalene walk behind, dressed in voluminous garments, and the heads of other figures are visible behind the sisters, alluding to the mourners who “were present at his funeral.”

The illumination on folio 24r illustrates the burial of Lazarus in a carved stone sarcophagus, a depiction that reflects the VBMM’s statement that his sisters “enclosed Lazarus in a marble tomb, drenching the stone which closed it with their tears.”\textsuperscript{97} The scene is depicted in the Vie in a similar manner. Two priests place Lazarus in the sarcophagus while Martha and the Magdalene weep in front of it. The Magdalene is on
the ground doubled over in anguish while Martha sits on the lid of the sarcophagus “drenching it” with her tears, as mentioned in the *VBMM*.¹⁰⁸

In the next scene, folio 25r, we see the interior of Lazarus’s tomb as it is described in the *VBMM*, which differs slightly from the description in the Gospels. In the Gospel of John 11:38, Lazarus’s tomb is described as a cave with a stone covering the entrance. The author of the *VBMM*, however, states that Lazarus was placed in a “marble tomb,” but that “the tomb was in a cave, and a stone had been placed before it” which is in keeping with the Gospel of John and yet has a significant difference in that the body was placed in a “marble tomb” which was itself within a cave.¹⁰⁹ The comment from the *VBMM* can be understood, therefore, as a stone or marble sarcophagus placed within a cave-like tomb with a stone door. Folio 25r of the *Vie* illustrates the scene in a similar manner, with the carved stone sarcophagus placed in a cavernous interior space, precisely as described in the *VBMM*.

The remainder of the Lazarus episode in the *VBMM* is in agreement with scriptural accounts and does not bear repeating here. The same is true of the second anointing scene at the house of Simon the Leper, which aligns closely with scripture and also correlates with the depiction of this scene in the *Vie*. An important theme, however, is introduced concerning the cost and composition of the unguent that the Magdalene prepared for Christ’s anointing, which the author of the *VBMM* emphasizes was composed of pure, unadulterated nard that was made of a fragrant and costly herb.¹¹⁰ During his dialectic with Louise in folios 90r to 92r, Demoulins reiterates this theme and concurs with the author of the *VBMM* regarding the expense and composition of the precious ointment.

Not surprisingly, the *VBMM* presents the Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and post-Ascension scenes in accordance with the scriptural accounts of these episodes, as does the *Vie*. In fact, the author of the *VBMM* is even more punctilious in his alignment with scripture, including all four Gospel versions of the Resurrection in his manuscript, each indicated by the name of the writer, “so that I might not wander even a little from the sense of the Evangelists.”¹¹¹ He does, however, paraphrase and expand on the core texts with his interpretation of the biblical accounts. What is remarkable about these
scenes and about the *VBMM* in general is the amount of detail and elaboration that the author includes, especially in his description of the Magdalene’s emotional state. While Demoulins does not present each Gospel version of the Resurrection or include the same amount of detail as the author of the *VBMM*, there are verbal parallels and thematic echoes in the *Vie de la Magdalene* that have their source in the earlier *vita*.

For example, throughout these episodes, the author of the *VBMM* emphasizes the Magdalene’s distress at the arrest and death of Jesus. In the scene in which he is arrested, the author presents the Magdalene’s sorrow and grief in a series of rhetorical questions that are echoed in Demoulins’s version of the scene. In the *VBMM*, the author asks, “Who can recount the tears of Mary and her laments, when her beloved was led from the house of the priest…?” and later, “Who can tell of the sobbing of Mary and of her cries of sorrow when he was accused by the priests before Herod…?” Demoulins uses the same rhetorical style in folio 45v of the *Vie*, which also narrates the arrest of Christ: “Oh, poor mother, who could describe the pain you felt when told about the capture of your son? And you, Magdalene, weren’t you the saddest woman in the world?”

Furthermore, both authors emphasize the Magdalene’s loyalty in remaining at the cross when the Apostles fled in fear. The author of the *VBMM* writes, “But loyalty did not forsake Mary Magdalene. The skin of her flesh adhered to the bones of the Saviour, for when Judas betrayed him, Peter denied him, and the ten Apostles fled from him, there still was found in Mary Magdalene the courage of the Redeemer.” Demoulins echoes this sentiment in folio 47v: “The ones who said, ‘Let us go and die with him’ are all gone, and you alone stayed with your loyal friend.”

One of the most important similarities, however, is found in the fact that both authors emphasize the mutual love between Jesus and the Magdalene by using the terms “lover” and “beloved.” In one of many such passages in the *VBMM*, the author writes, “In all this, what sorrow was in the soul of Mary . . . when the lover saw her beloved hung amidst thieves.” In a later passage, Jesus speaks to the Magdalene in a vision at her death: “Come, my beloved, and I shall place you on my throne.” These terms of endearment do not appear in the *Golden Legend* or the scriptural accounts of the Magdalene’s story, but are used liberally throughout the *VBMM*. Significantly,
Demoulins uses the same terms in the motto, “The Lover Gives More Than the Beloved Asks,” on folio 30r, which depicts Christ’s return to Bethany at the Magdalene’s request following the death of Lazarus. In this case, the “beloved” is the Magdalene, whose request Christ, the lover, exceeds by returning her brother to life. The terms clearly refer to the Magdalene and Jesus and are intended to emphasize their mutual devotion, a major theme of the VBMM as well.

Another parallel is found in the theme of the strength of love. The author of the VBMM writes “love is as strong as death” and “love is stronger than death” in scenes describing the Crucifixion. Although not a precise verbal parallel, Demoulins clearly echoes this statement in his narrative of the Crucifixion scene found on folio 47v, which reads, “The loyal strength of true love is firmer than all the diamonds in India. Merciless death cannot touch it.”

One of the most important themes found in both the VBMM and the Vie de la Magdalene is the comparison of Eve and the Magdalene as messengers. At three points in the VBMM, the author presents the Magdalene as a redeemer of the sin of Eve through her role as “Apostola,” a theme found in Sermon 232 of Saint Augustine. For example, in Chapter 27 he writes, “Eve persuaded her own husband with the promise of the serpent: ‘You shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.’ Mary announced to her fellow Apostles the good news of the Resurrection of the Messiah: ‘I have seen the Lord.’ . . . Mary prophesied with greater truth than Eve did; she bore far better news than the first message-bearer did.” Demoulins parallels this theme in folio 51v: “The Magdalene, who was to be the messenger of Jesus Christ, was named ‘Apostola.’ Eve, our mother, disgracing the female sex, had brought news of sad death. And Magdalene, saving and restoring the honor of ladies, carried the news of the Resurrection and of a happier life.”

Other aspects of the VBMM are included in the Vie, such the spelling of the name of Martha’s servant as “Marcella,” rather than medieval “Martilla” as in the Golden Legend. However, the author of the VBMM also includes several pre- and post-Ascension episodes not found in the Vie, including the Apostles’ reverence for the Magdalene and her devotion to the Virgin Mary, among others.
One of the most famous episodes of the Magdalene legend is that of the rudderless boat. This is associated with the Provençal legend of the Magdalene and, as I mentioned above, is found in both the *Golden Legend* and the *Vie de la Magdalene*. It is not included in the *VBMM*, however, with the exception of a reference to “the counsel of divine providence which led them in this journey.” The *Golden Legend* mentions both the rudderless boat and “the power of God” that protected the vessel and its occupants. The *Vie de la Magdalene*, however, makes no specific mention of divine providence, although on folio 54v it does mention that the Magdalene and her companions were put to sea “in a boat disarmed and empty of everything,” and that “all together in very little time and without problems they arrived in Marseilles.” The *VBMM* also notes the exact route that the pilgrims took to Gaul and includes more disciples with the Magdalene than those mentioned elsewhere. The *Golden Legend* mentions that others accompanied the Magdalene on her trip to Marseilles in addition to those named in the *Vie*, but does not include their names.

It is obvious in reading the *Vie de la Magdalene* that the question of the number of pilgrims was a point of discussion between Demoulins and Louise and may have been brought up by the mention of additional members of the Magdalene’s group in other *vitae* such as the *VBMM* or the *Golden Legend*. In folio 92v, “Madame” poses a question to “Obedience” concerning those who were with the Magdalene when she was put to sea. In folio 93r, Demoulins responds, “As I already told you, Madame, there were five persons with her--Martha, Marcella, Lazarus, Maximinus, and Sidonius.” What makes this comment interesting is that it apparently did not satisfy Louise, for below the same roundel Demoulins wrote, “There might have been a larger company with the Magdalene when she went to sea, but nothing I found in books has satisfied me.” It is important to note that this portion of the text is not contained within the roundel frame. This indicates that the comment was probably an afterthought intended to settle the question between author and patron in a manner that recognized other theories, such as those in the *VBMM*, while allowing Demoulins to support his own theory.

The author of the *VBMM* continues the Provençal legend by noting that the Magdalene settled in Aix where she converted many to Christianity through her
preaching. This episode of proselytizing is also included on folio 55v of the Vie. Curiously, there is no mention in the VBMM of the conversion of the king and queen of Provence, a portion of the story that is a significant part of the Golden Legend and the Vie de la Magdalene, of which eight pages, from folios 55v to 59r, are dedicated.

More important, the author of the VBMM rejects two essential aspects of the Magdalene’s Provençal legend--her life in the grotto and her elevation by angels. In reference to the Magdalene’s solitary life at La Sainte Baume, the author agrees that after a period of preaching the saint devoted herself to a life of contemplation. He emphasizes, however, that the legend of her life in the desert was a falsity created by storytellers who confused the Magdalene’s vita with the life of another female penitent, Saint Mary of Egypt. The author also calls the story of Mary’s elevation and nourishment with food brought by angels “a false legend” and “an apocryphal story” that, however, may not be entirely without merit. He explains that this story may be based on a truism to make it more believable or it could have a mystical interpretation, in that doubtless she was often visited by angels and nourished by their presence. However, he emphatically rejects the idea that she was elevated into the air each day by angels, who also provided her with heavenly food.

Although Demoulins does not mention angelic food, his positive stance on the question of the Magdalene’s life in the grotto and elevation by angels is the strongest divergence between the VBMM and the Vie de la Magdalene. He devotes folios 58v to 68r to this portion of the story, including the detailed illuminations of the shrine found on folios 60r to 68r. There are two reasons for the inclusion of this material in the Vie. First, it was an established part of the Provençal legend that was well known through popular books such as the Golden Legend, which, as I demonstrated above, had a strong influence on the Vie. Second, Louise’s recent visit to the grotto shrine had inspired the writing of the Vie de la Magdalene, and, therefore, she was very aware of this portion of the legend. To reject this episode would have conflicted with Louise’s understanding of the story. According to Mycoff, however, the author of the VBMM was writing for Cistercian monks who had no specific association with the site, thus rejecting this aspect.
of the story for the sake of theological scholarship would not have conflicted with their perception of the story.\textsuperscript{119}

In reference to the Magdalene’s death, the author of the \textit{VBMM} notes that she lived a life devoted to spiritual contemplation, but eventually she longed to be reunited with Jesus.\textsuperscript{120} She died after seeing a vision of Christ, who called her to join him in heaven, and Maximinus “embalmed her holy body with diverse spices and placed it in a wonderful tomb.”\textsuperscript{121} Mimicking the description mentioned in the \textit{VBMM}, folio 68r of the \textit{Vie} depicts the Magdalene’s wrapped body being gently lowered into a carved white stone sarcophagus outside a church with Maximinus overseeing the ceremony. The \textit{Golden Legend} also mentions that she was buried ceremoniously but makes no mention of a tomb. The \textit{VBMM} does not include, however, the location of the Magdalene’s death or the details described in the \textit{Golden Legend}, such as the hermit who informed Maximinus that her death was imminent or the controversy concerning her Last Communion. Neither does the \textit{VBMM} specify where the Magdalene’s tomb is located, but it does note that Maximinus later “built a grand basilica over her blessed remains,” possibly implying that this structure was Maximinus’s own church in Aix.\textsuperscript{122}

In the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene}, Demoulins first refutes Voragine’s claim that the Magdalene went to Aix to receive her Last Communion, and then introduces his own version of the Magdalene’s death on folio 67v, stating “[I think instead] that Maximus went to ”La Baume,” and that after the Magdalene died, he had her body carried to Aix, and he ordered a beautiful tomb for her.” The tripartite illumination on folio 68r depicts the Magdalene kneeling outside the grotto as Maximinus gives her the Eucharist, the funeral procession carrying her cloth draped coffin through the wilderness toward a city in the background, and her burial ceremony, in which Maximinus directs the placement of her body in a carved stone sarcophagus. In this way, Demoulins incorporated aspects of both the \textit{VBMM} and the \textit{Golden Legend} into the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene} while remaining deferential to the Magdalene’s premiere significance as a saint by having Maximinus go to her at the grotto, in the manner of a subject to a queen. Even more important, by emphasizing that the Magdalene’s last moments were spent at La Saint Baume, Demoulins was signifying the importance of the holy grotto as a sanctified place and one
worthy of the pilgrimage that Louise, and many other monarchs, had undertaken—the same pilgrimage that inspired the creation of the *Vie de la Magdalene*.

**Representations of the Life of Mary Magdalene in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art**

Mary Magdalene’s pivotal role in the story of Christ and the large cult following that developed as a result has made her one of the most represented figures in Christian art, especially in Western culture. Her representation generally takes three forms. The first are the iconic images of the saint, in which she is depicted with her attributes alone or with other saints as intercessors, patrons, and protectors. The second are the representations of Mary Magdalene in which she is a participant in the Gospel stories for which she is most famous, such as the Passion episodes. These are usually created as single images, however, and are not serialized to present a continuous storyline. Although some of the illuminations in the *Vie*, such as the Crucifixion and the Feast at the House of Simon the Pharisee, are based on traditional forms taken from single images, the illuminations were intended to be episodes of the *vita* and, therefore, are understood to be part of the larger scheme. Although both the iconic and single Gospel representations were extremely popular as devotional images, the Magdalene is not depicted in this fashion in the *Vie de la Magdalene*, and therefore, these forms of Magdalenian imagery will not be discussed in this study.

The third and least common type of Magdalene image presents the episodes from the saint’s life in a serialized form that becomes a visual *vita*. The earliest illustrations of the saint’s story in this form are found in the stained glass Magdalene windows of several twelfth- and thirteenth-century French churches and cathedrals, including the royal cathedral of Chartres.123 The Magdalene window in the nave of Chartres, dated 1205-10, begins with the saint washing Christ’s feet at the House of Simon the Pharisee and is immediately followed by five medallions that illustrate the death and resurrection of Lazarus, including two scenes set in the tomb. The emphasis on Lazarus’s story indicates the importance of this theme in the Magdalene’s *vita* during the medieval period, as well as establishing a thematic segue to the scenes depicting her involvement in the Passion.
This portion of the story begins with her encounter with the angel in Christ’s tomb, which is followed by the *Noli me tangere* scene, and concludes with the Magdalene’s announcement of the Resurrection to the apostles, in which she is identified as MARIAM APOSTLENA. This scene covers two medallions and is placed in the center of the window, which is indicative of its importance as a theme as well as its role as a transitional moment in the Magdalene’s story. The Crucifixion and Entombment are not presented on this window but rather are reserved for the Passion window nearby.

In addition to the Gospel panels, the Magdalene window at Chartres has what is believed to be the first illustrations of the Provençal legend, beginning with the Magdalene’s arrival in Marseilles with the other disciples. The next scene depicts the conversion of the local pagans, but it is a male disciple who is preaching rather than the Magdalene, a detail that is indicative of the medieval prejudice against female apostolacy. The same figure, holding a bishop’s crosier, presides over the Magdalene’s funeral two panels later, and is, presumably, Maximinus, who became the Bishop of Aix. The pilgrimage of the king and queen of Provence is not depicted, although the scene that follows the preaching medallion shows two men leaving a city. The last five medallions of the window, which are placed at the top, are devoted to the Magdalene’s funeral and Christ’s reception of her soul into heaven, where she receives a crown from a descending angel.

The inclusion of the Provençal legend in the Magdalene window at Chartres is indicative of the medieval incorporation of this portion of her story to the saint’s *vita*, as well as indicating the prominence of her cult across France in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Although Vézelay was considered the center of Magdalenian veneration during this period, in fact at least six other churches in France were dedicated to her by the eleventh century, including the Burgundian church of Auxerre, which began celebrating the feast day of Mary and Martha in the late sixth century. Furthermore, eight churches in addition to Chartres had windows dedicated to the Magdalene: Auxerre, Baye, Lyon, Sées, Bourges, Semur-en-Auxois, Clermont-Ferrand, and Le Mans.

The Magdalene window in the cathedral at Bourges is extraordinary for two reasons. First, it has an exceptionally coherent iconographic system through which it,
and indeed all the windows, is organized, making a narrative reading of the window quite lucid.\textsuperscript{130} The second reason is the completeness of the episodes, which are all from the Gospels. The thirty medallions give a remarkably inclusive account of the saint’s conflated life from her conversion at Christ’s sermon to the resurrection of Lazarus, with the conclusion of her pre-Ascension story again found in the Passion window.

Both Auxerre and Semur-en-Auxois expand on the Provençal legend begun at Chartres. The Auxerre window, in fact, does not include any scenes that occur before the arrival of the Magdalene and her companions at Provence, although the bottom three windows were replaced at some point and may depicted the last of the Magdalene’s Gospel episodes.\textsuperscript{131} The remaining thirteen medallions illustrate the Provençal legend, including the Magdalene preaching to the crowd in Marseilles, the story of the king and queen of Provence, and the baptism of the royal family by Maximinus. The final two medallions are abbreviated versions of the death of the Magdalene, with her appearance to Maximinus announcing her imminent death and the bishop’s celebration of a Mass at her tomb.

The church of Notre-Dame in Semur-en-Auxois has three windows dedicated to Mary Magdalene. The windows include episodes from the Gospel accounts, particularly the death and Resurrection of Lazarus, and the Provençal legend, but unfortunately, the narratives do not flow as easily as those at Bourges or Auxerre due to their incorrect placement by restorers.\textsuperscript{132} Nevertheless, we can determine that two episodes of the Magdalene’s Provençal life included in Semur-en-Auxois are not found in the other windows. These are the death of Martha and the discovery of the Magdalene in the wilderness by the hermit priest, both episodes found in the \textit{Golden Legend}.\textsuperscript{133}

The most significant inclusions, however, are the two panels that depict the acquisition of the Magdalene’s relics by the abbey at Vézelay (figure 28). Although there are several versions of the story, the final version, which I discuss in greater length in Chapter 3, claims that in the eighth century Abbot Odo of Vézelay, at the request of Count Girart de Roussillon, sent the monk Badilon to Provence to retrieve the remains of the saint from a hidden tomb outside of Aix, where her relics had been placed for safekeeping when the city was sacked by the Saracens.\textsuperscript{134} Badilon was shown the crypt
where her uncorrupted body had been placed, and the odor of sanctity that issued from it affirmed its sacred nature. The monk hesitated in disturbing the saint’s remains, however, until the Magdalene came to him in a dream and told him that she wished to be taken to a place pre-ordained by God. Thus the relics arrived in Vézelay, although the *Golden Legend* notes that at the outskirts of the abbey, the Magdalene’s remains suddenly and mysteriously became immovable until the abbot and monks went in procession to greet her with appropriate reverence and ceremony.\(^{135}\)

In the Magdalene window at Semur-en-Auxois, the first panel shows the Abbot, with the Count standing beside him, charging Badilon with the task of bringing the body of the Magdalene to the abbey at Vézelay. In the second panel, the abbot and monks of Vézelay are in discussion, presumably concerning the proper translation of the saint’s relics into the abbey. Considering the close proximity of Semur-en-Auxois to Vézelay, it is clear that these two scenes were included to support Vézelay’s claim to possessing the true relics of the Magdalene. The abbey asserted that the authenticity of these relics was proven by the miracles associated with their discovery and translation, miracles and events that are the subject of these two panels, which function, therefore, as hagiographic propaganda for Vézelay.

The Italian equivalent of the French Magdalene windows are the fresco cycles of the saint’s life that decorate the walls of numerous churches, chapels, and cathedrals across Italy.\(^{136}\) Thirteen churches have Magdalene cycles and many include both the biblical life and the Provençal legend in their episodes.\(^{137}\) These cycles date from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and are, therefore, the pictorial successors of the Magdalenian iconography established in the French windows.

There are some interesting differences, however, between the images in the windows discussed above and those in the fresco cycles. In two of the Italian cycles, scenes of the saint’s worldly life are included in the painted program. In the Church of Santa Maria Maddelena in Bolzano, an elegantly dressed Mary is chastised by Martha, while Lazarus, wearing a woeful expression, and the Magdalene’s dandified lover look on (figure 29). The latter places his hand on the Magdalene’s hip in a manner both possessive and suggestive, alluding to a sexuality that is also evident in folios 9r and 11r
of the *Vie de la Magdalene*. In the Church of Santa Maria Maddelena in Cusiano, an elaborately inlaid marble arcade frames the Magdalene, who is surrounded by suitors dressed in short tunics and gaudy hosiery. The saint, who is hierarchically larger than her suitors or her maidservant, is dressed in a form-fitting gown, with her long hair crowned by a garland of flowers (figure 30). In contrast, the saint’s rejection of the worldly life is illustrated in a later fresco in the cycle in which the Magdalene, Martha, and Lazarus distribute their wealth by feeding the poor as Christ looks on approvingly (figure 31).\textsuperscript{138}

Some of the images in the Italian cycles also exhibit a synthesis of several episodes that is more inventive and more exaggerated than in the French windows. In the Magdalene cycle painted by Giovanni da Milano in 1360-65 for the sacristy of the Rinuccini Chapel at Santa Croce in Florence, the scene of Magdalene’s contrition during the Feast at the House of Simon is joined with the expulsion of the seven demons, who fly up through the roof of the house while the Magdalene washes Christ’s feet below (figure 32). In the Magdalene chapel in the Lower Church of San Francesco in Assisi, painted by Giotto about 1310-20, the artist combines the saint’s arrival in Marseille, which is in the background, with the miracle of the pagan queen and her child, who rest on a rocky island in the foreground. The man disembarking from a small boat at the island’s shore is undoubtedly the king, indicating the happy ending of the tale.

It is also in the Italian frescos that the image of the Magdalene clothed only in her hair became a prominent element. She appears in this manner in several cycles, including Giotto’s Magdalene frescos in San Francesco in Assisi. One portion depicts the elevation of the Magdalene by angels. Covered with wavy blond hair that completely obscures her body, she is shown in profile on a cloud supported by two angels while two more angels hover overhead, one in the process of blessing the adoring saint. Another episode in the same chapel depicts the Magdalene in the opening of the grotto, again covered with her blond hair, receiving a cloak from a monk identified as Zosimus.\textsuperscript{139} The garment allows her to maintain her modesty when she goes to Maximinus to receive final communion, and thus alludes to the saint’s impending death. This is the alternate version of her death that is related by Voragine in the *Golden Legend*.\textsuperscript{140}
The first version of her death as told in the *Golden Legend* is found in the Capella della Maddelena at the Church of San Domenico in Spoleto. This fresco cycle, dated c. 1400, also depicts the meeting between the Magdalene and the monk, who witnesses her elevation (figure 33). The Magdalene looks down intently at him, as if communicating with him, while he stares at her with his hands upraised in a gesture of wonder. This scene may be intended to combine the two episodes of the priest’s sighting of the Magdalene from the *Golden Legend*, in which he first sees her elevation and then hears her disembodied voice, which instructs him on his role in her impending death. In this panel, she is also clothed only in her hair (figure 34), as she is in the succeeding fresco that depicts her death. On the upper right, the Magdalene is again shown being elevated by angels, who carry her using a white cloth suspended between them. This is probably intended to depict the Magdalene’s appearance in Maximinus’s church, where she was “led thither by angels,” for her final communion, an episode from the first version of her death in the *Golden Legend* that is continued by the other scenes in this fresco. In the scene below her elevation, the saint worships beside an altar in a small room, probably the altar of the oratory mentioned in the legend, and in the larger portion of the fresco to the left, she is shown, accompanied by two angel, in the tabernacle of a church kneeling to receive the Eucharist from Maximinus, who wears the bishop’s cope and miter. In each of these scenes, she is again clad only in the abundance of her hair, which covers her like a cloak.

The prominence of the type of representation of the Magdalene, i.e. clothed in her hair, within Italian art may have had its origins in the famous panel by the Magdalene Master at the Galleria dell’Accademia in Florence (figure 35). Dated c. 1280, it presents the saint in the center of the panel with her brown hair falling from her head to her ankles in a solid mass that does not show any portion of her body beneath. Her left hand is raised in a gesture of blessing and in her right she holds a scroll that reads in Latin, “Do not despair those of you who are accustomed to sin, and in keeping with my example, return yourselves to God.”

On either side of the Magdalene are eight panels, four on each side, that include episodes from the Gospels and the Provençal legend. Reading from upper left to right,
the first four scenes include the saint washing Christ’s feet at the House of Simon the Pharisee, the raising of Lazarus who, in this case, appears as small as a child, the *Noli me tangere* scene, and the Magdalene preaching to the pagans in Marseilles. In all of these scenes, the saint is clothed in a gown, to indicate her pre-conversion status, or robes and a veil indicting her post-conversion status. In the remaining four scenes, which are set in Provence, the Magdalene is presented as she is in the center of the panel, clothed only in her hair. The scenes include the elevation of the Magdalene by angels, the Magdalene in the grotto receiving sustenance from an angel who flies down from heaven, the saint receiving Last Communion from Maximinus outside the grotto, and her burial service, in which she is placed in a coffin beneath a baldacchino and attended by several religious figures, including Maximinus wearing a bishop’s miter.

Of these depictions, the scene in which an angel delivers what appears to be a round loaf to the Magdalene in her grotto is extremely unusual. The scene is an interpretation of the *Golden Legend*, which mentions that the Magdalene survived only on “heavenly meats” and the divine music she heard during her angelic elevations, and thus, “being filled with this delightful repast, she came down to her grotto, and needed no bodily food.”144 The angel in this portion of the panel appears to be delivering the “heavenly meats” on which the Magdalene survived during her thirty years of seclusion.

One of the most famous works to present the Magdalene’s *vita* on panel is the *Magdalene Altarpiece* created by Lucas Moser in 1431 for the Church of Saint Mary Magdalene in Tiefenbronn, Germany (figure 36).145 The diptych originally contained a sculpted image of the elevation of the Magdalene that was replaced with a later version in 1508. Iconic representations of Martha and Lazarus are on the interior panels, praying in adoration to the sculpted image of their sister. On the predella below, Moser depicted the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins with Christ as the Bridegroom, a theme that was intended to characterize the Magdalene in her pre-conversion and post-conversion states (figure 37).146

The exterior panels have five scenes, although only one of the scenes, placed in the gabled portion of the altarpiece, is taken from the Gospel accounts of the Magdalene’s life (figure 38). This is the saint’s washing and anointing of Christ’s feet,
but Moser’s version of the story is unconventional in that it unites two different versions of the story. The figures in this scene include Christ, who is speaking to Simon the Pharisee, Peter who is conversing with Lazarus, the Magdalene at Christ’s feet, and Martha, who serves the meal at the right. The inclusion of Martha and Lazarus indicates that this unusual interpretation combines the first anointing at the House of Simon the Pharisee, told in Luke 7: 36-50, with the second anointing episode from John 12: 1-8, in which Jesus dined the siblings at their house in Bethany. Lazarus joined Jesus at the table while Martha served and Mary again used her hair to anoint Christ’s feet with precious ointment.

The key to identifying the synthesis of these two scenes is the presence and actions of the siblings. Lazarus and Martha are not present at the first episode but both are present at the second, in which Martha acts as hostess as she does in the painting. In John’s account of the second anointing, however, the Magdalene is not weeping, although she weeps abundantly in Luke’s anointing scene. In the painting the Magdalene’s pronounced frown, evident tears, and sorrowful expression indicate the tearful contrition described in the Gospel of Luke, while the presence of Martha and Lazarus refer to the episode from the Gospel of John. Thus this scene is a successful fusion of the two episodes that allowed Moser to include Martha and Lazarus in the composition.

Undoubtedly, the reason for the synthesis of these two scenes is the inclusion of Martha and Lazarus who are also participants in the other scenes of the panel, which illustrate portions of the Provençal legend (figure 39). Moser has cleverly united the four scenes visually with the flow of landscape and architecture from left to right. On the left, we see the Magdalene with Sidonius, Maximinus, Martha, and Lazarus, seated in the rudderless boat, arriving at Marseilles in the foreground. The center scene introduces the story of the king and queen of Provence. In the lower portion of the composition, the Magdalene’s companions sleep on the porch of a structure, presumably the temple mentioned in the Golden Legend, because the people of the town had refused them accommodations. Through a window above we see the Magdalene appearing in a dream to the queen, who sits up in bed with her hands in an attitude of reverence and
prayer before the apparition while her husband sleeps beside her. Their pagan nature at this point in the story is subtly indicated by the presence of a crescent moon on a post above a pinnacle of the castle in the background.152

The final scene on the right of the panel depicts the Last Communion of the Magdalene (figure 40). This scene is set within the spacious structure abutting the temple porch that protected the Magdalene’s sleeping companions in the previous scene. This building, now a Christian church as indicated by the crucifix above the archway, is the setting for the final moments of the Magdalene’s life. In accordance with the depiction of this episode in the Golden Legend, Mary Magdalene hovers above the ground supported by angels and smiles serenely as she prepares to accept the Host from a somber Maximinus, who is dressed in bishop’s garb. As in previous depictions of this scene, the saint is clad only in her hair, but in contrast to the cloak-like description typical of Italian painters, Moser has allowed the Magdalene’s body to be defined by the hair rather than hidden by it. Instead of falling to her ankles in a pyramidal mass, the Magdalene’s hair curves around her limbs and shows the contours of her nude body, including her abdomen, thighs, and breasts. Although some of her hair flows from her head and over her arms, the remainder of her form appears to be covered with long hair growing from her limbs and torso, forming a furry garment that both hides and emphasizes her nudity.

This hirsute depiction of the Magdalene was a common device used by Northern artists in their description of the saint, and was used on the sculpted image of Mary Magdalene that was placed within Moser’s altarpiece (figure 41). Dated 1508, this work replaced the original sculpture, now lost, that was found on the interior of work.153 Six angels elevate the nude Magdalene, who is covered by her tresses and suit of hair, as well as a drape held by two of the angels that covers the saint’s lower torso to protect her modesty. A seventh angel holds a crown over the saint’s head. With hands together in a reverential gesture and wearing a beatific smile on her face, the Magdalene is presented standing in a state of ecstatic elevation.

This type of Magdalene was especially popular with the German artists, most notably Tilman Riemenschneider, who repeated the motif for the interior of the great schnitzaltar that he created in 1490-92 for the Church of Saint Mary Magdalene in
Münnerstadt (figure 42). The sculpture resembles that found within the Moser altarpiece, but is more curving in stance and therefore more graceful in appearance. In both works, however, the knees of the Magdalene are free of hair, possibly indicting that they have been worn smooth by repetitive kneeling, and the saint’s breasts are also evident through her suit of hair. Although the effect is undoubtedly odd, it seems intended to be more innocent than provocative.

In the predella of the Münnerstadt altarpiece, the figures of the four Evangelists were placed according to their order in the New Testament, providing the scriptural foundation for the general theme of the work, which is the doctrine of man’s redemption through the death of Christ (figure 43). This theme is reinforced by the arrangement of the figures placed in the gable above the Elevation of the Magdalene (figure 44). These include the Virgin and John the Evangelist who stand on either side of God the Father, who holds the body of his dead Son in a Pieta-like arrangement. Above this grouping, John the Baptist points to the paschal lamb, reminding the faithful of the sacrifice of Christ.

On the interior of the wings are four carved panels depicting scenes from the Magdalene’s life. These, too, reinforce the theme of forgiveness and redemption that is the primary message of the altarpiece. On the dexter wing, the top panel depicts the saint washing Christ’s feet at the House of Simon the Pharisee (figure 45). The saint’s curved body, intent expression, and pool of agitated drapery folds separate her from Simon and the two men seated at the table, but unites her with Jesus in a sweep of line and concentrated energy. It is a poignant moment in the episode, for the Magdalene has not yet been forgiven for her sins and continues to wipe Christ’s feet with her hair, while Jesus rebukes Simon for his contempt of the repentant sinner. This contempt is expressed not only by the man’s look of disgust but by his gesture of pulling up the table cloth, which he does not only to watch the saint’s actions, but to keep it from being soiled by this unclean woman. The Magdalene is oblivious to this interaction, however, and is engrossed in the act of love and repentance that will, in the next moment, be her salvation.
Below this panel is the *Noli me tangere* scene, in which Mary meets the risen Christ in an enclosed garden. The emphasis here is on the redemption of all men through Christ’s death and Resurrection, and the careful depiction of Christ’s wounds stresses his physical suffering. In this scene, the Magdalene acts not only as the first witness to the miracle but also as the emblem of all mankind who at that moment are forgiven their sins and guaranteed salvation. In the background is an unusual element, the figure of Peter, who wept with shame for three days after rejecting Christ. Exhausted by his grieving, he sleeps against a rocky outcrop, unaware that Jesus will soon appear to him as well and forgive him for his lack of faith, thus continuing the theme of forgiveness and redemption through Christ’s sacrifice.

On the sinister wing, the Magdalene’s death is illustrated (figure 46). The upper panel depicts her Last Communion, which takes place in the wilderness on the outskirts of the city seen in the background. The Magdalene kneels before Maximinus, who holds a paten in his left hand while raising his right in a gesture of blessing, a gesture reinforced by his face turned heavenward. The “other clergy” mentioned in the *Golden Legend* watch in reverence, while a tall figure holding prayer beads quietly converses with the man behind him. The Magdalene appears as she does in the center sculpture, her hands together in prayer and her tresses flowing down across her body, which is covered with hair. Her expression is again one of smiling serenity and anticipation as she concentrates on Maximinus’s actions. In this scene, of course, the theme of salvation through Christ’s death is illustrated with the sacraments of the Holy Eucharist and Last Rites. It is important to note that Riemenschneider has placed the last moments of the Magdalene’s life in the wilderness rather than in the cathedral at Aix, a location that is in keeping with Demoulins’s description of these events in the *Vie de la Magdalene*.

In the scene below, which also is set in the hills of Provence, the lifeless Magdalene is gently laid into a coffin by three angels and Maximinus as another clergyman offers prayers. Her eyes are now partially closed, her mouth is agape, and her body is limp. As in the Accademia panel, her body is not wrapped in a shroud but covered only in her hair, in this case her body hair, giving it a touching vulnerability. The inclusion of the angels is a reference to the *Golden Legend*, which mentions them as
attending the Magdalene during her last moments, although none of the works I have
discussed above have the angels actually placing the saint in her coffin.\textsuperscript{156} However, this
unusual motif forms a poignant visual and thematic segue to the sculpted figure of the
saint and her angelic attendants found in the interior of the altarpiece (figure 47). During
the Magdalene’s life, angels elevated her bodily to allow her a vision of heaven, a reward
for her unshakeable faith and devotion. Now, at her death, her angelic attendants lift her
body for the last time into her coffin so that she may enjoy forever the life in heaven that
she was only allowed to glimpse during her earthly life. With great subtly and eloquence,
this panel reinforces the overall theme of Riemenschneider’s Magdalene altarpiece, tying
thematically and visually with the other reliefs and the central figure to create a powerful
statement of repentance, forgiveness, and salvation.

In creating the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene}, Demoulins and Godefroy may have
benefited from the iconographic developments of their predecessors, but it is difficult to
know what works one or both may have seen, if, in fact, they were aware of any
Magdalene images beyond the stained glass windows of France. Certainly, there are
hints that Godefroy may have known the Riemenschneider altarpiece, which, given his
Northern birth, would not have not been impossible. In particular, the stance of the
Magdalene and the placement of the angels that elevate her in folios 59r and 67r bear a
striking resemblance to the central group of the Münnerstadt altarpiece, although
Godefroy chose not to cover the Magdalene’s body with hair as in the German versions
of the scene. Rather, the graceful, curvaceous Magdalene of the \textit{Vie} more closely
resembles Botticelli’s newborn Venus than Riemenschneider’s furry saint.

In addition, the placement of the final moments of the Magdalene’s life in the
Provençal countryside rather than the church in Aix also hints at Godefroy’s knowledge
of Riemenschneider’s Magdalene altarpiece, as this location is not found in the written
sources or French windows discussed above. Furthermore, Godefroy’s depiction of the
Magdalene kneeling outside her grotto to receive her Last Communion, clothed only in
her hair, bears a striking resemblance to Giotto’s rendition. In Godefroy’s version,
however, the saint’s hair does not form the cloak so common in Italian frescos, but falls
more naturally over her body in long, heavy tresses that allow her nude form to show
through. It is difficult to say if Godefroy or Demoulins would have known of Giotto’s Magdalene fresco cycle. However, given the large portions of Godefroy’s life that are unaccounted for, as well as the presence of Italianate motifs and formal elements in his work, it is possible that the artist had traveled to Italy and was aware of this cycle, as well as other Magdalene images, and incorporated them into the *Vie de la Magdalene*.

The major point that unites all the visual treatments of the Magdalene’s life discussed above is the fact that they are all deficient in some way. The artists had to resort to synthesis or allusion to relate some episodes or disregard them completely for the sake of space and time, relying on the viewer’s knowledge or the cleric’s sermon to fill in the important gaps in the saint’s story. The *Vie*, on the other hand, has a complete collection of images of her life, with many of the episodes described gradually and in great detail without synthesis or allusion. Even the roundels that show multiple scenes do not synthesize those scenes, but rather, each portion is an autonomous episode that forms a narrative link with the other illuminations. These images work with the narrative in the facing roundels to provide Louise with an extremely complete and vivid telling of the life of Mary Magdalene.

**Conclusion**

As I have demonstrated, the *Vie de la Magdalene* is an amalgam of three essential literary sources for Magdalenian iconography--the evangelical Gospels, *The Golden Legend*, and the *Life of Saint Mary Magdalene*, or VBMM. A comparison of these three sources with the images and text of the *Vie* proves that each provided the Magdalene manuscript with specific events, details, themes, and textual elements. These elements were of vital importance to Demoulins in his development of the narrative of the *Vie*, and to Godefroy in his conception of the illuminations and the frame motifs. When combined with the visual conventions of Magdalenian iconography that evolved in Europe during the medieval and early Renaissance periods in Europe, the creators of the *Vie de la Magdalene* had a rich foundation from which to draw for their version of the Magdalene’s story. By choosing what they required from each source and incorporating
these elements with the biographical and regal themes I discuss in Chapters 3 and 4, and aspects of the Passion plays I discuss in Chapter 5, Demoulins and Godefroy created a life of Mary Magdalene that was both firmly grounded in tradition and daringly innovative in design and content.
Notes

1. Haskins, 87-94.


5. Many of the Early Christian fathers and theologians addressed this issue, including Saints Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and John Chrysostom, as well as Cyril of Alexandria, Hippolytus of Rome, Origen, and others. See Haskins, 55-94, for a recent study.

6. Apostolos-Cappadona, Image, 110. As mentioned in note 33 of Chapter 1, the Eastern Orthodox Church also reveres Mary Magdalene but does not accept the Gregorian conflation or the Provençal legend. According to Eastern orthodoxy, the Magdalene accompanied John and the Holy Virgin to Ephesus, where she cared for Mary until her death. Afterward, the Magdalene spent her life preaching, performing miracles, and converting.

7. See Chapter 1, n. 96.

8. Voragine, 355-64. The medieval life of Mary Magdalene that appears in literary sources like the Golden Legend is a conflation of several earlier vitae, including
the *vita apostolica*, the *vita eremitica*, the *vita evangelica*, and the *vita mixta*. See Jansen, 37-39, 50-51, and 52.

9. See Chapter 1, n. 96.


11. See Haskins, 90-93.

12. From *Homilia 33* in *Homilarium in evangelia*. Quoted in Jansen, 32-33, n. 44; and Haskins, 93.


17. Luke 10:38-42. This is the origin of the symbolic association of Martha as the active Christian and Mary Magdalene as the contemplative Christian. See Jansen, 116-42. It should be noted that the scriptural account mentions only that the event took place in “a certain town” and that “there was a certain woman named Martha who received him into her home” and that she had “a sister named Mary.” The women are not identified as Martha of Bethany or Mary of Magdala, nor is the town identified as Bethany or Magdala in Luke’s Gospel.

18. Ibid.


20. John 11:1-3: “His sisters therefore sent to him, saying: Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.”

21. See John 11:46-56 for this portion of the episode.

22. Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-10.

23. Matthew 26:6-13; Mark 14:3-9.
24. Knecht, 88-89.

25. Ibid.


28. John 20:17-18. This is the origin of her cognomen “The Apostle to the Apostles” or Apostola, for Jesus chose her as the one to announce the miracle of his Resurrection to the world. See Haskins, 62.


30. “Quis revolvet lapidem ab hostio monumēti”


32. In Matthew 28:8 and Luke 24:10, Mary Magdalene is accompanied by one or more women when she tells the disciples of Christ’s Resurrection. In Mark 16:10 the Magdalene is alone but she does not say, “I have seen the Lord,” although it is alluded to in verse 11: “And they hearing that he was alive and had been seen by her, did not believe.”

33. Acts 1:2-4: “Until the day on which, giving commandments by the Holy Ghost to the Apostles whom he had chosen, he was taken up. To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion, by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them, and speaking of them of the kingdom of God.” Since the Magdalene was among those chosen by Jesus and she was also one of those to whom he showed himself after his Resurrection, the continuation of her vita has been extrapolated from these verses. This extrapolation is included in the Vie de la Magdalene.

34. Jansen, 62-82.


36. Mycoff, 39.

37. Voragine, 355-64.

38. Voragine, 355. Voragine states that the name “Mary” is derived from amarum mare, meaning “bitter sea,” “light-giver,” and “enlightened.” Voragine associates the meaning “bitter sea” with the bitterness of the Magdalene’s remorse and the tears of her repentance. “Light-giver” is a reference to her contemplative state, in
which she pondered Jesus’s teachings, and her evangelical role, in which she “gave out” her understanding of his words, and “enlightened” is a reference to her perfect knowledge which will lead to heavenly glory. He also equates Magdalene with *manes rea*, which he interprets to mean “remaining in guilt,” “unarmed,” “unconquered,” and “magnificent.” These terms are a reference to her state before, during, and after her conversion.

40. Voragine, 355.
41. Voragine, 356.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid. As an aside, he notes that it is the warmth of the climate that compelled people to use water and ointment several times daily.
44. Voragine, 355-56.
46. Ibid.
47. Voragine, 357-62.
48. Folio 57r is a quadripartite illumination and this episode is found in the upper right quadrant.
49. Voragine, 357.
50. Folio 54v states that the boat was “disarmed and empty of everything.”
51. Voragine, 357.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Voragine, 358.
55. Voragine, 359. This passage is probably the source for the motto on folio 52r, “I saw love transform sorrow into joy.”
56. Voragine, 360-61.
57. Ibid.
58. Voragine, 361. “Now a certain priest who wished to live in solitude had built a cell at a distance of twelve stadia from Magdalen’s grotto.”

59. A cubit, which was an ancient form of linear measure, was 18-22 inches, thus two cubits were 36-44 inches. In folio 58v this measure is presented in Latin as two cubits and in French as one meter (39.37 inches), thus the equivalent of two cubits. Voragine writes that “Maximinus himself tells in his writings that the saint’s visage, long used to the sight of the angels, had become so radiant that one might more easily have looked into the rays of the sun than into her face.” See Voragine, 361-62.

60. Ibid.
61. Voragine, 362. Voragine claims that this version of the Magdalene’s death was found in a book by either Hegesippus or Josephus.

62. Demoulins does not mention Voragine by name or indicate the Golden Legend as his source, but on folio 54v he says, “Here ends the references to the Holy Scriptures and begins the account of what I found about the Magdalene in other books and authentic sources.”

63. Voragine, 361.
64. Voragine, 356.
65. Folios 73r to 75r.
66. Voragine, 363.
67. Mycoff, 7-14.
68. Mycoff, 7. For the debate over the issue of attribution, see Mycoff, 7-10.

69. Victor Saxer, “La ‘Vie de sainte Marie Madeleine’ attribuée au pseudo Raban Maur, oeuvre claravalienne du XIIe siècle,” Mélange Saint Bernard (Dijon, 1953), 409-10. See Mycoff, 7-21, for a full discussion of the Cistercian authorship. This theory was based on several things, such as the inclusion of the vita in several manuscripts that also contain works associated with Bernard of Clairvaux, the founder of the Cistercian order, as well as a close parallel between the language of Bernard and that found in the VBMM. See Mycoff, 9.

70. Saxer, “La ‘Vie,’” 419-20; translated by Mycoff, 26, n. 19.
71. Mycoff, 8.
72. Mycoff, 10.
73. Mycoff, 27.
74. Mycoff, 10-11. For a discussion of the similarities between the *VBMM* and these earlier authors, see Mycoff, 117-66.
75. Mycoff, 132, commentary on lines 516-579.
76. Mycoff, 30.
77. Given the subtleties possible in the translation of a medieval language, these passages may have been precisely the same in their original forms.
78. Voragine, 356. Voragine states only, “For love of her, He restored her brother to life after he had been dead four days.”
79. Mycoff, 28.
80. Mycoff, 30.
81. Mycoff, 33.
82. Mycoff, 31.
83. Ibid.
84. Mycoff, 33.
85. Mycoff, 34-35.
86. Ibid.
87. Mycoff, 16.
88. In the *VBMM*, however, Simon’s derision of the Magdalene is in the form of thoughts that Jesus nonetheless understands and addresses. See Mycoff, 36.
89. Mycoff, 38.
90. Mycoff, 39-40. The author notes that two bronze sculptures placed on pedestals beside the door to her house commemorate her miraculous healing, and that
plants growing from beneath the sculptures to touch the hem of the man’s robe were believed to have healing powers.

91. Mycoff, 42-46. These scenes include his preaching, teaching at the temple, healing the sick, exorcizing demons, and saving the adulteress from stoning.

92. Mycoff, 42.

93. Mycoff, 46.

94. Mycoff, 47.

95. Ibid., lines 627-630.

96. Mycoff, 47-48.

97. Mycoff, 48. It should be noted that the folios depicting Lazarus’s burial site present conflicting visual information. In folio 24r, lanterns hanging from the ceiling clearly indicate that the sarcophagus is placed in an interior large enough to hold many people. In folio 25r, the same three lanterns hang over the coffin, which is now depicted in a much smaller interior space. In folios 38r to 40r, the black background of these scenes is the same as that found on folio 24r, indicating that the depicted space is also an interior. In folios 41r to 43r, however, the scene suddenly changes to an exterior landscape scene with architectural elements in the background and figures standing in the distance watching the Resurrection of Lazarus. While this shift from one venue to another is dramatic and unexplained by the text, I believe that Godefroy and Demoulins realized that it was necessary to place these scenes in an exterior to align with the scriptural accounts. John 11: 45-46 states that “many therefore of the Jews, who were come to Mary and Martha, and had seen the things that Jesus did, believed in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees, and told them the things that Jesus had done.” In the background of this roundel we see these figures are indicated walking away from the scene and toward the town in the background, presumably to tell the Pharisees about the miracle.

98. Ibid.


100. Mycoff, 54.


102. Mycoff, 60.
103. Ibid.

104. Mycoff, 62; “Oh holy sinner and most ardent lover of Christ,” 70; “She grieved with the grief of a forsaken lover,” 85.


106. The terms “lover” and “beloved” when used in reference to Christ are associated with the Song of Solomon. The author of the VBMM utilized specific references to the canticle throughout his manuscript. See Mycoff, 64-65, 59, and 78, and his commentaries on lines 1011 and 1164 on 140-41.

107. Mycoff, 61, 71.

108. Mycoff, 73-76. In an Easter homily Augustine presented the idea of Mary Magdalene as the counteragent of Eve: “Humanity’s fall was occasioned by womankind, humanity’s restoration was accomplished through womankind, since a virgin brought forth Christ and a woman announced that he had risen from the dead,” Saint Augustine, Sermon 232, quoted in Jansen, 31. Jansen also notes that “it was probably the fourteenth-century bishop Hilary of Poiters who introduced this theme into western exegesis.” Furthermore, in his commentary on the VBMM, Mycoff notes that the “typological linking of Eve and Mary Magdalene appears in Christian exegesis at least as early as Ambrose, Expositio Evangelii secundum Lucam (PL 15: 1936-1937).” See Mycoff, 143.


110. Mycoff, 79-93. These include Christ’s charge to the disciples to preach throughout the world, the first conversions, the establishment of early church, and the first martyrdoms. In reference to the Magdalene, he describes her great love and devotion for the Virgin Mary, with whom she shared angelic visions and visitations intended to console her. He emphasizes the reverence the other Apostles felt for the Magdalene due to Christ’s love for her, and that she was loved and honored in the same manner as the Virgin Mary. The ointment she had intended to use on Christ’s body was preserved and distributed among the disciples as a treasured object, and the Apostles presented her in their sermons as a model of conversion and penitence. Martha was also extolled as a model of benevolence and generosity, and Lazarus was ordained as a bishop. The author also includes in his text descriptions of the persecution of the disciples by the Jews of Jerusalem, the division of the world among the disciples for proselytizing, the assumption of the Virgin, and the disbursement of the disciples throughout the world to preach to the Gentiles. The holy women accompanied the disciples in their travels; the Magdalene committed herself to the care of Saint Maximinus, and Martha to Saint Parmenas.

111. Mycoff, 93.
112. Voragine, 357.

113. Mycoff, 93-95. In addition to the Magdalene, Martha, Marcella, and Maximinus, the author of the VBMM includes archdeacon Parmenas, to whom Martha had committed herself, the bishops Trophimus and Eutropius, and “the rest of the leaders of the army of Christ.” The provinces of France, Belgium, and Germany were divided between them for proselytizing. Lazarus was given the bishopric of Cyprus, but Sidonius is not mentioned.

114. Voragine, 357. In the Vie the region of Aix is not named as the final destination of the Magdalene, but Demoulins mentioned “La Sainte Baume” on folio 59v, which is located near Aix.

115. Voragine, 357-60.

116. Mycoff, 98. In the VBMM Saint Mary of Egypt is referred to as “the Penitent of Egypt” but Mycoff, 6, notes that “the remote source of the account of Mary’s solitude is the legend of Mary of Egypt.”

117. Mycoff, 98. “Because of this, an apocryphal story has sprung up, though it may not be entirely apocryphal, for it is the habit of poisoners to mix in much honey so that they may more easily pass on the gall. Because of this, I say the false legend has taken root that she was carried up into the ether everyday by angels and carried back down by angels, and that she ate the food of highest heaven which the angels brought her. If this is understood in a mystical sense, it is not completely unbelievable for it is a fact that admits no doubt that she was quite often refreshed by the sight of angels, aided by their services, and delighted by their conversation.”

118. Ibid.

119. Mycoff, 8. As implied by the full title of this manuscript, The Life of Saint Mary Magdalene and of Her Sister Saint Martha, the remainder of the VBMM describes the life and miracles of Martha in detail, with the last portion, chapter 50, reserved for the passing of Saint Maximinus. By contrast, in folios 93r Demoulins notes only that after the Magdalene retired to the wilderness, Martha stayed in the city of Nerach, now called Tarascon, where she established a convent of virgins and devoted herself to perpetual virginity. As it is outside the scope of this study to include the story of Martha beyond that mentioned in the Vie de la Magdalene, I will not relate the content of those chapters of the VBMM, except to say that the Magdalene’s last years are interwoven with the story of her sister. See Mycoff, 97-115.

120. Mycoff, 107.

121. Ibid.
122. Ibid.

123. Haskins, 427, n.105.


125. Haskins, 118.

126. Voragine, 360.

127. The leader of the group is the same man who is seated in front of Maximinus in the previous scene and may be presumed, therefore, to be the king.


129. Raguin, 155; Grodecki and Brisac, 46, 66, 82, 84, 142-44, 244, 259.

130. The window should be read from left to right and bottom to top.

131. Raguin, 154-57. Given the narrative flow of the extant medallions, the missing panels probably began with the Magdalene’s meeting with Christ in the garden and continued with her announcement of the Resurrection to the apostles, and the voyage of the Magdalene and her companions to Marseilles—all scenes that would have prepared the viewer for the emphasis on Mary Magdalene’s roles as preacher and protector that are found in the successive scenes.

132. Raguin, 88.

133. For the life of Saint Martha, see Voragine, 391-95. For the discovery of Mary Magdalene in the desert, see Voragine, 361.


135. Voragine, 362.


137. For a list of the fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Magdalene fresco cycles in Italian churches, see Jansen, 69, n. 62.

138. The frescos are dated c. 1470 and painted by Giovanni and Battista Baschenis de Averaria. See Jansen, 83.
139. The identification of the hermit with Zosimus is a conflation with the story of Mary of Egypt, another penitential hermitic female saint who was venerated in the medieval period. Mary was a prostitute living in Alexandria during the time of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to venerate the Holy Cross. She is compelled to join the pilgrimage and convinces the captain of a boat to convey her to the Holy Land in exchange for her services. Once she arrives, Mary cannot enter the church until she has repented of her sinful life, which she does before a vision of the Holy Virgin. After worshipping before the cross, Mary decides that she must live a repentant life away from men. She goes into the desert where she lives in repentant solitude for many years, sustained only by three loaves of bread, which feed her perpetually. Eventually Mary is discovered by the monk Zosimus, who went into the desert to find holy hermits. Her clothing disintegrated years before, and Mary was naked except for her long hair; thus, she asks Zosimus for his cloak. They pray together, after which he sees her levitate a short distance above the ground. At Mary’s request the monk brings her the Eucharist the following Sunday and returns a year later, again at her request, to find her dead with a letter addressed to him requesting a Christian burial. However, Zosimus has nothing with which to prepare a grave, but he is aided by a lion, which uses its paws to dig the hole into which Mary’s body is placed: Voragine, 228-230. The vitae of the two saints became intermingled in the Early Christian period and it is possible that the portion of the legend that describes the Magdalene’s life in the wilderness of Provence was adopted from the Egyptian saint’s desert penitence, as well as the involvement of a priest or hermit at their death. See Jansen, 37-38, 124-25; and Haskins, 108, 117, 227. The close association of Mary Magdalene and Mary of Egypt is indicated by their joint placement in the stained glass windows of several French churches, including Bourges, Auxerre, where they are placed side by side, and Chartres, where both windows are in the south nave—the Magdalene’s window in the lower nave and Mary of Egypt’s window in the clerestory. See Raguin, 153-54; and Grodecki and Brisac, 66, 82, 84, 244.

140. Voragine, 362.

141. Voragine, 361-62.

142. Voragine, 361.

143. Jansen, 233-35. The panel reads: “Ne desperetis vos qui peccare soletis eximempleque meo vos reparate Deo.”

144. Ibid.

145. For a detailed analysis of this altarpiece, see Franz Heinzmann and Mathias Köhler, Der Magdalenealtar des Lucas Moser in der gotischen Basilika Tiefenbronn (Regensburg: Schnell and Steiner, 1994).


148. “Jesus therefore, six days before the Pasch, came to Bethania, where Lazarus had been dead, whom Jesus raised to life. And they made him a supper there, and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them there at table with him. Mary therefore took a pound of ointment or right spikenard, of great price and anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.”

149. Snyder, 221; Heinzmann and Köhler, 44-45. Below the altarpiece is a predella illustrating the parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins found in Matthew 25:1-13, with Christ as the Man of Sorrows at the center representing the Bridegroom. In this case, the Foolish Virgins refer to the Magdalene in her sinful state, and the Wise Virgins refer to the Magdalene after her conversion, when she was reborn through her repentance into a purified state. That moment of rebirth is depicted in the gabled panel, where the Magdalene washes Christ’s feet with her tears, thus thematically uniting the top and bottom of the altarpiece just as the backgrounds visually unite the scenes in the center portion of the altarpiece.

150. The figures are indicated by inscriptions on their gold tooled halos.

151. Voragine, 357.

152. Cuttler, 268.


154. Julien Chapuis, et al., *Tilman Riemenschneider, Master Sculptor of the Late Middle Ages* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press), 208-21. The figures who stand on either side of the Magdalene are Saint Kilian, the bishop of Würzburg, and Saint Elizabeth of Hungary, patroness of the group of Teutonic Knights who commissioned the work. The original altarpiece was dismantled in the seventeenth century, the result of a shift in taste, and some of the pieces dispersed to private collections. The central figure of the Magdalene remained, however, as the focus of the renovated altarpiece. The current altarpiece is a modern copy of the original, but includes several of the pieces created by Riemenschneider for the original.

155. Chapuis, 216. The exterior of the wings had four scenes from the life of Saint Kilian.
156. Voragine, 361.
CHAPTER 3

SACRED KINGSHIP AND ROYAL PATRONAGE IN LOUISE OF SAVOY’S VIE DE LA MAGDALENE

When, in January of 1516, Louise of Savoy and Francis I visited the shrine Mary Magdalene in Provence, they were continuing a tradition of royal devotion to the saint and royal pilgrimage to the site that went back centuries. The Vie de la Magdalene commemorates their pilgrimage and, more importantly, emphasizes their place as the most recent in a long line of monarchs to venerate Mary Magdalene in her most sacred and intimate locale. Throughout the Magdalene manuscript, numerous illuminations of the shrine and relics, the story of the king and queen of Provence, and royal motifs such as fleur-de-lis stress the connection shared by Louise, Francis, and previous monarchs in their devotion to Mary Magdalene. Furthermore, the inclusion of the two scenes in which Mary Magdalene anoints Jesus and references to both Jesus and Francis I as “king” establishes parallels between the King of Kings and the newly anointed King of France, both of whom fulfilled the prophecies of their birth as divinely chosen to realize their life roles. In this chapter, I will examine the royal themes in the Vie de la Magdalene, with an emphasis on those referring to sacred kingship, royal pilgrimage, and the royal patronage of Mary Magdalene and La Sainte-Baume to determine the reasons, both political and personal, for their inclusion.

The Cult of Mary Magdalene in Burgundy and Provence

The Magdalene’s shrine in Provence, known as La Sainte-Baume, had been the focus of regal attention for centuries before Louise, Francis, and their company made the journey there in 1516.1 The shrine is located within an immense white cliff that dominates the countryside near Aix-en-Provence (figure 48). Midway up the massif’s vertical face, a horizontal cleft marks the entrance to a deep cavern where many believe the Apostle of Provence spent the last thirty-three years of her life in ascetic penitence and contemplative solitude. Accordingly, La Sainte-Baume became a site of veneration and pilgrimage during the Early Christian era.
The arrival of the Magdalene’s cult in Provence is a complicated tale that does not bear repeating in its entirety in this work. However, the most significant aspects of the establishment of the Provençal shrine as the center of Magdalenian worship in France do require explanation, as they affect the conception, narrative, and design of the Vie de la Magdalene. The cult of Mary Magdalene was established in France by the sixth century, although widespread veneration of the saint did not occur across Europe until the eleventh century, a period dubbed by Victor Saxer as “the century of Magdalenian fermentation.”2 During this period, the locus of devotion to the saint was the abbey church of Sainte Marie Madeleine in the Burgundian town of Vézelay. Founded in the ninth century by Count Girart de Rousson of Burgundy and his wife Berthe, the church was originally dedicated to several other saints, most notably the Virgin Mary, for whom it was named.3 Mary Magdalene was not included among the abbey’s heavenly protectors until 1050 when Pope Leo X added her name to the church’s roster of patron saints. The Magdalene was promoted to such prominence among the saints in Vézelay that in 1058 Pope Stephen IX confirmed her as the sole patron of the abbey, henceforth called the Church of Sainte Marie Madeleine.4

Although the reasons for the sudden shift in saintly protection are unclear, the executor of this transference of devotion was the abbot Geoffrey, during whose tenure (1037-1052) the church at Vézelay was propelled to the forefront of sacred sites in France, particularly as a place for the veneration of Mary Magdalene. What is remarkable about this is the fact that before Geoffrey’s abbacy, there is no record of Magdalenian veneration at Vézelay, nor any mention of the presence of her relics in the church.5 Relics are an essential component of any significant pilgrimage site, but before the mid-eleventh century, the only relics Vézelay claimed were those of the Holy Martyrs Andeux and Pontian, which had not been of much interest to pilgrims. This changed during Geoffrey’s abbacy, however, when the religious community of Vézelay announced that the body of Mary Magdalene rested in the church’s crypt. They made this claim despite the fact that there was no visible proof, such as a reliquary, of her physical presence at the abbey, nor any explanation of how her body came to be in France. When questioned, the monks said only that, “All is possible to God,” and assured the pilgrims that their faith in her presence there was all that was required to
receive the saint’s benediction, and witnessing the relics was not necessary. The papal bull of 1058 mentioned above, which assigned Mary Magdalene with sole protection of the church, supported the monks’ claims by stating explicitly that the saint’s true relics resided at the abbey.

Miracles that were reported in conjunction with the saint’s relics, especially those associated with infertility, conception, childbirth, and the welfare of children, as well as the freeing of those unjustly imprisoned, and the protection of knights unhorsed in battle. It appeared that the people of Burgundy had a powerful protector in Mary Magdalene, for it was believed that a saint was bound to protect the region in which his or her true relics resided. The relationship was reciprocal, however, and in return for this protection, the faithful demonstrated their respect through acts of supplication such as *ex voto*, the celebration of feast days and holy offices, the commissioning of reliquaries and church adornments, and, especially, pilgrimages.

By the mid-thirteenth century, however, the pilgrims’ faith in the relics at Vézelay began to wane. Therefore, to explain their claims and inspire the faithful to return, the monks of Sainte Marie Madeleine issued documents stating that in the ninth century, Count de Roussillon, the abbey’s founder, and Odo, the abbot at that time, sent a monk named Badilon to Aix-en-Provence to retrieve the Magdalene’s body from the secret tomb in which it had been placed to protect it from the invading Saracens. Badilon successfully located the saint’s remains, performed a *furtum sacrum*, or holy theft, and translated the relics to Vézelay, where they were interred with appropriate ceremony and, according to the documents, had been ever since. To emphasize the claims made by the documents, the abbey reiterated that the papal decree of 1058 had verified the relics in the crypt as the authentic remains of Mary Magdalene.

As a result of the abbey’s claims, the Church of Sainte Marie Madeleine was the premiere pilgrimage site in France throughout the medieval period, a status resulting from an increasing devotion to Mary Magdalene and the abbey’s prime location on the route to Santiago de Compostela. In addition, the abbey began offering indulgences in 1267 to pilgrims who visited the shrine on the saint’s four major feast days. Many thousands of pilgrims visited the shrine over the centuries, including several popes and numerous members of the aristocratic and royal families of Europe. Among those were
the French monarchs Louis VI, Louis VII and his queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, and Philip Augustus, as well as the English king Richard the Lionhearted. The most illustrious of the abbey’s visitors, however, and the most significant for this study was Saint Louis IX, who was particularly devoted to Mary Magdalene. The king made four pilgrimages to the shrine at Vézelay, including a visit in 1270 that marked the beginning of his last Crusade. In addition, Louis attended the translation of the saint’s relics in 1267, when they were brought up from the crypt and transferred into a new silver coffer. An avid collector of saintly relics, Louis kept a large portion of the Magdalene’s remains for himself but gave the abbey an arm, a jawbone, and three teeth, for which he later provided reliquaries of precious metals.

Unfortunately for Vézelay, the preeminence of Sainte Marie Madeleine as the focus of Magdalenian devotion and royal attention was relatively short-lived, and the abbey’s importance began to decline in the later thirteenth century. The problem stemmed from the legend of Badilon’s discovery of the Magdalene’s remains in Provence, which, despite its convenience for the abbey, did not explain why the saint’s body was in France to begin with when scriptural accounts placed her in the Holy Land. Here, too, the monks of Vézelay provided an answer, explaining that the saint spent the last years of her life as a hermit in the Provençal wilderness. They based their explanation on the Vita eremitica Beatae Mariae Magdalenae, the eremitical life of Mary Magdalene in Provence that I discuss in Chapter 2. Written in southern Italy in the ninth century, the Vita eremitica was well-known among monastic communities by the eleventh century, especially the Franciscans and Dominicans, although the legend was introduced to the abbey of Sainte Marie Madeleine during Geoffrey’s abbacy. The precise location of the Magdalene’s refuge remained a mystery, however, until a Swiss manuscript, dated 1170, identified the saint’s retreat as La Sainte-Baume, a large cavern found high up on a massif near the Provençal town of Saint-Maximin.

Although the Vita eremitica placed Mary Magdalene in Provence, an explanation of the saint’s arrival in Gaul was necessary to give credence to her presence in France. Over time, the vita apostolica, which I also discuss in Chapter 2, was developed to fill the gap between the Magdalene’s scriptural and eremitical life, telling of the saint’s voyage from Jerusalem to Provence and her conversion of the Provençal pagans. Most
importantly, this version of the saint’s life emphasizes her relationship with the king and queen of Provence, on whose behalf she intervenes for a male heir, and to whom she provides protection during a royal pilgrimage. Eventually the two stories were combined into the *vita apostolico-eremitico*. This *vita* is particularly important because it emphasizes that at the Magdalene’s death, Maximinus, her friend and the bishop of Provence, buried the saint at his church in Saint-Maximin. Centuries later, according to the Vézelay legend, her body was moved to the hidden tomb from whence Badilon performed the *furtum sacrum* that brought the Magdalene’s relics to Vézelay.

In an ironic twist, the story establishing the Magdalene’s residence in Provence that was so energetically promoted by the monks of Vézelay to support their claim of possessing her relics ultimately proved to be their undoing. In 1279 Charles of Salerno (1254-1309) became convinced that the true relics of the saint were still in Provence and was determined to find them. Charles was the son of Charles I of Anjou, the head of the cadet Angevin branch of the Capetian dynasty and the younger brother of Louis IX, the Magdalene’s most ardent royal admirer. Unlike his brother, however, Charles I showed little concern for spiritual matters but spent his life building the Angevin empire, which by 1266 included Anjou, Provence, Maine, Forcalquier, and the Regno, all the lands south of Rome including Naples and Sicily. His son Charles, the Prince of Salerno and Count of Provence, eventually became Charles II, King of Naples, Sicily, and Jerusalem.

Like his royal uncle Louis IX, Charles of Salerno had a great affection for Mary Magdalene and spent the last thirty years of his life demonstrating his devotion in various ways. Even before he became king, Charles actively promoted the cult of Mary Magdalene in his family’s domain, and his devotion to the saint was passed down through his descendants so that the Magdalene became the most powerful and celebrated protector of the Angevin dynasty. Why Charles was so enamored of the saint and adamant that her relics were in Provence rather than Vézelay is uncertain, but Katherine Jansen proposes several theories.

First, Charles’s mother was Beatrice, Countess of Provence, who was herself extraordinarily devoted to Mary Magdalene and passed that devotion to her son. Jansen suggests that his mother may have impressed upon Charles the idea that their ancestry
went back to the pagan king and queen of Provence who were converted by Mary Magdalene, and to their son, who was conceived through the saint’s intervention. Thus, a strong familial association initially stimulated Charles’s emotional and spiritual attachment to the saint. Second, Charles was particularly fond of the Dominican order, which also held the saint in high esteem. As mentioned above, the Dominicans were well acquainted with the Magdalene’s vita, regularly including her as an exemplum virtutis in readings and sermons, and the Dominican Jacobus de Voragine was instrumental in promoting the Provençal aspect of her life in The Golden Legend. Whatever affection Charles felt for Mary Magdalene because of his family ties undoubtedly was amplified by the reverence the Dominican brotherhood exhibited for the saint.

Finally, there was the matter of saintly protection. As a soldier and politician, Charles I was more intent on building the Angevin empire than on entreating saintly protection for the family. This task fell to his son Charles of Salerno, who chose Mary Magdalene to fulfill this role for several reasons. In addition to the familial connection mentioned above, the Magdalene was an intimate of Jesus Christ, and therefore could act as a direct and powerful intercessor between the Angevin dynasty and the Savior. As the Apostle of Provence she brought Christianity to the family’s ancestral territory, which was now the heart of the Angevin empire, and if her remains were still in Provence as Charles believed, her intercessory power would also reside there in its most potent form, just as it had been believed to reside in Vézelay. The Magdalene’s protection could be invoked for the region and its inhabitants, provided that she was venerated in a manner befitting a saint of her magnitude, something that Charles spent over thirty years ensuring.

Whatever the reason, Charles of Salerno became convinced that the Magdalene’s relics were still awaiting discovery in Provence. After making inquiries and conducting research, he decided that the Magdalene’s remains were in a crypt deep inside the Provençal church of Saint-Maximin, where, according to the Vézelay account, the relics had been located originally before their removal to the tomb outside Aix where Badilon found them in the ninth century. In 1279 Charles led the excavation into the crypt of Saint-Maximin himself and even joined in the digging. As he suspected, another
sarcophagus was unearthed containing human remains and a note, placed in a protective covering, which stated the bones were those of Mary Magdalene. The note explained that to protect the Magdalene’s relics from possible desecration by the Saracens, her body was switched with that of Saint Sidonius, another of her companions. The monks of Saint-Maximin then placed the authentic relics of Mary Magdalene in Sidonius’s sarcophagus and buried it deep in the crypt of Saint-Maximin, where it successfully escaped discovery by the Saracens. The body discovered by Badilon and revered at Vézelay was, therefore, a decoy and the remains those of Saint Sidonius.

In May 1280 clerics, nobles, and locals gathered in solemn ceremony at the church of Saint-Maximin to witness the translation of Mary Magdalene’s relics, which were publicly displayed before being placed in precious reliquaries. As at Vézelay, miracles were quickly attributed to the spiritual power of the Provençal relics, motivating Pope Boniface VIII to issue a papal bull in 1295 that verified the newly discovered relics as the true body of Mary Magdalene. With that, Vézelay’s fate as the center of Magdalenian devotion was sealed. From that point on, the focus of the Magdalene’s cult shifted irrevocably to Saint-Maximin and La Sainte-Baume, and soon the flood of pilgrims, royal and common alike, headed south to Provence.

Royal Pilgrimage and Royal Patronage at La Sainte-Baume

With the influx of pilgrims to La Sainte-Baume and Saint-Maximin, the appropriate structures and ornaments of devotion had to be made ready to fulfill their spiritual and physical expectations. Although commoners made up the majority of the visitors to the Provençal shrine, it was the royal pilgrims who brought the site both prestige and the majority of its financial support. Even before the discovery of the Magdalene’s remains in 1279, La Sainte-Baume also received royal visitors, most notably Saint Louis IX who stopped there in 1254 while on crusade, as he had done at Vézelay. However, it was the devotion of Charles of Salerno, later Charles II, and that of his Angevin descendants that transformed the area around Aix-en-Provence into the focal point of Magdalenian devotion that it remained until the French Revolution, when all things associated with monarchy, including the Magdalene’s shrine, were left in ruin.
Immediately after his discovery of the Magdalene’s relics in 1279, Charles began a program of veneration that included the founding of Dominican and Franciscan churches in the saint’s name throughout the Regno and Provence. He received papal approval for the construction of a new basilica at Saint-Maximin to be dedicated to Mary Magdalene, as well as the construction of a royal convent of Dominican friars to care for the basilica and shrine. He also commissioned reliquaries to hold the precious body of the saint. While the majority of her remains were placed within the high altar, the Magdalene’s head, arms, and hair were left out for public veneration. This choice was based on the fact that these body parts came into contact with Christ during the saint’s repentance at the House of Simon and her meeting with the risen Christ in the garden. Charles commissioned three reliquaries to display these portions of her anatomy, including a silver arm and hand in which a bone can be seen through a small door, a crystal vase holding the Magdalene’s hair that is set within a miniature gold and silver Gothic-style baldachin, and a crystal and gold reliquary containing her skull. When closed, the skull is covered with the gold sculpted face of the Magdalene surrounded by flowing golden hair and supported by gilded angels, their inclusion undoubtedly intended as a reference to the angelic elevation that was an essential part of the Magdalene’s Provençal legend. The head reliquary was designed to allow removal of the gold “face” so that the saint’s skull can be viewed through the transparent crystal vessel that holds it. As a final touch, Charles placed a crown, possibly one of his own, upon the gilded head. As I will discuss below, these three reliquaries are included in the illuminations for the Vie de la Magdalene and play multiple roles in the overall function of the manuscript.

Royal veneration continued long after Charles established the shrine and grotto as a royal possession. On one remarkable day in 1332, five European rulers traveled together to venerate the Magdalene at her Provençal home--Philippe de Valois, King of France, Alphonse IV of Aragon, Hugh IX of Cyprus, Jean of Luxembourg, King of Bohemia, and Robert the Wise, Count of Provence and King of Sicily. Robert the Wise (d. 1343), son of Charles II, adopted his father’s veneration of the Magdalene as an Angevin legacy and, along with his fellow Angevin princes, contributed large sums of money to support, maintain, and improve the Basilica of Saint-Maximin, La Sainte-Baume, and the convent of Dominicans that cared for both sites. These Angevin princes,
all direct descendants of Charles II, included Louis I of Valois (1339-1384), King of Naples and Count of Anjou and Provence, Louis II (1377-1417), King of Naples and Count of Anjou and Provence, and René I the Good (1408-1480), King of Naples and Sicily, titular King of Jerusalem, Duke of Lorraine, Bar, and Anjou, and Count of Provence.35

René in particular was as devoted to Mary Magdalene as Charles II and made several pilgrimages to the holy grotto during the fifteenth century.36 His admiration for the saint and for La Sainte-Baume inspired him to build chapels and altars within the grotto and provide funds for the upkeep of the shrine. He is recorded as donating the baptismal font to the abbey church of Saint-Maximin, which, according to legend, was the same font used to baptize the pagan king and queen of Provence after their conversion to Christianity by Mary Magdalene. He also donated to Saint-Maximin the Holy Ampoule, a vial of soil believed to be from beneath the cross of the Crucifixion and soaked with Christ’s blood.37

In addition, René gave funds for the establishment of a college for Dominican study at Saint-Maximin, as well as building a miniature version of the holy grotto, called La Baumette, at his home in Anjou.38 He honored the Magdalene in other ways as well. From 1478 to 1480, he had her image struck on a Provençal coin known as the Magdalon d’or, a public gesture indicative of the political and personal association of the saint as protector of Angevin concerns.39 In addition, René was the patron of the Passion d’Angers by Jean Michel, in which Mary Magdalene plays a greatly enhanced role compared to her involvement in earlier Passion plays.40 As I discuss at length in Chapter 5, the Michel Passion was highly influential to the design and content of the Vie de la Magdalene, thus emphasizing, if only to Louise, the thread of Magdalenian devotion uniting Francis and Louise with their royal Angevin predecessors.

When Provence was returned to the French crown after the death of René’s successor, Charles IV, in 1481, the French Valois kings continued the tradition of devotion to Mary Magdalene with pilgrimages to her shrine and donations to support the convent, basilica, and grotto, thus recognizing and honoring the long relationship between Mary Magdalene and her royal patrons. Louis XI (1423-1483) was particularly ardent in his admiration for her and went on several pilgrimages to La Sainte-Baume.41
He contributed large sums of money for the upkeep of the shrine, including funds for the construction of the Gothic style baldachin to cover the altar at the interior of the shrine. This is the same baldachin that is depicted on folio 63r in the *Vie*. As I discuss below, the king also commissioned statues for the grotto that depicted his second wife Charlotte of Savoy (d. 1483) and himself kneeling in adoration of the Magdalene. Louis XI’s son and successor, Charles VIII (1470-1498), also considered the Magdalene as his saintly protector and was depicted in a book of hours (Pierpont Morgan Library, ms. M 250, folio 14r) kneeling before the risen Christ as Mary Magdalene presents him to the Savior in an unusual twist on the traditional *Noli me tangere* image (figure 49). His wife, Anne of Brittany (d. 1514), was equally devoted to Mary Magdalene and had a figure of herself kneeling in adoration of the saint included on the head reliquary (figure 50), a detail that is significant for the reliquary miniatures in the *Vie*.

Some of the motivation behind Anne’s devotion to Mary Magdalene may have been driven by her desire to produce a male heir for her royal husbands, something for which, it was believed, the Magdalene could intercede. Although her first marriage was childless, Anne produced two daughters for Louis—Claude, who married Francis I, and Renée (1510-1575)—but unfortunately was not able to produce a living male heir for the king.\(^{42}\) Therefore, at his death in 1515, Louis XII was succeeded by Francis I (1494-1547), whose own devotion to Mary Magdalene came naturally. His mother Louise of Savoy was particularly devoted to the Magdalene and he was related maternally to Louis IX and paternally to Charles II and René of Anjou. Thus Francis I, the new king of France, was both the political and spiritual descendant of three of the greatest royal patrons of the Magdalene’s cult in Provence.\(^{43}\) It is little wonder that Francis stopped at Saint-Maximin and La Sainte-Baume on his return from his first military victory at Marignano to give thanks to the Magdalene for her protection.

As mentioned above, accompanying Francis on his visit to the shrine were his mother, his sister Marguerite of Angoulême, and his wife Claude of France, who traveled south to meet the king on his triumphant return from Italy. The trip through Provence allowed Louise to fulfill her vow to Mary Magdalene that she would make a pilgrimage to La Sainte-Baume in return for the saint’s protection of Francis during the military campaign. In fact, she made two visits to the grotto, the first on 2 January 1516 when she
was in route to meet Francis, and again on 21 January during the return journey with Francis at her side. The royal family also went to the church of Saint-Maximin to view the Magdalene’s relics. Because women were not allowed into the crypt, Francis had the holy vessels brought up to the sanctuary above so that his mother, sister, and wife could venerate the saint in the presence of her earthly remains, thus increasing the sanctity of the moment.

Francis and Louise continued the tradition of royal patronage to Saint-Maximin and La Sainte-Baume and both gave substantial funds for the completion of the church, thereby fulfilling the vision Charles had for a great basilica dedicated to Mary Magdalene in Provence. Their generosity also benefited the shrine at La Sainte-Baume. Disturbed by the condition of the grotto’s chapels, altars, and convent buildings, they made large donations for structural repairs to the shrine complex, including building a hostel for visitors. The condition of the baldachin donated by Louis XI was particularly distressing for Francis and he gave funds for its immediate repair.

In addition to rejuvenating the established royal donations at La Sainte-Baume, Francis commissioned the sculptor Jean Guiramand to create a portail, an ornamental stone facade placed at the entrance of the shrine to demonstrate the devotion of the current royal family to Mary Magdalene. What remains of the portail today is used as a fireplace surround in a building on the grounds of La Sainte-Baume, though it is not in its original form (figure 51). An engraving of 1822 shows that it was designed in the Italianate style Francis favored, and included Corinthian columns, pilasters, cherubic heads, Renaissance garlands, rows of acanthus leaves, and other classical ornamentation as decorative motifs (figure 52). It is interesting to note that many of these same motifs appear in the Vie de la Magdalene and are used as decorative elements on the frames of the narrative roundels and the pilasters and cornices of architecture. The original commission for the portail called for a bas-relief of the Elevation of the Magdalene, although that theme was replaced at some point by a scene depicting The Lamentation, as seen on the 1822 engraving.

In addition, Francis and Louise commissioned four statues from Jean Guiramand to accompany the portail, two standing figures of Saints Francis of Assisi and Louis, the name saints of mother and son, and two figures of Louise and Francis kneeling in an
attitude of prayer and adoration before the original elevation scene (figure 53.) The portraits of Louise and Francis served several purposes. First, the figures acted as testaments to other pilgrims of the sincere piety of the royal family and their devotion to Mary Magdalene. Second, Francis’s donation of the portail and its figures of the king and his mother perpetuated a custom among royal pilgrims in which they commissioned sculptures, either of Mary Magdalene or of themselves, that were placed at significant locations within the grotto, again emphasizing their piety and devotion.

Finally, the figures of Louise and Francis functioned as a form of ex-voto, or offering of thanks. Many of the pilgrims to the Provençal shrine placed ex-votos in the grotto as tokens of gratitude for the saint’s intervention with miraculous healings, freedom from unjust imprisonment, or protection during times of danger or crisis. Typical ex-votos were crutches, chains and shackles, small wax depictions of body parts cured of ailments, or representations of houses, boats, and other things saved from destruction. Another form of ex-voto for those who could afford something more permanent was sculpted figures of the donor. For example, Louis XI commissioned sculptures of his wife Charlotte of Savoy and himself for placement near the high altar at La Sainte-Baume as a gesture of gratitude for the saint’s intercession in the safe birth of their son Charles VIII in 1470.

In a similar fashion, the figures of Louise and Francis served as constant reminders to the Magdalene of their gratitude for her protection of Francis throughout the dangers of his recent military campaign. Because the Magdalene answered the prayers of both Francis and Louise, to have mother and son depicted in adoration of the saint would serve the same purpose as any ex-voto as both a token of thanks and a testament to all pilgrims visiting the shrine of the potency of sincere faith and the intercessory power of Mary Magdalene. Of course, these figures also held an inherent value as propaganda and the inclusion of Saint Louis among the portail grouping may have served a political purpose as well. Although undoubtedly intended as a pious gesture in memory of their illustrious ancestor, the figure of Louis IX was a pointed reminder of the royal lineage of Louise and Francis as well as the familial devotion to the Magdalene shared by Louis and his descendents. The inclusion of Louis’s sculpture with those of Francis and Louise also emphasized the tradition of royal patronage and pilgrimage to the Provençal shrine.
exemplified by the sainted king and perpetuated by this “Most Christian King” and his royal mother.

**Royal Pilgrimage, Royal Patronage, and Sacred Kingship**

**In the Vie de la Magdalene**

As mentioned above, Louise commissioned François Demoulins and Godefroy le Batave to create the *Vie de la Magdalene* as both a commemoration of the pilgrimage to the holy grotto and a personal book of devotion, but the creators off the manuscript created much more than a souvenir and religious text. Throughout the *Vie* are representations and references, both visual and thematic, to sacred kingship, royal pilgrimage, and the tradition of royal patronage of Mary Magdalene and the Provençal shrine of which Louise and Francis were now a part. As I will demonstrate, the *Vie de la Magdalene* is as much a work of royal propaganda, aimed at supporting Francis as the rightful successor of a long line of kings united by their devotion to Mary Magdalene, as it is a work of commemorative and devotional significance. Equally important, the manuscript’s references to the Magdalene’s anointing of Jesus allude to Francis as the divinely chosen king of France who likewise was anointed during his coronation ceremony. The significant elements within the manuscript that promote these ideas fall into several categories: illuminations of the shrine and reliquaries, royal motifs found on the narrative frames, regal references in the miniatures and narrative text, and references to sacred anointing.

Before discussing these elements, however, I find it worth noting that Demoulins addresses the Burgundian legend on folios 73r to 74v of the *Vie*, relating that “Gyrard,” Duke of Burgundy, desirous of a son, built a great church at Vézelay to house the relics of Mary Magdalene, which he had retrieved by a monk from the hidden tomb in Aix. On folio 75r, however, Demoulins flatly refutes this legend, claiming that he found evidence this legend was fictitious and the invention of hypocritical members of the clergy. Conversely, it seems curious that Demoulins does not mention the discovery of the Magdalene’s true relics by Charles of Salerno or the prince’s subsequent gifts to the saint by way of reliquaries and funds for the construction of the structures at Saint Maxim and La Sainte-Baume. However, given the prominence of the Provençal site in the
sixteenth century, the relationship of the royal family to their Angevin ancestors, and their recent visit to the shrine, Demoulins may have deemed a recitation of the Provençal translation in the manuscript to be unnecessary. This would be especially true since other allusions, such as the reliquaries donated by Charles of Salerno, are prominent elements of the *Vie de la Magdalene* that specifically refer to Charles’s discovery of the Magdalene’s relics in Saint-Maximin. The recounting of the Vézelay legend therefore probably was included both for accuracy and as a reassertion of the authenticity of the Provençal shrine over the falsity of the Burgundian cult.⁵¹

Among the most significant allusions to Charles of Salerno and his association with the Magdalene in Provence are the quadripartite illuminations on folios 55r to 59r that relate the story of the Magdalene’s involvement with the king and queen of Provence. In these miniatures, we see the Magdalene’s arrival in Provence with her companions, including Maximinus and Sidonius who is mentioned in the text on folio 54v. The illustrations depict her preaching and the conversion of the pagan king and queen, the birth of their son, conceived through the saint’s intervention, the Magdalene’s protection of mother and child during the pilgrimage of the royal couple to Rome, and their reunion and baptism upon return to Marseilles, after which all of Provence converts to Christianity. The saint then retreats to La Sainte-Baume and lives her remaining years in solitude. The lower two portions of the illumination on folio 59r depict the Magdalene running through the forest toward the grotto on the left and elevated by angels above the cliff on the right. An anachronistic element to the last quadrant of the illumination is the chapel of Saint Pilon, which is visible on the cliff behind the saint and her angelic attendants. The chapel, which appears in nearly identical fashion on folio 61r, marks the spot from whence the Magdalene ascended heavenward each day, a structure that obviously would not have been present during the Magdalene’s lifetime.

Following the illustrations of the Provençal legend are the depictions on folios 60r to 66r of the exterior and interior of La Sainte-Baume. These images of the shrine, where the saint spent her last days, create a thematic and chronological transition between the first portion of Provençal images and the illuminations on folios 67r and 68r, which depict the events surrounding her death and burial by Saint-Maximinus. Of special note are the last of the miniatures in this series, at the bottom of folio 68r, illustrating the
internment of the Magdalene’s wrapped body in a large stone sarcophagus bearing her name. The final illuminations in the manuscript, on folios 69r to 72r, depict the saint’s relics in their reliquaries, including her arm, her hair, and two views of the head reliquary, one with the false face in place and the other with it removed to show the skull.

This group of illuminations has several features significant to the themes of royal pilgrimage and royal patronage of the Provençal cult, especially by the Angevin dynasty. The most immediately recognized aspect for those aware of the legend is the association of the king, queen, and prince of Provence with Charles of Salerno and his Angevin line, all descended theoretically from the Provençal royal family through Charles’s mother, Beatrice of Provence. Thus, the inclusion of this story in the *Vie de la Magdalene* served several purposes. It related the account of the saint’s life in France in keeping with Magdalenian hagiography necessary for a saintly *vita* and it established the importance of the Provençal legend as the origin of the Magdalene’s cult at La Sainte-Baume. The story also alludes to Charles’s familial connection with Mary Magdalene through his mother’s ancestors, as well as that of Francis, who was Angevin through his paternal lineage.

Furthermore, the inclusion of the scenes of the Magdalene’s life at the grotto, her death, and especially her burial by Maximinus are references to Charles’s discovery of the saint’s body in a sarcophagus in the crypt of Saint-Maximin. Presumably, the coffin depicted in the miniature on 68r was the original receptacle of her body before it was switched with Sidonius’s remains to protect it from the Saracen invaders. Regardless, the miniature on folio 68r clearly refers to Charles’s discovery of the Magdalene’s body in a sarcophagus deep within the crypt of Saint-Maximinus’s church where it rested for centuries following her burial—the burial depicted in the *Vie de la Magdalene*. In fact, Demoulins and Godefroy may have intended the structure behind Maximinus in the burial scene as an allusion to the Basilica of Saint-Maximin where Charles discovered the Magdalene’s body.

Two other aspects of this group of miniatures also relate to the themes in this section. First, the journey taken by the king and his pregnant queen to visit Saint Peter in Rome establishes the theme of royal pilgrimage. This obviously correlates with the pilgrimage undertaken by the French royal family, establishing thematic parallels
between the piety and devotion of the Provençal monarchs and the Magdalene’s protection accorded them by their faith, with the devout actions of Louise and Francis during their pilgrimage and the saint’s protection of Francis that motivated the trip to La Sainte-Baume. The second aspect of note in this group of illuminations is found in the upper right quadrant of the miniature on folio 59r, a scene in which the royal family is baptized in an enormous baptismal font. As mentioned above, legend held that René of Anjou donated the same font to Saint-Maximin. This scene, therefore, acts as another reference to the Angevin patronage of the Provençal shrine.

Of all the illuminations in the *Vie de la Magdalene*, the views of the grotto and the reliquaries are the most direct in their connection with the manuscript’s dual themes of royal patronage and royal pilgrimage at La Sainte-Baume, particularly by the dukes of Anjou. These miniatures emphasize the legends and structures associated with the Provençal shrine, thereby supporting the campaign begun by Charles of Salerno and continued by his successors that shifted the focus of the Magdalene’s cult from Vézelay to Provence. The shrine illuminations begin on folio 60r, which depicts the long view of the cliff, the monastery buildings, and the forest path that leads up to the stairs. This miniature has several important aspects that relate to the themes of pilgrimage and patronage. The first is the path leading to the shrine, which appears clearly defined on the illumination. All pilgrims used this path to reach the base of the shrine, but it was known as the *Chemin de Roi*, or “King’s Way,” to signify the royal pilgrims who trod it for centuries. To the right of the scene, the path leads to a large building placed in a clearing. While the inclusion of this building, as with all portions of the illumination, is attributable to Godefroy’s desire for visual accuracy, this structure also represents one of the donations Francis made to the shrine complex. Following his visit to La Sainte-Baume, Francis ordered a *hostel* built to house visitors, including three rooms for the three most important members of the royal court. I suggest that this structure represents that building, serving as one of the visual references to Francis’s generosity to the Provençal shrine.

Another reference is visible further back in the miniature. At the right edge of the grotto’s diagonal staircase is a tower that meets the end of the path at the base of the cliff. Known today as the Tower of Francis I or the Francis Tower, this too was part of the
king’s donation to the reinforcement and renovation of the shrine (figure 54.) Godefroy emphasized the tower by shading it heavily at the top and right edge, thereby separating it from the mass of similarly colored stone behind it. Also visible above the Francis Tower are the buildings at the mouth of the grotto, which represent the Dominican monastery founded by Charles of Salerno for the maintenance of La Sainte-Baume and the care of the pilgrims. The inclusion of these buildings, as with the depiction of Saint Pilon mentioned above, likewise alludes to the generosity of the current king, for Francis gave funds for the renovation and upkeep of these buildings as well. The same is true of the structures found on folio 62r, which represent the interior of the shrine with the monastery buildings visible at the center and on the right of the illumination.

The presence of the hostel, the tower fortification, and another element in the illumination on folio 60r, an oratory, brings up the concept of time and the process of creating the manuscript. Louise and her children visited the grotto in January 1516 and made their donations following this visit. The abundant foliage on the trees, however, and the inclusion of the hostel and the Francis tower indicate that the scene does not depict the grotto as it looked when the royal pilgrims visited it in the dead of winter, but rather how it looked after the king’s generosity went into effect. In essence, this illumination commemorates the future of the site, which benefited from Francis’s largesse long after he, Louise, and the other members of the royal family had returned home.

The oratory on the center left of the miniature is the indicator of the “future tense” of this illumination. In 1516 Monsignor Jean Ferrier, the archbishop of Arles and Aix-en-Provence, had a series of seven oratories erected along the Chemin de Roi (figures 55.) These small gabled structures contained relief sculptures depicting major events in the life of Mary Magdalene, and their placement on the main route allowed pilgrims to rest, pray, and meditate on the saint and her life during the process of the pilgrimage. In the illumination on folio 60r, Godefroy depicts the Crossroads Oratory, so called because of its placement at the junction of the pilgrimage trail leading to and from the shrine and the hospice. Since the oratories were installed during the year of 1516, it is unlikely that the oratory was in place in January of that year, when the cold weather would have created conditions unfavorable for its construction. Therefore the Crossroad Oratory
would not have been visible to the royal pilgrims and their entourage when they visited that winter. I suggest that the inclusion of this structure in the miniature, along with the hostel and the tower, functioned as a vision of the sacred site in the future, described after the king’s patronage had transformed La Sainte-Baume for the better.\textsuperscript{54}

The view of the Gothic baldachin on folio 63r is particularly important in terms of royal patronage at La Sainte-Baume and specifically the generosity of Francis I. This is the dilapidated structure mentioned above that was originally donated by Louis XI and refurbished by funds provided by Francis I. Although the shrine’s association with the monarchy brought about its destruction during the French Revolution, an engraving of 1788 shows the structure as it appeared immediately preceding the outbreak of the war (figure 56). Despite differences such as the angle of the view, a comparison between the engraving and the miniature on 63r indicates that Godefroy’s representations are remarkably accurate, giving us an idea of how it looked when Louise and Francis visited La Sainte-Baume. However, there is one important difference between the appearance of the baldachin in the miniature and how it probably appeared to Francis and Louise—in the illumination it is not in a state of disrepair. While it seems logical that an artist would not wish to record for posterity, or his royal patron, an image of the chapel in rundown condition, I suggest this specific illumination, like that of folio 60r, was purposefully manipulated to celebrate the king’s generosity by showing the chapel in a refurbished condition demonstrative of Francis’s donation for its repair. Thus, depiction of all the sacred spaces at La Sainte-Baume as refurbished and pristine are intentional references to the devotion and veneration of Francis and Louise to Mary Magdalene, and of their generous gifts to the shrine, gifts that both perpetuated and fulfilled the promises made to the Magdalene by their royal ancestors.

The illuminations of the reliquaries are equally important in advancing the familial connections between Louise and Francis and the earlier kings who shared their devotion to the Magdalene. The most direct connection is with Charles II, who gave the original reliquaries to the church of Saint-Maximin. As mentioned above, the four illuminations on folios 69r through 72r depict the arm of Mary Magdalene, along with that of Maximinus, the remnants of her hair placed in a crystal vessel, and the two views of the head reliquary with and without the gold face of the saint covering the skull.
Although modern photographs of the reliquary do not show the Magdalene wearing a crown (figure 57), one is quite prominent in both illuminations of the head reliquary on folios 71r and 72r of the manuscript. This, too, has a specific reference to Charles II, for legend has it that he placed one of his own crowns on the golden head.\textsuperscript{55} The crown of the Dukes of Anjou had a jeweled band beneath fleurs-de-lis, and as if proof of this legend, a similar crown is depicted in the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene} adorning the gilded likeness of Mary Magdalene that he commissioned.\textsuperscript{56}

The various motifs and allusions to the House of Anjou found throughout the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene} had associations with Louise as well as her son, associations that would have been particularly pertinent during the period of the manuscript’s production in 1516-17. When Francis became the king of France in January 1515, he elevated his mother to the title of Duchess of Anjou.\textsuperscript{57} She bore that title the same year as the pilgrimage to Provence, which had been the heart of the Angevin empire.\textsuperscript{58} Thus the \textit{Vie’s} many references to the Angevins referred not only to Francis as a blood descendent of this dynasty, but to Louise as well, who held the title of Duchess of Anjou for the remainder of her life.

The most obvious association with the illustrious houses from which Louise and Francis descended are the heraldic motifs and personal emblems used as decorative devices on roundel frames throughout the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene}. In particular, the fleur-de-lis is most evident and appears on seven frames in a variety of forms. On folios 12v and 34v, for example, the lilies appear in a simple pattern on a royal blue ground without additional motifs, while on folio 47v they are included with other elements that relate iconographically to the scene of the Crucifixion opposite. In folio 54v, the lilies are set within cartouches on a black ground, and on folio 31v, the fleurs-de-lis form an unbroken arrangement resembling a crown that encircles the narrative. This design may refer to the crown mentioned above that was part of the Magdalene’s head reliquary. The roundel frame on folio 71v has fleurs-de-lis arranged in threes and surrounded by flowers on lavender gray.

As I discuss in Chapter 6, the Lily of France has several interpretations. Single fleurs-de-lis, especially on royal blue, are a reference to the French monarchy in general, but the triple fleurs-de-lis are part of the heraldry of the Houses of Anjou and Valois, the
ancestral houses of Louise and Francis. In addition, Francis chose the triple fleurs-de-lis as his royal coat of arms, thus uniting himself with preceding Valois and Angevin kings who likewise chose that motif, including his ancestors Louis IX and Charles II.

The Angevin connection also pertained to Louise as the Duchess of Anjou, giving the fleur-de-lis a personal association for her as well.

One final use of the fleur-de-lis is especially interesting in reference to the House of Anjou. The frame surrounding the narrative on folio 27v consists of fleurs-de-lis on royal blue and set within cartouches. The lilies alternate with elongated crosses that are bisected at the center and end with perpendicular terminals. This type of cross resembles the large cruciform in the Jerusalem cross motif, which, with the fleur-de-lis, forms the coat of arms of the Angevin kings of Jerusalem, including Charles II and René of Anjou.

In 1295 Charles II placed the Angevin crest bearing the Jerusalem cross and fleurs-de-lis on the keystone of the Basilica of Saint-Maximin (figure 58). I suggest that the decorative motifs found on folio 27v are intentional references to the heraldic motifs on the cornerstone, and form yet another symbolic association that aligns Francis and Louise with the preceding royal patrons of La Sainte-Baume and Saint-Maximin.

Although not strictly heraldic, the wings that appear on several frames of the manuscript are another emblem associated with many French kings. As with most of the iconographic elements in the Vie de la Magdalene, this motif has several interpretations depending on its association with proximate narrative and images. For example, feathers and pairs of gold wings appear on the red frame of folio 53v opposite the miniature depicting Pentecost. These are obvious references to the Dove of the Holy Spirit, who hovers above the head of the Virgin in the illumination opposite. On a secondary level, however, the wings also refer to Louise, whose chose this motif as her personal emblem, as well as to her pious ancestor, Saint Louis IX. In her study of the symbolism associated with Francis I and other members of the French royal family, Anne-Marie Le Coq identifies the wing motif as a play on the French word ailles, which sounds like the letter L, and notes that those with the names of Louis or Louise often used it as a personal insignia. Thus, the wing motif found throughout the Vie de la Magdalene refers not only to Louise but to also to Louis IX, XI, and XII, who shared with Louise her devotion to Mary Magdalene and, in the case of Louis IX, her ancestry as well.
These motifs, which seem at first to be merely decorative, are in fact important references to the various royal families from which Louise and her children descended. More importantly, the motifs refer to the ancestral kings who also had a special relationship with Mary Magdalene, a relationship in which their devotion and veneration for the saint was repaid by her protection and assistance in their endeavors. In some cases, these endeavors included military victories, and the visit of Louis IX to La Sainte-Baume after the first crusade and of Francis after the Battle of Marignano exemplified the gratitude of generations of kings. The inclusion of heraldic motifs and regal emblems in the *Vie de la Magdalene*, therefore, emphasized the special relationship between Mary Magdalene and the royal ancestors of Francis and Louise, a relationship perpetuated through the king and his mother, and which is an important subtext of the manuscript.

**Miraculous Conception, Royal Birth, and Sacred Anointing in The *Vie de la Magdalene***

Finally, two additional topics require examination in respect to the diverse royal themes found in the *Vie de la Magdalene*. These are saintly intervention in the birth of a royal child and the ritual of sacred anointing during the coronation of kings, particularly French kings. As I have demonstrated, one of the functions of the Magdalene manuscript was to serve as a visual tribute to the royal lineage of Louise and Francis as well as a testament to their continuation of the pious actions of their royal predecessors in veneration of Mary Magdalene. Most importantly, however, the *Vie de la Magdalene* emphasizes Francis’s descent from generations of divinely chosen kings and, as I will demonstrate, equates “The Most Christian King of France” with another anointed “king,” Jesus Christ, the King of Kings.

The matter of Francis’s attainment of the throne had been uppermost in his mother’s mind since long before the birth of her son. In 1491 Louise, then a bride of fourteen, visited Francis of Paola, the Franciscan hermit living in Plessis-le-Tour who had a gift for healing and prophecy. In particular, he was renowned for intervening on the behalf of childless couples to help them produce healthy children. Louise, then a minor aristocrat married to another minor aristocrat, went to see the old man anxious for news of a son to carry on his father’s line and give her legitimacy as a wife and mother. She
left assured that not only would she give birth to a son, but that the child would become
king. It is important to note that after the death of Francis of Paola in 1507, Louise was
part of the group that worked tirelessly for his canonization, which was granted in 1519. \(^{65}\) Although this antedates the *Vie de la Magdalene*, Francis of Paola was beatified in 1513, and thus his elevation to sainthood was virtually guaranteed when the manuscript was created in 1516-17.

As far as Louise was concerned, neither the improbability of the prediction nor
the birth of Marguerite in 1492 discouraged her belief in the veracity of Francis of
Paola’s prophecy. Her hopes were vindicated when Francis was born in 1494, and as was
the custom his mother named him after the old man who foresaw his birth. \(^{66}\) Two years
later Louise was widowed and her children fatherless. From that day forward, Louise did
dall in her power to assure that Francis became the royal heir, even taking great joy at the
death of his only rival, the stillborn son of Louis XII and Anne of Brittany in 1512. \(^{67}\)

Until her death in 1514 Anne remained Louise’s greatest adversary in the contest to
produce an heir to the throne. However, the prophecy of Francis of Paola came true in
January 1515 when his namesake became king of France. A year later, the royal family
visited La Sainte-Baume and Louise commissioned Demoulins and Godefroy to create
the *Vie de la Magdalene*, of which the theme of saintly intercession in the conception of a
royal child is an important aspect.

This theme is at the heart of the legend of the king and queen of Provence whose
conversion to Christianity began after the intervention of Mary Magdalene brought about
the conception of their son. Like many other elements of the *Vie de la Magdalene*, the
inclusion of this portion of the story, described in detail on folios 57r through 59r, served
several purposes. Not only was it appropriate for inclusion in the saint’s *vita*, but it
provided the background information necessary to understand the connection between the
establishment of the Provençal cult, the involvement of the Angevin dynasty and their
legendary ancestors, and deeper meaning behind the miniatures of the shrine, the
reliquaries, and the heraldic motifs depicted in the *Vie*. Even more important to Louise,
however, the story both echoes and verifies her belief in the efficacy of saintly
intervention for the attainment of royal heirs. This was proven by the conception of her
own son, the newly crowned king of France, who was himself a descendant of the royal family of Provence through his Angevin heritage.

Francis’s coronation and the Magdalene’s reliquaries bring me to the final theme of this chapter, that of the sacred anointing of kings. The theme is introduced on folio 14r, which depicts the Magdalene’s tearful contrition during the Feast at the House of Simon the Pharisee as told in the Gospel of Luke 7:36-50. In the scriptural account, she washes Christ’s feet with her tears and dries them with her hair while kissing and rubbing them with perfumed oil. The second anointing is recounted in Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, and John 12:1-8. Matthew and Mark identify the location as the House of Simon the Leper in Bethany and John identifies the woman as Mary of Bethany, although he notes that she anoints Jesus’s feet. It is in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark that the unctrice anoints his head with precious oil, an important differentiation that symbolically unites Jesus with the Hebrew kings of the past, thus establishing him as “the Christ” or “Anointed One,” and “the King of Kings.” Although neither woman is identified as Mary Magdalene in the Gospel accounts, the role of unctrice was applied to her after the Gregorian conflation, and she is identified as such in the illuminations on folios 14r and 45r in the Vie de la Magdalene. The reliquary illuminations drive home the reality of the Magdalene’s anointing of Christ by showing us those parts of her body involved in the rituals—her hand and arm, her hair, and her head, which was the source of both the tears and kisses applied to his feet.

The depiction of the first anointing episode from the Gospel of Luke is one of the most commonly recreated moments from the Magdalene’s story, but the second anointing episode is depicted rarely. If, however, the scene is examined in light of the other royal references in the Vie de la Magdalene, it becomes clear why this important moment was included in a manuscript created for Louise of Savoy in 1516. Just as Mary Magdalene’s act of anointing his head “acknowledges and celebrates Christ’s royal and priestly nature,” Francis was also anointed during his coronation in a ceremony known as the sacre, or Royal Anointing.

The ritual originated in 496 during the coronation of the Frankish king Clovis. According to legend, at the moment of his coronation by Saint Remigius, a dove descended from heaven holding the Holy Ampulla, a chrism of oil which was poured on
the king’s head as proof of God’s favor of the Franks and their king. The ritual eventually became an essential part of the coronation ceremony of French kings, and both his body and his head were anointed with the holy oil, indicating the sacred and supernatural quality of French kingship and the alliance of church and state in the body of the king. The king first swore an oath to promote peace in Christendom, to protect Christians, and to be just and merciful in his judgments. He was then anointed and awarded the emblems of state, including the crown and sword, which were carried during the ceremony by princes of the blood. From the moment of his anointing, a French king was considered “spiritually superior to all other Christian monarchs,” thus earning the title, “The Most Christian King.” Furthermore, the process of the sacre imbued the anointed with priestly stature, as his body became the symbol of “the royal religion.”

Although largely symbolic by the sixteenth century, the sacre was still an important part of the ceremony during Francis’s coronation at Rheims on 25 January 1515. Louise witnessed the archbishop’s application of the holy oil to her son’s body and head, which conferred on him the sanctity of French kingship. With that moment fresh in her memory, she could not have failed to recognize the personal implications of the second anointing scene in the Vie de la Magdalene. In the miniature on folio 45r we see Jesus of Nazareth, the divinely conceived and beloved son of an adoring mother, anointed by Mary Magdalene, at that moment becoming the “The King of Kings” and the embodiment of divine grace on earth.

There are undeniable parallels between Jesus and Francis and between the Virgin Mary and Louise found throughout the manuscript, including many references to both Jesus and Francis as “prince” and “king.” The most notable parallel is the miniature of the Virgin and the holy women at Herod’s house on folio 47r, discussed in detail in Chapter 4, which contains a detail relevant only to Louise and Francis. Thus, the association of the anointing of Christ and the sacre of Francis would have connected easily in Louise’s mind. Demoulins ensured this, however, by identifying Jesus in the first anointing scene as “the merciful prince of pity” who “does not condemn the criminals when he knows [of] their loving contrition and true repentance.” This, too, may be an allusion to the oath taken by Francis during his coronation, in which he swears in the name of Christ to be just and merciful.
In reference to the sacral anointing of kings, the hair of Mary Magdalene takes on particular importance in the *Vie de la Magdalene*. Long golden strands decorate the frames of folios 14v and 15v, which narrate the story of the first anointing and the saint’s salvation by “the merciful prince of pity,” and curling locks of gold are interspersed with skulls on the roundel frame opposite the miniature of the hair reliquary on folio 70r. The two views of the head reliquary follow and on each, the Magdalene’s golden hair cascades down her shoulders and is surmounted by the Angevin crown placed there by Charles II. Thus the saint’s hair, once an allusion to her sin, was transformed into an instrument of sanctity as it anointed the feet of Jesus Christ. This sacred relic became sacramentally royal in itself, symbolic of the ceremonial anointing of kings and crowned with its own emblem of royalty.

Highlighting the association between the Magdalene’s hair, the royal crown, and the *sacre* is a small but important detail of the miniature of the hair reliquary. Below the vessel is the blue and gold stripped shield found on the coat of arms of the Dukes of Burgundy, one of the twelve French peerages. Representatives of the peerages actively participated in the coronation of French kings, with the foremost of the ecclesiastical peers, the archbishop of Reims, performing the ceremony. The six lay peers carried the royal regalia during the *sacre* and, as noted by Arnaud Bunel, it was the Dukes of Burgundy who bore the responsibility and honor of carrying the crown during the *sacre* and coronation ceremony. Significantly, the peers also held the Crown of Charlemagne over the head of the newly anointed king. Clearly, this detail and the miniature it adorns were intended as references to the French tradition of the sacred anointing of Christian kings, thus emphasizing the direct connection between Mary Magdalene and Jesus Christ, the first anointed Christian “king,” through all the anointed kings of France to the most recent, Francis I.

Should there be any doubt about the propagandistic intent behind the *Vie de la Magdalene’s* references to monarchs past and present, a detail in the illuminations of the head reliquaries are the proof of Demoulins’s savvy manipulation of Magdalenian tradition to meet the spiritual and political ends of the current royal family. Kneeling before the saint’s visage on folios 70v and 71v is the tiny figure of Francis, dressed in royal regalia complete with the sword of state and crown. Although this image looks
perfectly legitimate, it is in fact a fabrication, for the real reliquary featured not Francis but Anne of Brittany, wife of two kings and queen of France, in the role of supplicant. In the eighteenth-century print mentioned in above, Anne is kneeling in the same position as the figure of Francis in the illumination. However, knowing Louise’s antipathy for her rival, Demoulins substituted the image of the current king for that of the former queen, thus implying the transference of the reciprocal relationship between monarch and saint from Anne to Francis.

This may be the real purpose behind the inclusion of the many royal references found throughout the Vie de la Magdalene. They both glorified the current king and his mother, and reassured Louise that Francis’s familial connection to generations of kings who venerated and thus were favored by Mary Magdalene would ensure the saint’s protection for her beloved son. The saint had already shown her favor by returning Francis from his Italian campaign completely unharmed. Furthermore, the inclusion of visual references to the donations made by mother and son to La Sainte-Baume likewise reassured Louise that the saint would look favorably on their future endeavors. At the time of the manuscript’s creation, the most important of those endeavors was the attainment of male heirs for Francis and Claude, sons who would perpetuate both their distinguished royal lineage and devotion to the saint. Demoulins summed up this hope at the end of the Vie de la Magdalene (folios 105r to 106v) in a prayer he wrote for Louise to say to the Magdalene. In it, she asks the saint to guide her son well and to keep him from bad advice “in order not to create suffering around him” and to attain sons for her children. In one of the most indicative passages within the prayer, Louise assures the Magdalene that her prayer is not just for her own family, but “for the common good,” indicating her concern for all the people of France.

Conclusion

Throughout the Vie de la Magdalene Demoulins and Godefroy reiterate themes and motifs that emphasize the veneration of Mary Magdalene by generations of French monarchs, many of whom were ancestors of Louise and Francis. In particular, the references to royal patronage and royal pilgrimage to the Magdalene’s Provençal shrine at La Sainte-Baume and the abbey church of Saint-Maximin nearby are intended to create
a spiritual lineage between Louise and Francis and their royal ancestors who shared their
devotion to the Apostle of Provence. In addition, emphasis in the manuscript on the
anointing of Jesus by Mary Magdalene as the successor of the ancient Hebrew kings was
intended to reflect the sacral anointing of French kings during their coronations, a
tradition indicating that they, too, were chosen by God to rule. Louise had witnessed
Francis’s sacre during his coronation shortly before the manuscript was created and it
was undoubtedly the proudest moment of her life. With these references Demoulins
creates a correlation between Jesus and Francis as divinely chosen, anointed kings—a
correlation intended to reinforce Louise’s belief in Francis’s rightful succession to the
throne through the fulfillment of his prophesied destiny.

While surely glorifying Francis with these themes, Demoulins is likewise
glorifying the woman who helped place him on the throne. He praises Louise’s piety,
kindness, and wisdom, applauding her maternal success as nurturer, educator, and
spiritual guide for her children. He emphasizes her excellent influence on Francis, who,
as promised, had grown into a wise, generous, and devout king. The royal references can
be understood, therefore, as Demoulins’s reassurance to Louise that the Magdalene will
grant her petition for heirs to the throne of France. Her grandsons will carry their father’s
wise governance into the future, joining the generations of the kings who preceded them
in their veneration of Mary Magdalene and their enjoyment, with their subjects, of the
saint’s protection.
Notes

1. For information on the Magdalene’s cult in Provence, see Saxer, *Le Culte de Marie Madeleine en Occident;* and Neal Raymond Clemens, “The Establishment of the Cult of Mary Magdalen in Provence, 1279-1543,” (Ph. D. dissertation: Columbia University, 1997.) See also Haskins, 286-90; and Jansen, passim.

2. Haskins, 103; Jansen, 327-28. Devotion to Mary Magdalene began long before her cults were established in France. In the Holy Land veneration of Mary Magdalene and the women associated with her, the anonymous sinner and Mary of Bethany, is first mentioned in the fourth century. Saint Jerome tells of visiting the house of Martha and Mary of Bethany in c. 385-86, and one of the earliest Magdalenian cults was established in Ephesus in the sixth century. Material indications of the cult appeared in Europe in the tenth century when her relics were displayed and churches dedicated in her name. A church in Exeter, England claimed to have Magdalene relics and an altar in Halberstadt, Germany was dedicated in her honor. See Jansen, 35, n.58.

3. Haskins, 111. In addition to the Virgin Mary, the church also included Saints Peter and Paul and the holy martyrs Andeux and Pontian as patron saints. The monastery was dedicated to the Holy See in 863 by its founders, which ensured its independence from local nobles and the bishops of Autun, in whose diocese the church was located. Through the payment of annual dues to the Holy See, the abbey church at Vézelay received papal protection and recognized only the Pope as spiritual authority. This situation caused conflict with the townspeople, local nobles, the bishopric, and eventually the monarchy when the church of Sainte Marie Madeleine grew wealthy in the twelfth century due to the increased revenues brought in by pilgrims. For a detailed explanation of the evolution and decline of the Magdalene’s cult at Vézelay, see Victor Saxer, *Le dossier vézelien de Marie Madeleine: invention et translation des reliques en 1265-1267: Contribution à l'histoire du culte de la sainte à Vézelay à l'apogée du Moyen Age* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1975); Véronique Rouchon-Mouilleron, *Vézelay: The Great Romanesque Church* (New York : Harry N. Abrams, 1999.) 7; Haskins, 111-30.

4. Haskins, 110-111; Clemens, 21. Haskins notes that because of the church’s close relationship with the Vatican, the history of the abbey is well documented between the ninth and fourteenth centuries.

5. Jansen, 36-39; Haskins, 95-130. Known for his wisdom, piety, and goodness, Geoffrey was elected in 1037 to calm conflicts between the abbey and local nobles, and to reform the monastery. The monks had been under the rule of the Benedictines of Cluny since 1026, but had fallen into disobedience in the decade preceding Geoffrey’s arrival. The abbot’s promotion of the saint had a two-fold purpose. As an intimate of Christ and a reformed sinner, Mary Magdalene was both a direct link to Jesus and a compassionate intercessor who understood human frailty and had been forgiven for it. This made her a more appropriate *exemplum* to meet the spiritual needs of the newly reformed monks and the local congregation than the saint to whom the church was
originally dedicated. In addition, Magdalene cults recently established at Verdun and Besançon had inspired pilgrimages to these towns, radically changing the lives of locals due to increased revenues resulting from the influx of pilgrims. Establishing a Magdalene cult of Vézelay, therefore, would feed Geoffrey’s parish both spiritually and physically.

6. Haskins, 104-05, 115. A twelfth-century manuscript from the abbey gave an explanation of why the relics were not brought up from the crypt. Geoffrey had decided to remove the relics and put them in a reliquary for public display but at the moment the crypt was opened, the church suddenly became completely dark and the people assisting the translation fled in terror. This strange even was taken as a sign that the saint’s relics should remain undisturbed and the crypt never opened again, because “to do so clearly provoked divine wrath.” See Haskins, 115, n. 79.

7. Jansen, 40, 218, 247, 257-58, 258 n. 35, 282, 294-298, 310, 316; Haskins, 112-14; Clemens, 133-34, 165. For an analysis of the cult of miracles associated with Mary Magdalene, see Clemens, 124-59 and 257-65.

8. Jansen, 39; Clemens, 138-43.

9. Jansen 38-39; Haskins, 115; Clemens, 33-36. Badilon is also referred to as Badilo and Badius. According to legend, Badilon arrived in Aix to find the city destroyed but elders of the town showed him the site of the Magdalene’s tomb where, they assured him, the sweetly fragranced and uncorrupted body of the saint lay undisturbed. That night, the monk dreamt that the Magdalene, dressed in radiant white, came to him and told him not to be afraid but to take her body to the place pre-ordained by God. The following day he secretly removed her remains from Aix and translated them to Vézelay. See Voragine, 362.

10. Ibid. Voragine notes that when the relics were “a league” from the abbey, they would not be moved any further until an appropriately grand procession of clergy and nobles came out to meet the saint’s remains and escort them into the monastery complex.

11. Haskins, 119, 190-19. One of the most significant aspects of the development of the Magdalene cult in France was the proximity of the saint to Jesus himself. Before the twelfth century, the most celebrated saint in France was Saint Dionysius, who was believed to be a disciple of Saint Paul and was called “The Apostle of France.” Dionysius was martyred and buried in the church bearing his Gallic name, Saint Denis, which was the site of the coronation ceremony, particularly the sacred anointing or sacre, of French kings since Pepin the Short in 754. According to the Vézelay accounts, Saint Denis was two apostolic “generations” removed from Jesus, unlike Mary Magdalene who was an intimate of Jesus and had lived among and converted the people of Gaul to Christianity. Thus she provided an even more direct connection between the people of France and Christ.

13. Haskins, 119-20. Royal recognition of the political importance of Sainte Marie Madeleine and its powerful protector began in the eleventh century when Abbot Suger chose the abbey for the meeting between Louis VI and Pope Gelasius II in 1118. The abbey’s greatest moment occurred on Easter Day, 1146 when Pope Eugenius III selected Sainte Marie Madeleine as the departure point for the Second Crusade. The sermon was given by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux and attended by Louis VII, Eleanor of Aquitaine and their enormous entourage. The royal company was so large that the grandstand built for the members of the court collapsed shortly after Bernard’s sermon. The fact that no one died in the accident was attributed to the miraculous intervention of Mary Magdalene.

14. Haskins, 123; Jansen, 36, n. 59; Clemens, 208.

15. Haskins, 123; Jansen, 36; Clemens, 61-63.

16. Haskins, 123-24; Clemens, 61-63. In addition, Louis expressed his gratitude to the monks of Sainte Marie Madeleine for his “generous share of the remains” by giving them several relics from his own collection, including a piece of the True Cross, thorns from the Crown of Thorns, and fragments of Jesus’s clothing. In the accompanying letter, Louis wrote, “It seems to us fitting that some relics of the Savior be thus placed close to some relics of this most holy woman who cherished him with such a love that she merited in exchange the great pardon from her sins which she received from him, of that same woman whom he accepted with such familiarity that she touched him.” See Haskins, 123-24.

17. For a discussion of the rise and fall of Vézelay as a site of Magdalenian veneration, see Clemens, Chapter 2, 19-65; and Haskins, Chapter 4, 95-130.

18. Haskins, 117, 208-227; Jansen, 37-39; Mycoff, 6, 98; Louis Réau, Iconographie de l'art chrétien, vol. 3 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1955-59 ), 847, 855, 884-86. The vita eremitica was probably a conflation with the story of another female hermit saint, Mary of Egypt, an Egyptian prostitute who traded her services for passage to the Holy Land where she repented her sins and was converted to Christianity after a period of penitential isolation in the desert. She is invariably depicted either naked or with tattered remnants of clothing and covered with long thick hair. The two Marys are often shown together in stained glass windows, as in Auxerre. See Raguin, 55.

19. Haskins, 117. The vita eremitica may have been brought to the West by Greek monks fleeing the fall of Byzantium or written by a Cassianite monk. See Jansen, 37.

20. Haskins, 117. The holy grotto and the woods surrounding had been a sacred site since 410, when the monk Jean Cassian chose this isolated wilderness to establish a
religious community founded on the Benedictine rule. The community, which eventually numbered nearly five thousand, was not dedicated to the worship of Mary Magdalene, however, but rather chose the Virgin Mary as their patron. Regardless, the presence of a religious community at La Sainte-Baume at this early date is an important indication of the perceived sanctity of the area around the Magdalene’s shrine. See Renè Lambert, *La Sainte-Baume, Le Pèlerinage des Compagnons du Devoir* (Paris : Librairie Du Compagnage, 1997), 32 ; and Edmunds, 19.

In 1248, the Franciscan friar Salimbene de Adam of Parma wrote the first description of the grotto, specifically mentioning it in connection with Mary Magdalene. See Jansen, 127-28, 137, 238; Haskins, 126; and Clemens, 85-86, 111-12. Fra Salimbene de Adam, *Cronica Fratris Salimbene de Adam Ordinis Minorum A. 1283* is reprinted in *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (Leipzig: 1889), 522. See Haskins, 417, n. 121.


25. Ibid.

26. See Clemens, Chapter 2, 66-122, for discussion of discovery of Mary Magdalene’s body by Charles of Salerno, and the various monastic and historical accounts that supported or were extrapolated from Charles’s efforts to find the true remains of Mary Magdalene.

27. Jansen, 309. Charles worked with such enthusiasm and exertion that he was soon soaked with perspiration, which ran in rivulets from his face and body. Jansen notes that this observation was recorded in an account of the event by Philippe Cabassole, who was not an eyewitness to the event. See also Clemens, 100-105, who also discusses Cabassole’s account of the event.


29. In addition to the sources mentioned in note 28 above, see also Edmunds, 16-17.
30. Jansen, 209-11; Haskins, 129; Clemens, 78-81. Jansen points out that Boniface VIII was elected pope in Naples, the capital of the Angevin empire, and that in January of 1295, Charles of Salerno, now Charles II King of Sicily and Jerusalem, with his son Charles Martel, lead the pontiff’s white horse through the streets of Rome to Saint Peter’s Basilica. The following April, Boniface issued the bull in which he declared the relics discovered by Charles to be authentic, as well as approving the plans for the new basilica and Dominican convent.

31. Unfortunately, the association of the shrine and Mary Magdalene with the French monarchy led to its near destruction during the French Revolution, when most of the object, shrines, and chapels at La Sainte-Baume were damaged or destroyed.

32. Jansen, 310-13. Some of Charles’s efforts were delayed by war and other obligations of rule.

33. Haskins, 128-129; Jansen, 41-42, 308-09, 327-29; Clemens 69-75, 231-33, 274, n. 37.

34. Edmunds, 19.

35. See Jansen, 320-28, for discussion of the veneration of Mary Magdalene by Charles’s descendants in the Angevin dynasty.


37. Jansen, 325, n. 63; Clemens, 232.

38. Jansen, 325, n. 63; Clemens, 80.


40. Lynette Muir, *The Biblical Drama of Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 42, 194, n. 63, and 199, n. 42. Muir notes that René was a “fervent patron of the drama and sponsored performances in Angers of the Passion, Resurrection, and Marriage at Cana.” The themes of the plays are indicative of René’s religious devotion, as Mary Magdalene is a major character of the Passion and Resurrection plays. In addition, René donated a wine vessel believed to have been used at the Marriage at Cana to the major church in Angers. The Resurrection play was also believed to be by Jean Michel, but some scholars credit Jean de Prier, another playwright patronized by Renè, with its creation. See Grace Frank, *The Medieval French Drama,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954), 189.
41. Lambert, 40-42.

42. Knecht, 9, 15. For discussion of the complexities surrounding the marriage of Francis and Claude, see Knecht, 11-17.

43. Francis I was descended from Capetian king Louis IX through his maternal grandmother, Margaret of Bourbon, and from the Valois and Angevin lines through his father Charles Valois, Count of Angoulême, who was a descendant of Charles II, King of Sicily and Count of Provence. For the genealogy of Francis and Louise, see the genealogical tables for the Capetian, Valois, and Angevin dynasties in following sources: Knecht, xxv; Snyder, 538-39; Matarasso, ix, x; Armin Wolf, “Reigning Queens in Medieval Europe: When, Where, and Why,” in Medieval Queenship, ed. John Carmi Parsons (New York: Saint Martin’s Press, 1993), 185-86; and David Potter, A History of France 1460-1560: The Emergence of a Nation State (New York: Saint Martin’s Press, 1995), 370-77. See also the genealogical tables on the following web site: http://www.heraldique-europeenne.org/Celebres/Personnages/Francois_I_France.htm. This is the electronic version of Arnaud Bunel’s Armorial Illustre de Grands-Officiers de la Maison de Rois de France (Paris: Editions Sibauldus, 2006). See also: http://www.heraldique-europeenne.org/Genealogies/Genealogie_Capetienne/Valois_Angouleme.htm for a more extensive genealogy of the Capetian dynasty, in particular the Valois-Angoulême branch.

44. Clemens, 305.

45. Lambert, 42-43.

46. Lambert, 42-44.

47. Ibid.

48. Lambert, 43.


50. Lambert, 40, 42.

51. The mention of the hypocrisy and falseness of the monks of Vézelay also allows Demoulins to segue into one of his invectives against the abuses of the various religious orders and members of the clergy, a theme found elsewhere in the manuscript on folios 75r to 77r.
52. Lambert. 42.

53. Lambert, 31. The oratories were donated by Mgr. Jean Ferrier, the archbishop of Arles. Of the seven, four oratories remain today. The first, second, and seventh oratories built have disappeared but the third one is still located on the road to Nans, the fourth at the entrance to the forest, the fifth at the crossing of four paths near the fountain of Nans, and the sixth on the path to the Saint-Pilon. I believe it is the fifth oratory that is depicted on folio 60r of the Vie de la Magdalene.

54. The inclusion of the oratory in the illumination may also indicate that Godefroy returned to La Sainte-Baume later in the year to create drawings for the manuscript, which was given to Louise in 1517.

55. Haskins, 128.

56. See “Duché d’Anjou, Charles Ier de France” at: http://www.heraldique-europeenne.org/Regions/France/Anjou.htm. The crowns of the counts and dukes of Anjou bear a strong similarity to the crown placed on the Magdalene’s head reliquary in folios 71r and 72r.

57. After the accession of Francis 1st to the throne of France, Louise of Savoy’s many titles as a Peer of France were the Duchess of Angoulême, Duchess of Anjou, Countess of Maine and of Beaufort, Duchess of Nemours, Duchess of Auvergne, Duchess of Bourbonnais, Duchess of Châtellerault, Countess de Clermont-en-Beauvais, and Countess of Gien. See Arnaud Bunel, “Louise de Savoie” at: http://www.heraldique-europeenne.org/Regions/France/Angouleme.htm.

58. Provence returned to the French crown following the death of René of Anjou’s successor, Charles IV, whose brief reign lasted from 1480-81. After this time, all of Anjou including Provence was granted to members of the royal family. See Potter, 114. When Francis became king in 1515, he awarded his mother the title of Duchess of Anjou along with her other titles listed on note 66 above.

59. For the armorials of the Duchies of Valois and Anjou, see the link to the website on note 56 above.


61. For the Jerusalem Cross, see the Bunel web site at: www.heraldique-europeenne.org/Regions/Balkans/Jerusalem.htm.

63. Le Coq, 61, 77, 95-97.

64. Knecht, 3; Matarasso, 112-13.

65. Potter, 211-12.

66. Knecht, 3. It was common for children born after the intervention of Francis of Paolo to bear his name.


68. Potter, 4-5; Jackson, 16-21.

69. See Chapter 2 for an explanation of the conflation of the role of Mary Magdalene as unctrice.

70. Haskins, 23; Knecht, 45-46; Jackson, 39-41. Although the entire coronation ceremony is often referred to as “le sacre,” the actual sacre, in which the king’s body is anointed with sacred oil from the Holy Ampulla, directly precedes the crowning of the king. For discussion of the origins of the anointing ritual, see Michael J. Enright, *Iona, Tara, and Soissons: The Origins of the Royal Anointing Ritual* (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1985). For origins of the French sacre, see Chapter 3, “Ordaining Pippin: Political Propaganda and the Reception of the Uction Concept in Francia,” 107-163.

71. Knecht, 45-46; Jackson, 203-06; Potter, 18, 21, 286; Enright, 119-137.

72. Jackson, 13, 31-32, 176-178, 204-05; Knecht, 45.

73. Knecht, 46.

74. Knecht, 45. By the sixteenth century, the sacre was no longer considered essential for the assumption of a king’s power, as it was believed the king began his rule the moment he acceded to the throne, but it was still had important symbolic and ceremonial meaning to the monarch and the people of France.

75. Knecht, 46; Jackson, 205; Enright, 137-159.
76. For the crest of the Duchy of Burgundy see the Bunel website: http://www.heraldique-europeenne.org/Regions/France/Bourgogne.htm. Above the armorial for Burgundy, Bunel notes: "En tant que titulaire de l'une des Anciennes Pairies de France, le Duc de Bourgogne portait la couronne et mettait la ceinture du Roi au cours de la cérémonie du Sacre." See also Knecht, 45-46; Jackson, 39-40, 157. The Duchy of Burgundy was first among the six lay peerages, which also included Normandy, Guyenne and Aquitaine, Toulouse, Flanders, and Champagne. The ecclesiastical peerages were Reims, Laon, Langres, Beauvais, and Noyon, with the ceremony presided over by the Archbishop of Reims. For the twelve peerages and their duties during the sacre, see http://www.heraldique-europeenne.org/Regions/France/Anciennes_Pairies.htm.

77. Elizabeth McCartney, “The King’s Mother and Royal Prerogative in Early-Sixteenth Century France,” Medieval Queenship, ed. John Carmi Parsons (New York: Saint Martin’s Press, 1993), 117-141. As McCartney, 125, points out, several writers at the royal court between 1505 and 1515 emphasized Louise’s “bio-genetic” role as nurturer, teacher, and guide to the future king, as well as assuring royal succession by transmitting to her son the bon sang of her illustrious ancestor, Louis IX: “In these works Louise is hailed as “Mater Regis” and dynast, honors that continued to be celebrated after Francis’ accession.” The most famous of these manuscripts is the anonymous Le Compas du Dauphin (Paris, B.N., ms. fr. 2285). See McCartney, 120.
CHAPTER 4
THE INFLUENCE OF LOUISE OF SAVOY ON THE CONTENT
AND SYMBOLISM OF THE VIE DE LA MAGDALENE

At first glance, the Vie de la Magdalene appears to be just that, the life of Mary Magdalene told with images and narrative text. However, a careful examination of the motifs, illuminations, and textual elements found in this manuscript reveals that it is evocative of another life as well, that of the book’s owner Louise of Savoy. As I will demonstrate, François Demoulins de Rochefort, working with Godefroy le Batave, included numerous elements in the Vie that have a direct reference to the biography and concerns of their patron.\(^1\) There were several reasons for this. First, the inclusion of the insignias, emblems, heraldic motifs, and monograms of Louise and her family personalized the manuscript for its reader. Second, the inclusion of scenes and details from the Magdalene’s vita that referred to events in Louise’s life functioned as mnemonic devices, thus making the process of reading the manuscript a more deeply personal devotional experience. Third, the accurate, detailed depiction of the Magdalene’s relics and the shrine at La Sainte-Baume enabled Louise to re-experience the pilgrimage that inspired the Vie de la Magdalene each time she read the manuscript, thus providing her with a spiritual benefit through her remembrance of the actual experience.

European manuscripts of the late medieval and Renaissance periods often included personal elements associated with the patron. What makes the Vie de la Magdalene unusual is the degree to which Demoulins and Godefroy incorporated motifs and scenes referring to Louise’s life into the narrative and images of Mary Magdalene’s vita, and the complexity of this incorporation. In the Vie, the intertwining of the Magdalene’s story with allusions to Louise’s life is so profound that in some instances, only Louise herself could have fully appreciated and understood these associations. Furthermore, Demoulin made specific parallels not only between Louise and Mary Magdalene, but with the Virgin Mary as well. An example of this, as I discuss below, is the illumination of folio 47r in which the Holy Women go to Herod’s house following the arrest of Christ. The scene, which is extremely unusual, is included because it has a direct and pointed reference to a particularly traumatic episode in Louise’s life that
occurred during Francis’s childhood. This illumination proves that Demoulins intentionally included personal elements from Louise’s biography as intrinsic aspects of the Vie’s narrative, imagery, and decoration.

The inclusion of personal elements and comparable events served a very important purpose in the Vie de la Magdalene. It is clear that by emphasizing the parallels between the lives of Louise and the women depicted manuscript, Demoulins intended to create a book for his patron that would function to some extent as an imitatio sancti, in this case both an imitatio Magdalenae and imitatio Maria.\(^2\) As with all forms of imitatio sancti, this technique made the manuscript a more powerful devotional experience for its reader, one that involved not only her piety and her reverence, but also her memories and emotions as a woman and mother.

The inclusion of cloaked references in manuscripts was nothing new for Demoulins. As a theologian and humanist who was intrigued by the Neo-Platonic and cabalistic studies popular in the court of Francis I, many of the manuscripts Demoulins wrote for Louise and her children during his twenty-five years of service were filled with enigmatic allusions and arcane symbolism.\(^3\) One of the most interesting is the Libellus Enigmatum, a book Demoulins created for Louise that was, as I mentioned in Chapter 1, contemporary with the Vie de la Magdalene.\(^4\) Just four pages in length, three of the folios contain illuminations dedicated to the individual family members. An animal emblem placed at the base of concentric circles on each diagram identified the subject of the design. Louise is symbolized by an eagle with two eaglets (figure 25), Francis with a cock (figure 59), and Marguerite with a swan (figure 60). At the center is a large heart in which three small hearts are placed in two rows. Inscribed on the smaller hearts are the initials of the family, the lowest of the three being the monogram of the person to whom that page is dedicated. Within the rings are the astrological symbols of the family and various inscriptions testifying to their mutual love, devotion, and unity, qualities praised in many of the manuscripts Demoulins created for the family, including the Vie de la Magdalene.\(^5\)

Metaphors and allusions such as these were, therefore, a common literary device in Demoulins’s writings, as they were with many authors of the medieval and Renaissance eras. As I discussed in Chapter 1, many writers, intellectuals, and
ecclesiastics in France during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, including Louise, Francis, and Demoulins, were studying systems of arcane and mystical wisdom including astrology, alchemy, Neo-Platonism, and the Cabala. As noted in Chapter 1, one of the most significant members of Francis’s court to be involved in mysticism was the Carthusian monk Jean Thenaud, who wrote a number of books on spiritual and metaphysical subjects for the king and his mother.⁶

Thus, the widespread interest in symbolism and veiled messages among the French intelligentsia set the stage for Demoulins’s use of subtext in the Vie de la Magdalene, and as I will demonstrate, similar types of arcana appear throughout the Magdalene manuscript and in many different forms. In this case, however, the hidden messages are not strictly moral and spiritual in nature, but also biographical and political, reflecting the various events, concerns, and individuals in the life of Louise of Savoy and her children. In some cases, these references are especially timely, referring to incidents that occurred in the recent past or were ongoing, thus imbuing the manuscript with a sense of immediacy that enhanced its intimate nature. In this respect, the Vie de la Magdalene is an important historical document that testifies to the dramatic changes occurring in France during the early years of the reign of Francis I.

In reference to the personalizing of this work for its reader, it is necessary to mention two essential aspects of the manuscript. First, Demoulins addresses large portions of the narrative directly to Louise. For example, in folios 104v to 106v, he advises her on how to pray for the Magdalene’s intercession and protection, and on folio 59v, he praises her for undertaking the arduous pilgrimage to the shrine. He extols her wisdom and intelligence by comparing her to Minerva on folio 104v, and includes other flattering comments elsewhere in the manuscript.⁷ Demoulins also mentions Francis and Claude in equally obsequious terms, praising Francis as “our adamant and invincible king,” and Claude as “the sweetest little queen in the world.”⁸

In addition, Demoulins adopts a dialectic form for the commentary that follows the Magdalene’s story. This “conversation” between “Madame” and “Obedience” touches on various relevant points, including the composition of the ointment (folios 89v to 91r), the identity of those who accompanied the Magdalene to Provence (folios 92v to 93r), and, most significantly, the number and identities of the women known as Mary
Magdalene (folios 106v to 107r and 108r). The latter topic, if it came from Louise at all, gave Demoulins the opportunity to discuss this polemical issue in the guise of attempting to resolve his patron’s confusion over the persistent incongruities of the Gregorian conflation.  

Secondly, the minute size of the Vie de la Magdalene and the extreme detail of its visual elements undoubtedly required Louise to use a magnifying glass or optical lens to appreciate the manuscript fully. The use of such a device necessitated Louise’s focused attention, instilling the act of reading the Vie with an intimacy that enhanced the personalization of the manuscript. Taken together, the narrative style and diminutive size of the manuscript, the referential nature of the images, the inclusion of familial motifs, and the detailed illustrations of places she had visited and things she had seen made the process of reading the Vie a highly individual experience for Louise. In this chapter, I will examine the various ways in which the Vie de la Magdalene reflects the life and concerns of its owner, the manner in which these elements are incorporated into the manuscript, and the reasons that motivated their inclusion.

The Impresa and Emblematic Devices of Louise of Savoy and Her Family

The first of the visual elements that I will discuss are the gilded motifs in the frames surrounding the narrative roundels. I examine Demoulins’s use of many of these symbols in Chapter 6, but additional discussion is necessary at this point some of the designs in the narrative frames contain a complicated group of symbols that make both direct and indirect references to the royal family.

During the Gothic and Renaissance periods, visual motifs often functioned on several levels and could act as references to a specific episode or literary passage as well as a symbolic allusion to a particular person or event. This dual utilization of visual motifs is prevalent throughout the Vie. For example, the feathers and wings on the frame of folio 53v of the Vie de la Magdalene are obvious references to the Dove of the Holy Spirit, which hovers over the heads of Christ’s followers during Pentecost in the illumination opposite. However, as I explain below, the wings are also one of the emblems of Louise of Savoy, a motif that in itself has several layers of meaning.
Throughout the Vie, therefore, a single visual element can have several interpretations dependent upon its placement in the manuscript, the other motifs around it, the content of the narrative it surrounds, and the subject of the illumination on the facing page. If one is aware of the references in the content of the manuscript and, equally important, in the life of Louise of Savoy, these symbols reveal themselves to the reader.

Of course, the meanings of these symbols would have been more readily apparent to Louise than they are to the modern audience, particularly those objects that representative of the emblematic devices of the royal family. Louise’s favorite personal motif, wings, appears both singly and in pairs in the manuscript, and has several interpretations. First, it was one of the devices of the House of Bourbon, from which Louise was descended through her mother, Margaret of Bourbon. A traditional name in that family was Louis or Louise, and the motifs of a wing or wings was a visual pun on the similarity between the sound of the French word for wings, ailles, and the L that is the monogram of those names.11

For Louise, however, the most significant motive for her choice of wings as a personal emblem derived from maternal love and pride. As mentioned above, she chose a mother eagle with two eaglets as her animal device, a motif that correlated with her personal motto, SIC AQUILA PROVOCANS AD VOLANDUM PULLOS SUOS, “As the eagle urges her young to fly, and flying above them, she had spread her wings, and she took her young and carried them on her back.”12 Significantly, this motto is repeated in the Vie as part of the prayer that Demoulins wrote for Louise to recite to the Magdalene: “Madame, have pity on me, keep me, protect me, and allow me to keep my son and to defend him, SICUT AQUILA PROVOCANS AD VOLANDUM PULLOS SUOS.”13 The eagle and wings, therefore, along with the corresponding motto, were intended to emphasize that Louise was a powerful but loving mother who both encouraged and protected her children as they went out into the world. It is an especially fitting association for this manuscript in light of Louise’s rigorous protection of Francis as a child and her careful preparation of her son for kingship, preparations that enabled him “ascend” to the French throne.

In addition, the eagle’s wings found throughout the Vie are also a political reference to Louise’s role as regent of France. Her first regency occurred in 1515 during
Francis’s Italian campaign; therefore, Louise held this title during the period of the pilgrimage that inspired the *Vie de la Magdalene*. As Le Coq points out, Demoulins emphasized the significance of Louise’s regentship by including two astrological symbols on the last page of the *Vie de la Magdalene*, on which the author dedicated the manuscript to “My Lady.” At the top of the roundel is the symbol for Jupiter and at the bottom is the symbol for Pisces, one of two astrological houses of Jupiter. Le Coq states that the reason for the inclusion of the sign of Jupiter was that Demoulins considered it the most correct for Louise due to her recent role as Regent of France. This planet, named for the ruler of the Roman gods, was believed to fortify the strength of the commander and ruler. Therefore, the eagle, as the bird of Jupiter, was associated with royal and imperial power, and as such, the eagle was an appropriate symbolic reference to both Francis as the king of France, and Louise as his regent. In the *Vie*, the regal significance of the eagle translates visually into Louise’s wings, referring symbolically to the first of two regencies she held in which she served as monarch in her son’s absence.

In addition to the eagle’s wings, there are a number of winged objects decorating the frames of the narrative roundels. I discuss the significance of the bucrania, monstrances, and other winged motifs in Chapter 6, but the cherubic heads require mention here, as they, too, are an allusion to Louise of Savoy. While referring, on the one hand, to the angels that elevated the Magdalene heavenward, the winged cherubic heads are also a reference to Jean Thenaud’s theory of the angelic hierarchy. In 1519 Thenaud wrote *Cabale méritrifiée* (B.N. ms. fr. 822), a treatise in which he expressed, among other things, his theory that each type of angel manifested a cardinal virtue, and that after death the members of the royal family would be attended by a different level of angelic being in accordance with the virtues they exhibited in life. Thenaud asserted that cherubim would attend Louise after her death, as these beings were the manifestations of the prudence and wisdom she had exhibited during her life. Therefore, the winged angelic heads symbolizing cherubim that are found on a number of the frames, including folios 60v, 61v, and 66v, are references to Louise’s virtues of prudence and wisdom as well as to the angelic beings that would attend her after death.

The text found on folios 80v to 88r reinforces the association between Thenaud’s theory of angelic attendance and the purpose of the cherubic heads in the ornamentation
of the manuscript. These folios contain the revelation, mentioned in Chapter 1, made to the Franciscan mystic Amadeo Menez da Silva by the archangel Gabriel. These revelations were the foundation for a fifteenth-century philosophy of angelology known as Amadeism, on which Thenaud based his own angelic theories. Considering Demoulins and Thenaud were contemporaries at court, Demoulins’s inclusion of one of Amadeo’s revelations in the Vie reinforces the connection between the cherubic head motif in the decorative elements, Thenaud’s assignment of cherubs as Louise’s angelic attendants, and the revelations of Amadeo that were the basis for Thenaud’s theory of angelic hierarchy. In fact, Demoulins considered Amadeo’s revelation significant enough to include it twice, once in Latin and once in French, and to dedicate sixteen pages of the manuscript to it. On several of these pages, cherubic heads appear as decorative elements, reinforcing the association between Thenaud, Amadeism, and Louise’s celestial entourage as well as her virtues of wisdom and prudence of which the cherubs were symbols.

The prayer Demoulins wrote for Louise to recite to the Magdalene provides another interpretation of the wing motif. On folio 106r, the prayer continues, “But I would not know how to fly without the help of Jesus Christ.” In Neo-Platonic philosophy, wings were symbolic of the soul’s desire for spiritual elevation to be closer to the Creator. This portion of the prayer refers to the longing of the Christian soul, in this case Louise’s, to be near Christ. The reference to flight is especially appropriate for the Vie de la Magdalene, as this passage in the prayer recalls one of the most significant events in the Magdalene’s life, the angelic elevations that brought her physically and spiritually closer to Christ, as we see on folios 59r and 67r. Given the popularity of Neo-Platonism among members of the French court, it is likely that Louise would have understood both this reference to flight and the various wing motifs in the Vie, and recognized Demoulins’s correlation between her own desire for spiritual elevation and that experienced by the Magdalene.

Demoulins and Godefroy also refer to Louise’s children and daughter-in-law in a variety of ways. For example, the daisy at the bottom right of folio 71v and the pearl-like beads on folio 1v are references to Marguerite. Margarita is the Latin name for the daisy, which, as a heliotropic species, turns throughout the day to follow the brilliance of
the sun. Thus, the daisy motif is also an allusion to Marguerite’s well-known adoration of her brother.\textsuperscript{22} In addition, Margarita is also another name for a pearl in Latin, but the association of this motif with Marguerite is more personal still, for according to legend Louise conceived Marguerite after swallowing a perfect pearl.\textsuperscript{23} Therefore, in deference to this legend and her renowned virtue, Marguerite of Angoulême was called “The Pearl of France,” and accordingly, strings of round objects resembling pearls are found throughout her mother’s manuscript.\textsuperscript{24} Her brother’s famous salamanders are also included on folios 7v and 10v, as are the interlaced knots, the lacs d’amour, of the House of Savoy, which Francis used as personal devices on his chateaux at Blois and Chambord (figure 61).\textsuperscript{25} This type of loosely interlaced knot is a common motif in the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene} and is found on the tails of snakes (folio 22v) and dragons (folio 56v), as part of a gold cord (folios 64v and 67v), or a cordelière (folio 33v). As I discuss below, the Savoy knot and \textit{cordelières} are significant symbols in the repertoire of visual motifs related to Louise and her family.

One of the most prominent elements throughout the manuscript is the \textit{cordelière}, the knotted rope worn by Franciscan monks as evidence of their vows. The development of the Franciscan cult in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries motivated many aristocratic families to choose the \textit{cordelière} as an emblem to symbolize their devotion to Saint Francis. Among the families to adopt the \textit{cordelière} were the houses of Savoy and Brittany. Thus, Louise and Francis utilized the \textit{cordelière} as a personal emblem, as did Francis’s Breton wife Claude of France, whose own mother Anne of Brittany, had used it as well. There are, however, important differences between the \textit{cordelière} of Anne of Brittany, the \textit{cordelière} of Claude of France (folio 77r), and the \textit{cordelière} of Louise of Savoy (folio 64v) that require explanation.\textsuperscript{26}

A clear differentiation between the three types of \textit{cordelières} was essential in the \textit{Vie} because of the antipathy that existed between Louise of Savoy and Anne of Brittany, the queen of Louis XII.\textsuperscript{27} Thus, the \textit{cordelières} included in the \textit{Vie} as references to Claude and Louise had to be depicted so that they bore no resemblance to the \textit{cordelière} of Anne of Brittany, whose symbolic presence in the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene} would have been unwelcome by the manuscript’s owner.
The correct identification of the cordelières in the Vie’s with Louise and not Anne would have been a problem if not for a variation in the design adopted by the House of Savoy, and by Louise in particular. Since the fourteenth century, the Savoy family had used the lac d’amour, or love knot, as one of their devices.\textsuperscript{28} Louise applied the loosely interlaced knot to the Savoy cordelière to create a motif that appeared not only on the architectural ornamentation of the chateaux mentioned above (figure 61), but most significantly, on the coat of arms created for her after Francis acceded to the throne (figure 62).\textsuperscript{29} This knot, which appears throughout the Vie de la Magdalene, was a way to distinguish the Savoy cordelière from those of other families, most particularly Anne of Brittany. The twisted cordelière of Brittany is distinctly different from the knotted and interlaced Savoy cordelière, as is evident on an illumination from the Poetic Epistles of Anne of Brittany and Louis XII (figure 63). The Breton girdle is woven into the tapestry decorating the room in which Anne writes her letters.\textsuperscript{30}

In The Hours of Claude of France (E.B.A. no. ms. 95) however, Claude’s cordelières are neither knotted nor twisted, as evident on the folio depicting Saint Genevieve, in which plain tasseled girdles frame the illumination (figure 64). Claude’s cordelière motif appears in the Vie in a similar fashion, as simple, undulating Franciscan girdles (folios 77v, 87r, and 87v) that lack both the Savoy love knots and the twisted form used by Anne of Brittany.

Folio 70v displays one of the most significant applications of the cordelière motif in the Vie de la Magdalene, and typifies the multivalent aspect of many of the visual elements in the manuscript. The inclusion of this design is particularly appropriate given the creation of the manuscript following the regency of Louise of Savoy. At the top of the frame are two snakes with entwined necks, and at the sides and base of the roundel are interlaced gold cords. All display the Savoy knot and, as I will demonstrate, refer to specifically to Louise of Savoy.

In François Ier Imaginaire, Le Coq discusses the use of serpents, knots, and cords as symbols for Louise of Savoy that were applied to manuscripts and other objects created for the royal family.\textsuperscript{31} A pair of entwined serpents alluded to her wisdom, an association based on the Gospel of Matthew 10:16, in which the Evangelist advises the faithful, “Be ye therefore wise as serpents.” One interpretation of the serpent motif in
Western art, therefore, was as a symbol of the virtues of wisdom and prudence. In addition, serpents are one of the symbols of Minerva, the Roman goddess of wisdom to whom Demoulins compares Louise in folio 104v. Furthermore, Demoulins and others in Louise’s circle praised her for exhibiting these virtues and often referred to her as “Dame Prudence” and “Madame Concord” in their writings. The gold cord that appears throughout the manuscript, therefore, is a reference to this latter appellation and the “concord” with which Demoulins, in particular, associates her in his poetry. Thus, the gold cords and serpents used to decorate the frame of folio 70v are a tribute to Louise’s renowned virtues of wisdom and prudence, and her ability to maintain harmony in the kingdom during her first regency.

The design on folio 66v also contains one of the most interesting examples of the incorporation of subtle symbolism into the narrative frames. In this design, a gold cord loops and twists its way around the royal blue ground of the frame. At the top and bottom are winged cherubic heads and at the bottom on either side of the cherubs are triple love knots. Along the cord are beads in sets of four and three. While appearing at first to be merely a fanciful decorative design, a closer study of the motifs and their arrangement reveals references to all four members of the royal family.

The twists and loops of the gold cord create fanciful monograms that refer to Louise, Claude, and Marguerite. The two Ls, one in reverse, placed at the bottom of the frame on either side of the cherubs are references to Louise. On both sides, the cord from this letter flows first into the triple Savoy knots that are symbols of Francis, and then forms an M, for Marguerite.

This arrangement indicates the lineage, quite literally the bloodline, which flowed from Louise to her children. In folio 3r, Demoulins establishes this emphasis on bloodline and familial descent by including the “genesis” of the Magdalene and her siblings from their parents Sirus and Eucharia, a theme he repeats here in a more subtle form. Although the placement of the knot motif of the younger Francis before the monogram of his older sister seems problematic, I suggest several reasons for this arrangement. First, the placement could be a visual pun on François Premier, i.e. Francis the First. Secondly, it would have been appropriate that as king, Francis preceded his older sister in the family order. Third, this arrangement could also be a reference to the
undeniable fact that Francis was the favored child of the two and thus closest to his mother. Furthermore, the flow of the line from Louise to Francis also alludes to the fact that the bloodline of their family continued primarily through Francis, as indicated by the gold cord from mother to son. This idea, indicating the family’s bloodline by the gold cord, appears elsewhere in the frame and incorporates a reference to Claude in the motif.

On either side of the cherubic head at the top of the frame are two forms unlike any other in the design, but when the manuscript is rotated 90 degrees to the left, it is clear that this portion of the cord forms the letter C for Claude. The one on the right side is quite clearly a C, an important distinction because of the motif beside it. The C on the right flows into an unusual looped motif that is parallel to the M on the left. It functions as a visual balance to the M, but it is not a letterform. This tri-lobed motif is, in fact, unique in this frame and there is no other arrangement of loops exactly like it. Furthermore, its prominence at the upper right of the frame indicates it is an important element. By cleverly changing the direction of the cord, Godefroy created the three lobes of a fleur-de-lis, the symbol of France and of the French monarchy. Again, this arrangement has a multifaceted meaning. The flow of the C form into this shape may refer to Claude’s spousal relationship with the current king, Francis, but may also allude to the fact that she is the daughter of a king whose duty it is to give birth to kings. As such, Claude is “the cord” that unites past and future French kings through her role as wife of the current monarch. This interpretation becomes especially significant when understood in light of one of the main objectives of the pilgrimage, the attainment of royal heirs, which I discuss later in this chapter. I propose, therefore, that the cord motif in the frame of folio 66v was devised as a reference to the lineage of Louise and her children, representing the flow of royal blood from parent to child in past, present, and future royal families. This is one aspect of a much more significant theme, the relationship of the French monarchy to Mary Magdalene as expressed in the Vie de la Magdalene, which I discuss in greater depth in Chapter 3.

Godefroy and Demoulins employed a similar scheme in the frame on folio 54v, in which they also manipulated a decorative device to create a significant symbolic motif. In this case, Claude’s C forms create an alternating series of cartouches that contain the fleurs-de-lis of the French monarchy as one of the designs. In fact, on these cartouches,
the ends of the C create the outer lobes of the fleur-de-lis contained within. The fleurs-de-lis could be an obvious reference to Francis or, possibly, to the hope that the next French king was literally contained within Claude.

Returning to folio 66v, other elements of the design also refer symbolically to the royal family. The arrangement of the beads on the cord in groups of threes and fours is significant when compared with the text on folio 12v. This folio contains a prayer addressed to Mary Magdalene in which Demoulins mentions the royal family in numeric terms: “Magdalene, you are in a blessed state. Jesus Christ delivered you from seven impure spirits. To this end, we beg you to be an intercessor for three spirits and four—the three are Louise, Francis and little Claude, and if you add one you will find four—which means Louise, Francis, Claude, and Marguerite—three and four makes seven. This number evokes the destruction of the seven mortal sins and the accomplishment of the seven works of gentle mercy. Thus, Magdalene, please, intercede for us, for in you is our trust.” The sets of three and four beads on folio 66v are references to this prayer and the numbers and arrangements of the beads represent the royal family in a similar manner.

The importance of this motif is proven by the fact that it is repeated twice more in the manuscript. A gold cord and beads arranged in groups of threes and fours also decorates the frame on folio 64v. Even more similar to folio 66v is the frame of folio 33v, which also uses the cord, beads, Savoy knots, and a tri-lobed fleur-de-lis, although neither folios 33v nor 64v includes the monograms of the family. Like folio 66v, the gold cord on these frames is different from the true cordelière on folio 77r, which include the tassels and equally placed knots of the Franciscan girdle.

It is significant that the frames on both folios 64v and 66v, which use gold cord and seven beads as visual elements, are paired with images of the Magdalene and the holy shrine. Opposite folio 64v is an illumination depicting the reclining statue of the contemplative Mary Magdalene found in the grotto of La Sainte-Baume. The companion roundel of folio 66v is the quadripartite illumination in which the elevation of the Magdalene above La Sainte-Baume is depicted. The prayer on folio 12v addresses Mary Magdalene in the name of the royal family and uses the numeric symbolism of three and four to indicate Louise and her children. The placement of folios decorated with the cord and seven bead motif opposite images of the Magdalene at La Sainte-Baume unites these...
folios thematically with the prayer to the saint on folio 12v, reiterating the symbolic significance of the gold cord and the numbers three and four as allusions to the royal family and their devotion to Mary Magdalene.

The pairing of the illumination of the Magdalene and the grotto with the various motifs on folio 66v is also important for a complete understanding of the symbolism of this frame. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, the manuscript was created in response to a pilgrimage taken to La Sainte-Baume by Louise, Claude, and Marguerite during their journey to meet Francis after his victory at the Battle of Marignano. Motivated by their love for Francis and their gratitude and devotion to the Magdalene, the women made the trip to give thanks to the saint for his safe return. In fact, the gold cording that winds its way around the blue frame on folio 66v also refers to the saint. At the mid-right and upper left of the frame, the cord forms two more Ms out of evenly spaced loops. I have proposed that the M at the base of the frame is the monogram of Marguerite, and accordingly, these two Ms would serve as the monogram of Mary Magdalene, a motif that Demoulins used elsewhere in the manuscript. Decorative Ms are found on the breastplate of the Magdalene’s horse in folio 10r and on folio 37v, in which chevrons made from thick and thin strokes create a running pattern of Ms. The use of the Magdalene’s initials in the gold cord of folio 66v would be in keeping, therefore, with Demoulins’s symbolic language throughout the Vie de la Magdalene.

Finally, the cherubs that are part of the decorative scheme of folio 66v express the theme of love and devotion. In addition to the cabalistic reference to Louise and her angelic attendants mentioned above, the cherubic heads have two other meanings in this arrangement. First, they refer to the Magdalene’s steadfast love and devotion to Christ, and the angels that carried her heavenward each day as a reward for her fervent adoration. In addition, cherubs also symbolize the family’s love for each other and their devotion to the Magdalene, as well as reinforcing the overarching theme of the entire manuscript, the love of Christ for Mary Magdalene specifically and all men in general.

Thus, what appears on folio 66v to be merely a fanciful motif of cherubs and gold cord is, in fact, a complex arrangement of letters and symbols that held a highly personal meaning for Louise.
Dragons, the Visconti, and the Battle of Marignano

One of the most common visual elements in the Magdalene manuscript is the dragon, which appears in various contexts. As I discuss in Chapter 6, dragons are often included as symbols of sin or evil in European art. Some of the dragons in the Vie refer to the worldliness of the Magdalene’s pre-conversion life, or to sin in general, the repentance and forgiveness of which is a major theme of the manuscript. Dragons are also the saintly attribute of the Magdalene’s sister Martha, who tamed the dragon of Tarascon in Provence, where the royal entourage spent the Christmas of 1515. In addition, dragons are the attribute of Saint Margaret of Antioch, the name saint of Louise’s daughter Marguerite. In fact, Demoulins included two dragons on the page of the *Libellus Enigmatum* that he dedicated to Marguerite (figure 60.) All of these reasons make the inclusion of the dragon motif appropriate for this manuscript. However, there is an additional reason that necessitated the inclusion of dragons in the *Vie de la Magdalene*, one that is particularly suitable to this manuscript and the period of its production. As I explain below, when understood in the historical context of the Vie, it is clear that some of the dragons in the manuscript are symbolic of both the city of Milan and the Visconti family, for which they are heraldic devices.

It is important to note that Godefroy was careful to depict the dragons in the Vie as slender attenuated creatures to avoid confusion with the more rounded forms of Francis’s salamanders that also appear in several of the frames. This difference is evident when comparing the salamanders on folios 7v and 10v with the dragons on folios 17v and 56v. Unlike the salamanders, the dragons have two legs and tails that usually end in Savoy knots. They are also distinct from the little dragons in the *Libellus Enigmatum*, which have four legs and do not have knots in their tails. The dragons in the Vie are, however, similar to dragons found on the decorative border of Milanese documents such as the marriage grant of Ludovico Sforza, and the *Sforziada*, both of which are contemporary with the *Vie de la Magdalene* (figures 65 and 66). Therefore, I suggest that some of the dragons in the Magdalene manuscript are visual references to the dragons of Milan.

As mentioned previously, the *Vie de la Magdalene* was created following, and because of, Francis’s victory over the Swiss forces of Milan at the Battle of Marignano in
1515. This battle was the first triumph in his Italian campaigns, the major goal of which was to gain possession of the city of Milan, then controlled by Massimiliano Sforza. Louis XII had established Milan as a French capital in 1500, but lost it to the Sforza family in 1512. However, beyond his desire to regain the city for France, Francis had a personal reason for risking himself and his men to capture Milan, for Francis was himself of Milanese ancestry. His claim stemmed from the 1389 marriage of Valentina Visconti and Louis I of France, a royal marriage from which both Francis’s parents were descendants. Significantly, the heraldic device of the Visconti family was also a dragon with the loosely knotted tail. In fact, Louise amended her crest in 1499 to include the Visconti dragon, thus giving visual expression to Francis’s hereditary right to Milan. Furthermore, both Francis’s father, Charles of Angoulême, and his paternal grandfather, Jean of Angoulême (d. 1467), held the title of the Duke of Milan. In addition to his own ancestral attachment to Milan, Francis’s wife Claude was also descended from the same Visconti ancestor, thus providing a third claim to Milan as the possession of the French monarchy. Francis’s military campaign of 1515, therefore, were motivated as much by his desire to reclaim his birthright as a descendant of the Visconti family as his desire to return the city of Milan to the possession of the French crown.

Lyon celebrated Francis’s ancestral and political claim on Milan when the king made his ceremonial entry into the city in 1515 as the French army marched toward Italy. Part of the decoration for his triumphal entrance included a representation of Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides. In this version, however, the garden represented Milan and the creature curled beneath the tree was not Ladon, but the dragon on the arms of the city. This reference to Hercules defeating Ladon proved prophetic, for Francis’s victory over the Milanese forces at Marignano resulted in Pope Leo X declaring him the Duke of Milan in 1516. This was the same year as the royal pilgrimage to La Sainte-Baume and Louise’s commission for the creation of the Magdalene manuscript. Some of the dragons that decorate the *Vie de la Magdalene* may be interpreted, therefore, as allusions to Francis’s victory at Marignano, his reclamation of Milan for the French crown, and his new title as Duke of Milan.

The association of the dragon motif with Milan and the Visconti would also provide an explanation for illumination on folio 3v depicting Saint George and the
Dragon. Silhouetted in gold on a dense black ground, the image is placed in the center of the text, and has an irregular shape with the tops of several letterforms visible above the upper edge of the black background. The illumination apparently was included to disguise an error in the text, although this conclusion does not explain the choice of Saint George and the Dragon as subject, which at first glance seems entirely incongruous with the rest of the manuscript.

As with most of the visual elements in the *Vie de la Magdalene*, several mutually viable interpretations for this miniature are possible, a topic I discuss in Chapter 6 in conjunction with Magdalenian iconography. As mentioned above, the theme also has a personal association with Louise and her family, alluding specifically to Francis, his descent from the Visconti family, and his recent military victory against the Milanese. The primary association with “the glorious knight Saint George” is the fact that he was the patron saint of the dukes of Milan, a title that Francis had newly acquired with his victory at Marignano. Therefore, I suggest that in this miniature, Saint George, the patron saint of Christian knights and Milanese dukes, represents Francis I, “le Roi-Chevalier” and new Duke of Milan, and the dragon again represents the vanquished Milanese. Thus, Demoulins took advantage of an error in the text to include this unusual miniature celebrating Francis as the great Christian knight-king who does battle with the Milanese dragon to reclaim his patriarchal birthright to the Duchy of Milan.

The frame on folio 50v reiterates the theme of battle. On a black ground, gold knights charge at infantrymen as their horses trample the bodies of fallen warriors. Swordsmen thrust and parry or face off against lancers, while at the bottom left of the frame a lone archer kneels as he prepares to defend himself from the knight bearing down on him. Godefroy has carefully balanced the arrangement of the figures around the frame, matching horse for horse and man for man, yet managed to capture the chaos and violence inherent in real battle, a remarkable feat given the minute size of the figures in this frame.

Like the miniature of Saint George, the design of this frame seems to be a visual *non sequitur* within the design of the manuscript, and in truth, the battle scene does not relate to the text and image of the folios, which depicts the Magdalene meeting the Risen Christ in the Garden from John 20:11-17. However, when understood in light of the
manuscript’s creation following the king’s military victory, the motif of a battle in this frame can only refer to the Battle of Marignano. In addition, many knights in the roundel frame are similar in form to the figure of Saint George/Francis on folio 3v, tying the two folios together in both theme and design. Thus, folios 3v and 50v demonstrate that Demoulins and Godefroy refer to Francis’s battle against the Milanese in two ways--symbolically in the form of the dragons and Saint George, and in the realistic depiction of warriors in mortal combat.53

One last aspect of the Vie de la Magdalene requires explanation with regard to the political references in the manuscript. This is the reason for the many languages used for the mottoes of the image roundels. The languages in the narrative are Latin and French, but five additional languages are used for the mottoes—Italian, German, Spanish, and two forms of Greek. As I discuss in Chapter 1, the use of French for the majority of the narrative is explained by the fact that Louise’s knowledge of Latin was limited, as indicated on folio 104r in reference to the poem by Petrarch in Latin. However, she clearly understood the language sufficiently to read the scriptural passages and the Latin translations of the foreign language mottoes. The inclusion of Latin and Greek also reflected Demoulins’s interest in humanism, which was popular at the French court at this time.54 Furthermore, the inclusion of the Greek may have been homage to the Greek Orthodox Church, which vehemently rejected the Gregorian conflation of Mary Magdalene, an important issue at the time of the manuscript’s creation and a topic I discuss below.

The other languages, however, are more problematic. One theory, discussed in Chapter 1, is that the inclusion of the various languages emphasized the universality of Christianity and the Pentecostal gifts of “tongues,” depicted on folio 54r, that enabled the disciples of Christ to convert the nations of Europe. However, this theory does not address the question of why German, Italian, and Spanish were used for the mottoes, but English was not. The French had many ties with England at this time, including Louis XII’s marriage to Mary Tudor just before his death, and Francis had several representatives of Henry VIII at his court in 1516.55 Furthermore, England was still Catholic at this time, yet, curiously, English was not included among the languages intended to signify the universality of Christianity in the Vie de la Magdalene. There is,
however, a more timely explanation than simply wanting to indicate the universality of the Christian religion. This explanation concerns the Holy Roman Empire.

The title of Holy Roman Emperor was not a hereditary title, but, rather, it was conferred by election. It was possible, therefore, for a king of France to attain the throne of the Holy Roman Empire. As Knecht notes, “Though based in Germany, it was a supranational dignity, the secular counterpart of the papacy, and therefore had enormous international prestige.” Shortly after his ascendance to the French throne, Francis made known his desire to attain the position, mentioning in a letter that if Charles I of Spain, grandson of Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian, were to attain the throne “it could do me immeasurable harm” and cause the French to be expelled from Italy. At the time of the manuscript’s creation in 1516-17, however, Francis’s attainment of the title of Holy Roman Emperor seemed probable, as four of the seven electors offered to vote in his favor when the time came. Therefore, during the writing of the Vie de la Magdalene Francis’s chances of becoming Holy Roman Emperor were excellent, a fact that no doubt brought his mother great pride. The Holy Roman Emperor would have control over much of Europe, including Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, and parts of Italy, and if it was Francis, France as well. However, neither Francis nor Charles I could claim control of England. I suggest, therefore, that the inclusion of German, Spanish, and Italian in the Vie de la Magdalene was a reference to the possibility of Francis’s election to the position of Holy Roman Emperor and the international power and status that Louise believed would soon to be bestowed on her son.

The Life of Louise of Savoy as Paralleled in the Vie de la Magdalene

While most of the episodes depicted in the Vie de la Magdalene are in accordance with Catholic orthodoxy of the day, Demoulins purposefully included specific scenes and themes because they provided the manuscript with emotional and thematic parallels to the life of Louise of Savoy. These begin with an emphasis on the Magdalene’s birth into a life of privilege. She is depicted born to a wealthy couple (folio 5r), mourning their death as a maiden (folio 6r), enjoying the advantages of wealth (folio 7r), inheriting vast regions of property with her siblings Martha and Lazarus (folio 8r), and partaking in the
diversions of a courtly lifestyle, such as dancing (folio 9r), hunting (folio 10r), and romantic dalliances (folio 11r).

Like the Magdalene, Louise also lost her mother at an early age. Marguerite of Bourbon died when Louise was seven and her father Philip II, Duke of Savoy, sent Louise and her brother Philibert to live at the court of their maternal aunt Anne of France, where Louise received training in the social graces necessary to prepare a young woman for an aristocratic marriage. As she read the *Vie*, Louise could easily relate to similar events in the Magdalene’s life, from her grief at the loss of her parents to her privileged upbringing and social life of parties, music, and dancing. In his choice of episodes and the details of the illuminations, Demoulins emphasized that the two women had similar backgrounds and occupied comparable places in aristocratic society, thus providing Louise with an experiential touchstone that enhanced the devotional experience of the manuscript.

Of all the scenes of courtly life depicted in the *Vie*, the illumination that would have been most recognized by Louise is the scene of the Magdalene hunting on folio 10r. I discuss possible sources for this scene in Chapter 5, but it is worth mentioning here in light of Louise’s experiences with court life. Hunting was a favorite pastime of the French court as it provided the courtiers, particularly the men, with the physical activity and heightened awareness necessary to stay fit between military campaigns. While it is unknown whether Louise rode, the details of her upbringing would suggest that she did. Her aunt, Anne of France, was an avid equestrian so famous for her skill that she was compared to the Amazon queen Semiramis. Accordingly, the girls in Anne’s charge were also taught to ride and Louise’s companion Marguerite of Austria had ponies, dogs, and raptors trained especially for her so that she could participate in the hunting activities of the court at Amboise.

Regardless of her participation in the hunt, Louise was certainly familiar with this type of activity, especially considering her son’s avidity for the sport. Francis had a tremendous passion for the chase and spent many days in the field with his courtiers, male and female alike, hunting with hawk and hound. In 1515 Antonio de Beatis recorded that Francis especially enjoyed hunting stag with a spear, and the king’s kennel of white hunting dogs were famous across Europe. An examination of the hunting
miniature shows that the Magdalene is depicted enjoying a hunt in a fashion very similar
to that recorded by Francis’s courtiers. Riding sidesaddle on a large white horse, she
holds a hooded hawk on her wrist. The huntsman leading her horse is carrying a spear,
and three large white dogs run by her side, precisely the technique as recorded by de
Beatis. Another hunting scene created by Godefroy in his work Commentaries de la
guerre gallique of 1515 further demonstrates the similarity between the hunting scene in
the Vie and the hunting techniques used by Francis and his court (figure 67.) In this
scene Francis, surrounded by his large white hounds, rides a white horse wearing a black
bridle and breastplate exactly as is seen in the miniature from the Vie.

In addition, the inclusion of the hunting scene among the group of images
depicting the Magdalene’s worldly life is again correct according to this period, as
hunting was often an opportunity for an romantic rendezvous between courtiers. The
presence of the young gallant riding beside the Magdalene in the foreground and again in
the background, this time without the huntsman, implies just such an illicit interaction.
Although it seems unlikely that this image alluded to Louise’s involvement in similar
libidinous activities, she would have surely understood the reference.

It is important to note that the medieval sources for the Vie de la Magdalene,
Voragine’s Golden Legend and VBMM, do not mention the Magdalene participating in
hunting, banqueting, dancing, or similar courtly activities. Clearly, Demoulins included
these scenes to provide Louise with experiential parallels to activities and events that
were familiar from her own life

The Death of Lazarus and the Arrest of Christ

As I will demonstrate, two other episodes in the life of the Magdalene were
included in the Vie de la Magdalene to provide an emotional parallel to Louise’s life
experiences. These are the death of Lazarus and the arrest of Christ, which are on folios
20r to 43r and folio 47r respectively.

The Gospel of John 11:1-45 gives a detailed account of the death and resurrection
of Lazarus, and the VBMM relates the event with equal thoroughness, although the
miracle warrants less than a sentence in the Golden Legend. In the Vie de la Magdalene,
however, the story of Lazarus is remarkably prominent, with nearly a third of the
illuminations devoted to this portion of Magdalene’s vita. As I discuss in Chapter 5, one reason for the moment-by-moment depiction of the Lazarus roundels is the influence of French passion plays, which often included this episode from Christ’s miracles. While such emphasis may be attributable to the inherent drama of the incident or Demoulins’s desire to present an important Gospel passage as accurately as possible, I suggest a more personal explanation for the unusual prominence of the Lazarus episodes in the Vie de la Magdalene. This is the sudden death of Louise’s husband Charles, Count of Angoulême, in January 1496.

Although Charles, who was 28 at the time, originally resisted the marriage to the twelve-year old Louise, contemporary accounts record that they had a happy, devoted, and loving relationship. In December 1495, Charles was stricken suddenly with a fever while he, Louise, and their entourage, which included the historian Jean Saint-Gelais, were traveling from Cognac to the royal court. In his account of the event, Saint-Gelais emphasized Louise’s devotion to her husband, stating that she “attended on him day and night as tenderly and humanely as the poorest wife might nurse her husband.” Despite Louise’s constant care and attendance, Charles died a month later, leaving his wife distraught. As Saint-Gelais noted, “she nearly died of grief.”

Demoulins has fully captured the anxiety and sorrow of this experience in his description of the Magdalene and Martha in the Lazarus roundels. In folio 20v, the Magdalene kneels by her brother’s bedside, while Martha, their friends, and relatives gather on the other side of the bed. In the accompanying narrative on folio 19v, Demoulins notes specifically that Lazarus did not die “of bad treatment, for he had two sisters who served him with great courage.” In addition to commenting on the scene, Demoulins may have included this statement as a reference to Louise’s care of Charles during his illness, intending his comment to provide her with both comfort in her memory of the event, and praise for her steadfast efforts to heal her husband. Furthermore, Demoulins repeatedly stresses the magnitude of the Magdalene’s grief at the death of Lazarus, statements that likewise mirrored Louise’s own anguish at Charles’s death.

The most significant references to Louise’s grief are found in the narratives on folios 21v and 22v. In folio 21v, Demoulins has the Magdalene say, “Oh love, what pain you gave me. Alas my friend, my brother. By death, our love has been destroyed. ‘For
we are separated by death.’” The next illumination depicts the funeral procession of Lazarus, in which pallbearers dressed in contemporary clothing carry the coffin draped in embroidered plum-colored fabric. Preceding the coffin are several clerics, while the sisters, completely swathed in mourning garments, follow closely behind. Although on a much smaller scale, this scene is similar to accounts of the burial processions of French aristocrats such as Philip the Bold, whose funeral cortege was recorded in detail. Therefore, I suggest that this scene was intended as a reference to the funeral cortege of Charles of Angoulême. The procession, which included Louise, transported the body of the count from Châteauneuf to Cognac.

The narrative of the companion roundel reinforces the association of the funeral scene with the same tragic episode in Louise’s life. On folio 22v, Demoulins writes “Oh, unyielding separation of lovers! Oh, death’s horrid divorce.” These are strange words to describe the passing of a brother, but appropriate to describe the death of a beloved husband, who is “divorced” from his wife only by death. On the frame surrounding the narrative, serpents strike at hearts with their tongues. It was believed at this time that a snake’s tongue was the source of its venom, thus, this motif aptly describes the pain and heartache Louise suffered at her husband’s death.

Throughout the Vie de la Magdalene, Demoulins most often aligns events from Louise’s life with similar episodes in the life of the Magdalene. In several episodes and passages, however, he clearly refers to Christ and Francis both as “kings,” and establishes definite parallels between the Virgin Mary and Louise as the mothers of kings—the Virgin as the mother of the “King of Kings,” and Louise as the mother of the “Most Christian King of France.” Demoulins made an even more emphatic comparison between Francis I and Christ in Ut rosa de spinis (B.N. ms. fr. 2364), a small book written for Francis in 1515 during his Italian campaign. Thus, it that is contemporary with the Vie de la Magdalene. As noted by Le Coq, a verse in this book compares Francis’s willingness to take on danger for the French people to Christ’s willingness to sacrifice himself for all mankind, indicating Demoulins’s “implicit desire to assimilate the king with Christ.”

Demoulins emphasizes the associations between Louise and the Virgin, and Francis and Christ with the most unusual episode in the Vie de la Magdalene. In the
illumination on folio 47r, Christ has been arrested and the Virgin has gone to Herod’s house to plead for knowledge of his whereabouts. A scowling porter bars the door and refuses to allow the Virgin to speak to King Herod. Written above the porter is the anachronistic inscription, “Le Bastarte de Rouan.” In Chapter 5, I discuss a similar scene that is included in the Michel and Gréban passion plays. The inclusion of the unusual inscription, however, requires us to look elsewhere for the underlying meaning of this scene. As I will demonstrate, the inscription can only be a reference to a traumatic event in the life of Louise and Francis.

In his will, Charles of Angoulême gave full custody of his children to Louise, who was nineteen at the time of his death. However, the legal age for guardianship was twenty-five and as a result, the children’s closest male relative, Duke Louis of Orleans, claimed custody of Marguerite, who was three, and Francis, who was not yet two, insisting that their mother was too young to care for them properly. However, Louise was not willing to put the care of her children into the hands of another and opposed the duke by invoking a custom of Angoumois, which established the age of guardianship at fourteen. The Grand Conseil provided a compromise: Louise retained custody of her children, but she could not transact any business on their part without the approval of Louis of Orleans.77

As difficult as this arrangement must have been for Louise, it became far worse in 1498, when the duke, who had no sons, became Louis XII of France, and Francis, as his nephew, became the heir presumptive. In a very short time, the king forced Louise to share guardianship of the children, especially Francis, with Pierre de Rohan, the seigneur de Gié and marshal of France.78 A contemporary historian Arnoul le Ferron refers to Gié as the “Bastard of Rohan,” and describes him as “a violent and fierce person.” Marie Holban supports this description, noting that the figure of the porter on folio 47r in the Vie, “bears all the traits of the Bastard of Rohan.”79

Louise was very disturbing by the situation and tensions mounted between the two over the next few years, as Louise tried to keep her children under her care and Gié attempted to gain control over the future king. Ultimately, the conflict led to the incident referred to in this scene. Because Gié’s appointment was verbal rather than written, his exact duties were not specified, but presumably, he was expected to ensure Francis’s
safety. Before Gié’s appointment as their guardian, the children slept in Louise’s quarters so that she could ensure their safety at night. However, Gié expressed concern that the boy was receiving too much feminine attention and ordered Francis, then seven, removed from his mother’s care at night and placed in the quarters of the palace guards, supposedly to provide him with better protection than he could receive in his mother’s bedchamber. Louise resisted this decree, and when an overzealous guard broke into her bedchamber to take the boy, an enraged Louise requested the king’s intercession in the situation. Louis, however, refused her request and supported Gié’s decision by ordering Francis to sleep in the men’s quarters.

It was a decision that caused Louise tremendous anxiety over the loss of her son, precisely the emotions experienced by the Virgin in folio 46v and 47r as she seeks King Herod’s help in regaining her own son. This scene, then, is a clear case of art imitating life. The porter, identified as “the Bastard of Rohan” and representing Gié, stands between both mothers and the kings whose help they seek, as well as the two sons they wish to protect.

Demoulins reinforces the association between Louise and the Virgin Mary in the text and the mottos that accompany this episode. On folio 45v, which is opposite the illumination depicting John informing the Virgin of Christ’s arrest, he writes, “Oh, poor mother, who could describe the pain you felt when told about the capture of your son?” The “mother” referred to in this passage is not just the Virgin, but Louise as well, who experienced the same pain when Francis was forcibly taken from her and placed into the custody of the king’s soldiers. In folio 46v, which is opposite the illumination of the Virgin at Herod’s house, Demoulins describes Mary’s pathetic search for her son and her cruel treatment by the king and priests. The motto surrounding the illumination contains the poignant passage, “What love is greater than maternal love?”

Clearly, this scene was included in the Vie de la Magdalene to stimulate Louise’s memories and emotional involvement in the story by reminding her of a similar experience in her own life. Although Demoulins intended Louise to identify with the Magdalene in other portions of the vita through imitatio magdalenae, in this portion of the manuscript he intended for her to identify with the Virgin Mary through their mutual experiences as the devoted and courageous mothers of beloved sons. Demoulins
incorporated the devotional device of imitatio mariae to encourage Louise to re-experience a terrifying event in her own life through similar emotions experienced by the mother of Christ, thus comparing the mother of the “King of Kings” with the mother of the “Most Christian King of France.”

Finally, a third woman is included in the Vie de la Magdalene with whom Louise shared an emotional experience from her own life. This is the queen of Provence, whose story is in the Golden Legend. In folios 55v and 56r, Demoulins tells the legend of the king and queen of Provence, pagan sovereigns of the land where the Magdalene and her companions came ashore after being put to sea in Jerusalem. At first, the king and queen resist the Magdalene’s attempts to convert them. However, they had longed for a child for many years and the king told the Magdalene that they would believe in Christ if she would obtain a son for them, which she does.

As I discuss in Chapter 3, the plight of the queen parallels a similar episode in Louise’s life. As a young bride, Louise was concerned that she would not give birth to a son. Like many other noblewomen, she sought the help of Francis of Paola, an Italian hermit famous for his ability to obtain divine intercession in the attainment of male heirs. Louise went to see him at his hermitage in Plessis-les-Tours shortly after her marriage and was told that not only would she have a son, but that this son would become the king of France.

Obviously, Demoulins’s inclusion of the apocryphal legend telling of the Magdalene’s intercession for the king and queen of Provence was appropriate for a manuscript created because of a pilgrimage to the saint’s Provençal shrine. However, he undoubtedly recognized that this portion of the Magdalene’s vita also related directly to Louise’s own experience as an anxious wife desirous of an heir who sought saintly intervention in the attainment of her child. In both cases, the intervention was successful and Louise gave birth on 12 September 1494 to Francis, a child whom she was told would inherit a kingdom, just as, presumably, did the son of the king and queen of Provence.

This theme of saintly intercession in the attainment of royal heirs also is found on folios 105r to 106v of the Vie, which contain the prayer Demoulins wrote for Louise to address to Mary Magdalene. Written in Louise’s voice, it asks the saint to protect Louise
and her family, and specifically requests her intercession in the attainment of male heirs for her children: “May my daughter Claude soon be pregnant with a son, and my daughter Marguerite too.” Seen in conjunction with the previous reference to the same subject, it is clear that Demoulins’s inclusion of this theme of saintly intercession in the _Vie_ had two purposes. First, it is a reference to the plight of the queen of Provence in the Magdalene legend and therefore, an appropriate part of the saint’s _vita_. Second, it was included because it had a more intimate and personal association for Louise, mirroring her own hopes as a young and hopeful bride, and now giving voice to her current anxiety as an older woman concerned about the future of her family and her kingdom.

**The Shrine of La Sainte-Baume and the Theme of Pilgrimage in the _Vie de la Magdalene_**

Without a doubt, the most remarkable images from the Magdalene manuscript are those of La Sainte-Baume, the grotto where many believe Mary Magdalene spent the last thirty years of her life in penitent isolation. La Sainte-Baume was a popular subject for painters in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, most particularly the Antwerp landscape painter Joachim Patinir and his followers. Although this popularity testifies to the importance of the saint’s cult in Europe at the time, few of these artists created accurate depictions of the cliff site. Presumably, most of them did not make the difficult trip to the shrine, preferring to use literary descriptions from pilgrimage guides or previous images as their sources. However, the same cannot be said of Godefroy le Batave. The precision with which he depicted the shrine, grotto, and geological formations of the cliff could only have been achieved if Godefroy visited the shrine himself, either as a member of the royal entourage in 1516 or on his own sometime later. As I will show, the accuracy of these images is an important element in the devotional purpose of the _Vie de la Magdalene_.

It should be noted that the _Vie de la Magdalene_ is not the only work by Demoulins and Godefroy that includes an image of La Sainte-Baume. In 1516, the pair produced, at Louise’s request, a small book for Francis entitled _Dominus illuminatio mea_ (B.N. ms. fr. 2088). The manuscript, which is an interpretation of Psalm 26, deals with filial piety and presents Francis in the guise of Tobias accompanied by an angel during
his journey (figure 68). In the background of this illumination, there is the depiction of a rocky outcrop identified as “La Baume” in the inscription. However, this image, which may have been created during one of the many long stops on the journey, is not as accurate as that found on folio 60r of the Vie de la Magdalene and bears a closer resemblance to the inaccurate paintings of Patinir (figure 69). When compared with modern photographs, the illumination of the cliff on folio 60r is remarkably accurate, strongly suggesting that Godefroy visited to the shrine himself to make studies of the site (figure 70).

One of the most important and overarching themes of this manuscript is that of a journey or pilgrimage, in both the physical and spiritual sense, and it occurs in several portions of the Vie de la Magdalene. In folios 54v to 56r, for example, the Magdalene begins her journey to sanctity by preaching Christ’s word and giving the family’s wealth to support the apostolic mission. After she and her companions are driven from Jerusalem and arrive safely in Marseilles, she continues on the spiritual path of the apostles by becoming an evangelist and Christian leader. Folios 56v to 59r continue the theme by relating the spiritual progress of the king and queen of Provence from their initial conversion by the Magdalene from paganism, their harrowing pilgrimage to meet Saint Peter in Rome, and their return to Marseilles where they take the final “step” to spiritual salvation by being baptized into the Christian faith. In the illumination on the lower right quadrant of folio 59r, the Magdalene completes her spiritual journey by retreating into the wilderness of Provence to become a reclusive penitent at the grotto of La Sainte-Baume. The successive illuminations on folios 59v to 66r illustrate the exterior and interior of the grotto complex in detail, providing the reader with an authentic sense of the Magdalene’s penitential life at La Sainte-Baume.

As I mentioned above, the Vie de la Magdalene served several functions, one of which was as a remembrance of Louise’s pilgrimage to the Provençal shrine. According to contemporary accounts, all four members of the royal family made the difficult climb to the grotto and spent time in prayer and meditation.91 Demoulins specifically noted on folio 59v of the Vie that Louise “took the pain to climb there,” a fact that was important to the design and function of the manuscript. As I discussed in Chapter 3, a comparison between the illumination of the Chapel of Louis XII on folio 63r and the 1788 engraving.
of same chapel indicates that Godefroy’s miniatures are very accurate. In addition, folio 60r illustrates an overall view of the shrine complex and its environs, including the forest at the foot of the cliff, the “Kings Road,” the stair leading to the grotto, and above this, the cliff face, with its rock formations, the chapel of St. Pilon at the top of the cliff. In the next miniature, folio 61r, the reader can see the chapel of St. Pilon from two perspectives—one from the path, the other from the front of the cliff. The commemorative function of the manuscript is evident when comparing the miniatures with modern souvenir postcards of the same sites (figure 71).

Equally intriguing are folios 68v to 72r that depict the Magdalene’s reliquaries, including her arms, her famous hair, and her skull. These, too, served the same function as souvenir postcards, as can be seen by comparing folios 71r and 72r, which show the skull reliquary covered with the gilded face, and uncovered to reveal the skull, with modern postcards of the same object (figures 57 and 72). As I discussed in Chapter 3, Louise, Claude, and Marguerite were prohibited from descending into the crypt of Saint-Maximin to venerate the Magdalene’s relics. Therefore, Francis had the reliquaries brought up so that the women could honor the saint in presence of her remains. The miniatures of the relics, therefore, commemorate that important spiritual event, as well as providing Louise with images of the Magdalene’s relics on which to meditate during her daily devotions.

The mnemonic aspect of the shrine illuminations (folios 60r-66r) becomes even more obvious when viewed in order. They begin with the exterior of the shrine complex with a long view of La Sainte-Baume and two views of Saint Pilon, then move progressively deeper into the grotto, through the various shrines and chapels, to the door of the Magdalene’s chamber. The next illumination depicts the statue of the contemplative Mary Magdalene reclining in her rocky room and the final miniature of this series illustrates the spring located just behind the altar chapel. This sequential arrangement, which takes the reader step by step from one sacred site to the next throughout the shrine, not only aided Louise in her recollection of the pilgrimage, but also emphasized the important function of the manuscript as a devotional object. As Louise progressed through the illuminations, she was able to meditate on the Magdalene’s days in the grotto just as she had done at the actual site the illuminations
depicted. Thus, the process of reading the manuscript became a kind of virtual pilgrimage for Louise, quite literally a pilgrimage in miniature that enabled her to recall the emotions she experienced at each site.

To read the manuscript, then, became not only a stimulus to memory but, more importantly, a stimulus to piety. This becomes evident when one realizes that the scenes of the shrine move from exteriority to interiority. The first two views are of the exterior of the shrine and the cliff chapel, with successive views moving deeper into the most sacred areas of the grotto. In truth, this arrangement is contrary to the actual experience of the pilgrim, who went first up the steps and into the grotto before climbing the steep and narrow path to Saint Pilon. However, by arranging the miniatures in the order in which he did, Demoulins was alluding to the process of spiritual meditation. Through meditation, the devotee moves from an outward awareness of the physical world to a deep inward contemplation of the spiritual. In a similar fashion, the shrine miniatures in the Vie de la Magdalene move in succession from the expansive wilderness surrounding the holy grotto, deeper and deeper into the secluded space until finally reaching the innermost heart of the shrine, a site appropriately referred to as “The Spring of Love and Charity.” Demoulins carefully arranged the illuminations in this manner to assist Louise in the process of meditation, taking her on the spiritual journey from exteriority to interiority with each reading of the manuscript.

It is important to note that Demoulins emphasizes the deprivation of the Magdalene’s life in the grotto through not only the words and illuminations that describe her hermitic existence, but by those images on folios 60r to 66r that depict the actual grotto. These miniatures dramatically document the austere conditions in which the Magdalene lived the last thirty years of her life by illustrating the ruggedness of the cave and the surrounding wilderness. The extreme detail of these illuminations gives veracity to the vita, moving it from the realm of hagiographic legend to that of biographical and historical fact. Undoubtedly, the exactness of these images reinforced Louise’s memory of her recent experience of the grotto, thus allowing her to regain the spiritual benefit of the pilgrimage with each reading the Vie de la Magdalene.
François Demoulins de Rochefort, Franciscanism, and Church Politics in the Vie de la Magdalene

François Demoulins de Rochefort, a Franciscan priest, came to the service of the royal family in 1501, when Louise hired him as tutor for her children. He remained with the family for over twenty years, serving them first as teacher, then as librarian and author of numerous manuscripts, and as Francis’s chaplain while he was dauphin. In 1517 Demoulins was made the abbot of Saint-Maximin-de-Micy, perhaps as reward for the Vie de la Magdalene, and in 1519 he was appointed Grand Almoner to the King. In this later position, Demoulins was responsible for attending to the king’s spiritual needs. Throughout his life, he remained close with Louise, and it is believed by several scholars that Demoulins wrote Louise’s journal, or at least, closely assisted his patron in the process of writing and editing.

One of the most charming and engaging aspects of the Vie de la Magdalene is the intimacy between reader and author, and one “hears” Demoulins’s voice when reading the manuscript. The closeness between Demoulins and Louise is evident not only in the dialogue between them, but also in the jokes, puns, and asides that he includes in the narrative. Demoulins’s intellectual presence in the Vie is pronounced and the manuscript became an important tool for the expression of his personal agenda in several ways. For example, the incorporation of Greek and Latin, as well as references to the Roman gods and other classical themes are obvious allusions to Demoulins’s erudition and interest in humanism.

In addition, the cordelières mentioned above as references to Claude are also a symbol of the Franciscan order to which Demoulins belonged, giving this motif a multifaceted association that is typical of the decorative elements in the manuscript. The political motivation of some of the decorative motifs is made particularly evident by the inclusion of four cordelières on the frame of folio 77r. In the commentary on within this frame, Demoulins makes his request for a bishopric, which will include, on folio 77v, a mention of Saint Francis and Demoulins’s own aspiration to be canonized as a Franciscan saint. The most prevalent aspect of the Vie de la Magdalene to reflect Demoulins’s personal ideology, however, is the manuscript’s reflection of the Franciscan devotion to Mary Magdalene. From the late thirteenth century, the Franciscan
brotherhood revered her as a model of evangelical poverty, of humble submission and obedience to divine authority, of constancy in adversity, and of absolute devotion to Christ.  

In Chapter 2, I discussed the influence of the *Vita Beatae Maria Magdalena* on the *Vie de la Magdalene*. This *vita*, although of Cistercian authorship, was very influential to religious orders sympathetic to the Cistercians, including the Franciscan brotherhood. In particular, the level of emotion expressed by the religious figures in Cistercian manuscripts such as the *VBMM* proved inspirational to the writings and sermons of the Franciscans. The emotionalism evident throughout the narrative and images of the *Vie de la Magdalene* is typical of the ardent, emotional spirituality that is associated with the Franciscan order.

Two other aspects of the *Vie de la Magdalene* reflect Franciscan spirituality. The first is the concept of *imitatio Magdalenae*, which Katherine Jansen suggests existed along side the Franciscan model of *imitatio Christi*: “The *imitatio Magdalenae* was perhaps a lesser rung on the ladder of pious devotional practice, but . . . also more attainable for the average Christian penitent. . . . The devotee, rather than take on the wounds of Christ himself, instead, through deep contemplation partook of the Magdalen’s grief, sorrow, and emotional suffering at the foot of the cross.” This emotionalism is the driving motive behind Demoulins’s concept for the *Vie de la Magdalene* and his many parallels with the life of Louise of Savoy. By providing these personal touchstones, he hoped to inspire in his patron a profound sense of *imitatio Magdalenae* as she read the *Vie*.

The second concept, as I discuss above, is the powerful mnemonic quality of the images of the shrine. These images reflect a passage from the Franciscan guide to piety, *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, a book of contemplation that I discuss in Chapter 5 in conjunction with the influence of Passion plays. Not only does *Meditations* encourage the reader to empathize with the suffering of Jesus and his followers, but it teaches, “Your soul should be in all places and deeds just as if you were present there in body.” Thus, the images of the shrine, so precisely detailed and arranged, become a distinctly Franciscan devotional tool that allows Louise to imagine herself “there” in her soul just as if she were “there in body.”
However, piety was not Demoulins’s sole motivation for including his agenda in the *Vie de la Magdalene*. In several places, he inserted his personal Pre-Reformation ideology, as well as making a shameless bid for promotion, all under the guise of addressing the comments and questions of his patron. When understood in a historical perspective, these subjects are in themselves important signifiers that place the manuscript in a specific period and that have a direct association with the *Vie de la Magdalene*, the time and process of its production, and its patron, Louise of Savoy.

Following the French victory at Marignano in 1515, Francis I met with Pope Leo X to establish the Concordat of Bologna, an agreement that officially annulled the schism between the French and Roman churches. Created directly on the heels of the Concordat, the *Vie de la Magdalene* reflects three aspects of this agreement. First, as mentioned above, Leo X recognized Francis I as the Duke of Milan; second, the pope gave Francis control over the French church, and, third, he gave him the power to nominate individuals to fill the most important ecclesiastic positions, including the seats of archbishops, bishops, abbots, and others in control of the religious orders.

The potential of this situation was not lost on Demoulins. Realizing an opportunity to make his opinions known to a powerful advocate, Demoulins included in the *Vie* several biting criticisms of the clergy, whom he accuses of corruption, deceit, hypocrisy, and failure to maintain vows. He also includes both his praise and condemnation of the various religious orders, criticizing his own Franciscan brothers when necessary. Given the new control over the French church accorded the king by the pope, it is obvious that Demoulins intend these words not only for Louise but, more importantly, for Francis. As an intimate of the family, he knew that Louise provided Francis with consul on all matters and, in the words of an English ambassador, that “he will refuse her nothing that she requireth him to do.” Thus, Demoulins knew that his comments in the *Vie* would be passed on to the person who had the most power to correct what Demoulins perceived as corruption within the French clergy and monasteries.

Folios 77r to 78r contain an even more significant and pointed personal comment, a bid for career advancement. Again addressing Louise, Demoulins writes, “And what will we do with the bishops, since the religious men who took a vow of poverty and other theologians do not care about it? Madame, since holy persons hold bishoprics in such
scorn, tell the king that he should give one to his old schoolmaster. . . . The poor man is not asking for such a favor, but he would not refuse it if the king were to make him such a gift. However, if he knew that he only needs to ask, by my soul, he would take the risk.” This comment is particularly timely as it could only have been included after the Concordat of Bologna in 1516, precisely when Demoulins was writing the Vie de la Magdalene for Louise. Thus, Demoulins took advantage of the shift in church politics to include his request for a bishopric in a manuscript that was produced because of the same victory that gave the French king the power to appoint him to the position.

The Vie de la Magdalene also says a great deal about the French church at the time. In unequivocal language, Demoulins tells us of the corruption rampant in the clergy and the religious orders, and indicates the beginnings of the progressive Pre-Reform movement that would eventually result in the correction of these abuses. However, he also warns Louise against hypocritical clergymen, whom he says will take advantage of the situation for their own gain.106

The biggest problem addressed by Demoulins, however, is that of the Gregorian conflation of Mary Magdalene, which was an incendiary topic in the French church at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Pre-Reformers like Demoulins’s friend and mentor, Jacques Lefèvre d’Etaples, pushed for a reevaluation of the Gregorian conflation based on close study of the gospel accounts of the saint. Although this idea was popular among biblical scholars like Lefèvre and had been accepted by the Greek Orthodox Church for centuries, any challenge to the Roman Catholic orthodoxy, papal authority, and the cult of saints was perilous in 1517.

Demoulins’s nervousness about challenging accepted doctrine is obvious throughout the Vie de la Magdalene. Torn between his desire as a scholar and progressive to correct misconceptions, and his fear of retribution if he goes against Catholic canon, Demoulins makes several ambiguous statements about contentious issues, such as the number of women identified as Mary Magdalene, if the saint was truly a sinner, and how many people accompanied her to Provence. On folio 4r he states, “Everything that follows is in the tradition of the Church until the end of the stories,” but on folio 78v, he discusses the comments of the church fathers on the sinfulness of Mary Magdalene, stating that Jerome, John Chrysostom, and Origen did not consider her a
sinner. This alone is an important indicator of Demoulins’s Pre-Reform inclination, as a return to the writings of the early Christian theologians was a basic tenet of Pre-Reform scholars such as Lefèvre.\textsuperscript{107} Demoulins demurs, however, by stating, “I would rather follow the opinion of Saint Augustine and Saint Gregory, not because they are the wisest but because the Church adopted their view, and I want to conform to its commands.”

A few pages later, however, Demoulins shows his true colors, all carefully couched in precise language that will avoid accusations of heresy while allowing his opinion to be understood. On folio 80v he again writes, “I do not want to go against the decision of the church,” but he determines that he will not be doing wrong to include the revelation of Amadeo Menez da Silva on the number of Magdalenes. This revelation addresses the confusion over the number of Magdalenes and offers viable explanations, in essence allowing Amadeo, or rather Gabriel through Amadeo, to speak for Demoulins.

Demoulins concludes the \textit{Vie} by his own belief that the woman called Magdalene was the demoniac of the Gospels, and that the sister of Martha, a good and noble woman, was called Mary but not Magdalene. On folios 107v and 108r he sums it up in the most diplomatic manner: “Madame, I composed this book in accordance with the observance of the Church, not wanting to ignore its commands. However, it seems to me that I am not harming anyone if, instead of one saint, I name three who have the power to intercede before God on your behalf, to keep you in his grace.”

As a direct result of the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene}, this ongoing controversy exploded when Jacques Lefèvre d’Etaples, in an effort to help Demoulins resolve the question of the Magdalene’s identity for Louise, wrote his treatise, \textit{De Maria Magdalena}, which he published late in 1517.\textsuperscript{108} Dedicated to both Francis I and Demoulins, this treatise addresses all the problems of the Gregorian conflation and states in unequivocal terms that the figure identified as Mary Magdalene was in fact three individuals—the anonymous anointing sinner of Luke, the demoniac Mary of Magdala, and Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus. Regardless of its logic and basis in scripture, the treatise shocked and outraged the Sorbonne and led to the famous “Quarrel of the Magdalenes” that sent Lefèvre into hiding. Through Demoulins, he found sanctuary with both Marguerite and Louise, who was sympathetic to the old man, if not to the entire Pre-
Reformation movement. Thus Lefèvre rode out the storm of controversy inspired by the *Vie de la Magdalene* under Louise’s protective “wings.”

**Conclusion**

With its diminutive size, reverential narrative, and engrossing illuminations, the *Vie de la Magdalene* appears to be simply a saintly *vita* written for a devout aristocratic woman. I have demonstrated, however, that it is a highly personalized manuscript carefully designed to reflect the life and concerns of its owner Louise of Savoy, as well as the interests, ideologies, and personal aspirations of its author, François Demoulin de Rochefort. Furthermore, if one understands the symbolic language and subtextual content of the manuscript, the *Vie* is an important historical document that says a great deal about France and the French court at the time of its creation. It is a testament to the love and devotion of Louise and her children, and to their hopes for heirs to perpetuate the family claim to the French throne. It also offers an interesting glimpse into their lives at court, and to the pastimes and intellectual pursuits that concerned the aristocracy during the early years of Francis’s reign. Equally important, it celebrates the expanding power of the young king and his imperial plans, as well as hinting at the challenges he soon would face as leader of the French Catholic Church.

Most important, however, the *Vie de la Magdalene* is a book inspired by a sincere and pious devotion to Mary Magdalene and written in a manner that had an intimate meaning for its owner. By paralleling the lives of Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary with Louise’s life experiences, the Magdalene manuscript became a form of spiritual exercise for Louise, an *imitatio sancti* that enabled her to appreciate more fully the triumphs and sorrows of the women depicted in the manuscript by relating the events of their lives to experiences in her own.

Equally important to the purpose of the manuscript are the folios illustrating the shrine of La Sainte-Baume and the Magdalene’s relics. Depicted with extraordinary accuracy, these images helped Louise to recall vividly her feelings at the first sight of the shrine from a distance, the view of the grotto interior, the appearance of the reliquaries, and other important moments of the pilgrimage. Like a modern souvenir book or photo album, these illuminations acted as mnemonic devices, providing a powerful stimulus to
Louise’s memory of the pilgrimage and enabling her to re-experience the visit to the shrine from the security and comfort of her home.
Notes

1. Scholars believe that Demoulins directed the creation of the Vie and had primary control of both the visual and textual content of the Magdalene manuscript, possibly working simultaneously with Godefroy. See Orth, “The Magdalene Shrine,” 203; and “Progressive Tendencies,” 86, 309, 311.

2. Jansen, 92.

3. Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 83-120; Le Coq, 13, 77-78, 85-100, 123-24, 162-63, 211-14, 229-44, 315-23, 409-15, and passim; Knecht, 6. In particular, Louise commissioned Demoulins to produce several books for François on a wide variety of subjects. While ostensibly intended to prepare the boy for the duties of aristocratic adulthood, many of the books were filled with symbolic subtexts and coded references to virtue, morality, and folly. Furthermore, Demoulins presented Louise in various guises in these books, such as “Dame Prudence” and “Madame Concord,” all intended to emphasize her role as exemplar and teacher to her children as well as a model of Christian virtue. See Le Coq, 80-83, 230-31, 315-16, 338-39, 414-21; Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 139-41; Matarasso, 201, 286-91, and Knecht, 5.


5. Ibid. Several of the motifs found in Libellus Enigmatum reappear in the Vie, including the heart motif, the dragons found on Marguerite’s page, and astrological symbols that are associated with each family member. The symbol for Jupiter, which is a reference to Louise in the earlier book, is found at the top of the last page of the Vie. The most significant motif, however, is that of circles within circles, which reappear in the roundels and frames of the Vie, and as I explained in Chapter 1, have Neo-Platonic and cabalistic associations.

6. Knecht, 150; Le Coq, 72-74, 101-12, 302-03, and passim. These include the Cabala métirifiée for François, and the three volume Triumph of Virtue series for Louise. In truth, Thenaud considered cabalism to be a dangerous study and warned François against it in his writings, including the Cabala métirifiée. See Knecht, 150; Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 123-24; Le Coq, 302-03, 400-03, 454-58.

7. See Folio 59v.

8. See Folios 91r and 59v.

9. As a result of the Vie, this thorny question would be addressed more fully by Lefèvre d’Étaples in his treatise, De Maria Magdalena, in which he challenged the Gregorian conflation. The French church was outraged by this audacity and as a result, Lefèvre sought the aid of Louise and Marguerite until the furor caused by the treatise dies down. See Holban, “La querelle de la Madeleine,” Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 99, 111; Knecht, 308, Jansen 11, 334, 335; Le Coq 336, 395, 459; Haskins, 245-47. See also

10. Throughout her impressive study of the symbolism and iconography surrounding François I, Anne-Marie Le Coq emphasizes that most of the symbols had many layers of interpretation that worked together to imbue the motif with the greatest amount of meaning. See Le Coq, 441-442. Orth notes that Demoulins often combined widely varying themes into a single motif or work that had layers of meanings. See Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 327-28.


12. This is a variation of Deuteronomy 32, verse 11, “As the eagle enticing her young to fly, and hovering over them, he spread his wings, and hath taken him and carried him on his shoulders.”

13. Folios 105v to 106r.


15. Le Coq, 423. Le Coq notes that this reference is based on the writings of Ficino.

16. Le Coq, 454; Knecht, 150. This treatise is, in fact, a warning against the study of the Cabala and seeking to find answers in biblical texts that are not to be understood until revealed to man by God.

17. Le Coq, 468. For information on Amadeo or Amadeus Menez da Silva, see Chapter 1 n. 46.

18. See folios 80v to 88r.

19. Le Coq, 480.

20. See Le Coq, 470-82 for a complete analysis and interpretation of Louise’s emblem of wings. Orth also discusses its association with Louise. See Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 163-64.


23. Le Coq, 110-12, 415-16.


29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.


33. See folios 104v and 105r. The association of snakes with Minerva was based on Minerva’s correlation with the Greek goddess Athena who had snakes as one of her symbols.

34. Le Coq, 80-83, 211; Knecht, 5.

35. Le Coq, 416-421; Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 139-41.

36. Matarasso, 200.


38. G. Duchet-Suchaux and M. Pastoureau, 228, 231. Demoulins does not mention the famous dragon of Tarascon or Martha’s taming of it, but he does mention on folio 93r that she settled in a convent at Tarascon. The Golden Legend, relates the story indicating that Martha tamed the dragon, who was called the Tarasque or Tarascon, by sprinkling it with an aspergillum. See Voragine, 392-93; and Reau, vol. 3, part 2, 893-96.
39. Le Coq, 49-51. In François Ier Imaginaire, Le Coq discusses the Visconti emblem and notes that it could be a dragon or a serpent, and that it had both positive and negative connotations.

40. The exceptions to this style are the dragons found at the top of the frame on folio 85v which I am certain are by another hand.


42. Knecht, 67.

43. Knecht, 68.

44. Knecht, 240-46. His claim stemmed from the marriage of Valentina Visconti in 1389 to the French king Louis I, a match from which both his parents and his wife were descended. See Knecht, 62-63.

45. Like the dragon of Milan, the Visconti dragon is also depicted as a serpent, and can be shown swallowing a man. See http://www.heraldique-europeene.org/Regions/Italie/Milan.htm.

46. Le Coq, 49.

47. Knecht, 9-12, 17-18; Matarasso, 271-72; Le Coq, 48-49.


49. Le Coq, 204-05.

50. Knecht, 81-83.


52. Knecht, 252.

53. Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 127. The Vie de la Magdalene is not the only book by Demoulins that brings together a religious figure with an historical moment and a particular person. In the Petit Livret of 1518, he draws comparisons between Louise and the Virgin Mary, and between Francis and Jesus Christ. Demoulins and Godefroy collaborated on another manuscript also commissioned by Louise that used a similar formula. The Commentaries de la Guerre Gallique, which is in three volumes, were created by Demoulins in 1519-20. This manuscript brings Francis together with Julius Caesar for a discussion of the subject of empire and was undoubtedly produced at the request of Louise, who called Francis “her Caesar” from his childhood. The format is a dialogue between the two rulers, much in the manner of the dialogue between
“Madame” and “Obedience” in the Vie. The most significant association, however, is in the closing of the introductory section, which contains a miniature of the crucified Christ, who is presented as the “true monarch, who holds the Empire in His hand and who will grant it at his pleasure not according to the whim of the Marquise of Brandenburg nor all the ‘angels of Germany.’” These references to the Marquise of Brandenburg and the “angels of Germany” are allusions to an event that occurred in the process of writing the manuscript--the election of Charles V as Holy Roman Emperor, a position that François had hoped to attain. Furthermore, the figure of Christ holds the red French battle flag in his right hand, symbolizing the ultimate triumph of the Cross, and in his left, he hold the closed crown of Charlemagne which the kings of France continued to wear. As in the Vie, the spiritual and the temporal exist in the same plane and references to historical events are placed along side religious ones, thus uniting both spheres. See Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 162, 184-94; Le Coq, 229-43; and Knecht, 165-67. For the question of the authorship of Commentaries by Demoulins, see Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 192-94.

54. Knecht, 144, 146-47, 149-54.

55. Knecht, 17-18; Matarasso, 286 n. 1, and 299. England and France signed two treaties in 1514.


58. Ibid.

59. Ibid.

60. Knecht, 1; Matarasso, 36-40.

61. Lucas van Leyden’s engraving entitled The Dance of the Magdalene shows her dancing, flirting, and hunting, but is dated 1519, two years after the Vie de la Magdalene, and therefore cannot be considered an influence on similar scenes or themes in the manuscript. See note 67 below and Chapter 5 for further discussion.

62. Knecht., 111-12. Hunting provided the courtiers, especially the men, with the physical activity and heightened awareness needed to stay fit between military campaigns.

63. Matarasso, 29.

64. Matarasso, 36. Marguerite of Austria was being groomed by Anne to marry her brother Charles VIII and become Queen of France, but never achieved that lofty
position as Charles married Anne of Brittany. Marguerite eventually became Louise’s sister-in-law when she married Philibert of Savoy.

65. Knecht, 111-12.

66. This scene shows Francis hunting with his favorite huntsman Perot, identified with an inscribed banderole.

67. For dating of the Vie, see Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 299-302. Lucas van Leyden’s print entitled The Dance of the Magdalene shows a similar scene of the Magdalene and a male figure riding off together in the background. However, since this print is dated 1519, two years after the Vie de la Magdalene, it could not have been a source for the Magdalene manuscript. It is possible that there was a common source that has yet to be discovered. Orth notes that that the hunting scene also appears in a painting that is contemporary with the Vie de la Magdalene and the Leyden print, reinforcing the theory that these three works have a common but unknown source. See Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 315.

68. Knecht, 1-3; Matarasso, 110. This was despite Charles’s two mistresses, whom Louise accepted with grace and equanimity, raising his illegitimate daughters along with her children and taking one of her husband’s mistresses, Antoinette de Polignac, as her companion.

69. Knecht, 1-3; Matarasso, 110.

70. Knecht, 3-4.

71. Matarasso, 110.

72. Snyder, 68.

73. Psalm 139:4: “They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent: the venom of asps is under their lips.”

74. In folios 34r, 46v, and 101r, Jesus Christ is identified by the title of “King,” and in folios 39v, 59v, 75v, and 91r, Francis is referred to by this title as well. Likewise, in folio 46v, the Virgin Mary is identified as the mother of a king, and in folio 59r, 77r, 77v, and 91r Demoulins indicates that Louise is the mother of a king, as well. Francis bore the title “Most Christian King of France,” which was an appellation applied to all French monarchs from the twelfth century. See Knecht, 88.

75. Written by Demoulins and illustrated by Godefroy le Batave, Ut rosa de spinis was, among other things, a commentary on Francis’s mission to Milan. It was delivered by envoy to the king while he was enroute to Italy. See Le Coq, 211-14.
76. Le Coq, 211.

77. Knecht, 4-6; Matarasso, 113-14.

78. Knecht, 4-6; Matarasso, 113-14, 158-59, 203-05.


80. Knecht, 4; Matarasso, 158-60.

81. Knecht, 4; Matarasso, 158-60

82. Knecht, 4; Matarasso, 158-60

83. Voragine, 357-60.

84. Knecht, 1-3; Matarasso, 110-113.


86. The exception is the Master of 1518, whose painting of the Ecstasy of Mary Magdalene in Brussels has an accurate description of the cliff in the background, indicating that the artist probably saw the shrine in person. See Orth, “The Magdalene Shrine,” 205; and Koch, 273-75.


89. Le Coq, 315-23; Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 283-98; “The Magdalene Shrine,” 202-05. As a predecessor for the Magdalene manuscript, Dominus is interesting for several reasons. First, Demoulins presents a member of the royal family as a modern impersonation of a religious figure, an idea he will repeat in the Vie a short time later. Second, the illuminations are in roundel form with inscriptions in the surrounding frames, an idea that become a dominant motif in the Vie. Third, the theme of a spiritual and physical journey is implicit in the theme and illuminations of both manuscripts.


92. Knecht, 6; Matarasso, 201, 254; Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 83-88.

94. Matarasso, 292-93. See also Chapter 1, notes 43 and 78 for other sources addressing Demoulins’s contribution to the journal of Louise of Savoy.

95. Folios 93v, 76r, and 76v.

96. This is particularly evident on folios 77r to 78r, in which Demoulins promotes himself for a bishopric.

97. For the Franciscans’ devotion to Mary Magdalene, see Jansen, 86-99 and 138-42. Jansen, 138, notes that, “Writers of Franciscan devotional literature fancied their founder a second Magdalen.”

98. Mycoff, 8.


101. Jansen, 90.

102. Knecht, 94.

103. Knecht, 6. Demoulins’s *Le traité sur les vertus cardinales* (Paris, B.N., ms. fr. 12247) also demonstrates his hatred of bad priests and deceitful theologians. See Le Coq, 85-100. Robinet Testard, who had been in the employ of the court of Angoulême for many years, illuminated this treatise.

104. Folios 75r-76v and 77r-78r.

105. Knecht, 113; Freeman, 77-98. Louise remained her son’s most trusted advisor until her death and was often in control of the government, officially or unofficially, while her son was away from court hunting or was otherwise engaged. See Freeman, 77-78.

106. Folios 75r-77r, 94v, and 95r.


109. Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 99. Marguerite was heavily involved in the French Pre-Reformation movement and carried on a long correspondence with several of the Pre-Reformers, most particularly Guillaume Brinçonnet, Bishop of Meaux, in which she showed her remarkable intelligence and acumen, which in matters spiritual far surpassed her mother and brother. Her court at Navarre became a haven for reformers at odds with the Catholic Church. See Knecht, 154-64; Le Coq, 44, 393-95, 414-16, 458-60, 468; and Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 298-99; and “The Magdalene Shrine,” 203. See also Barbara Stephenson, The Power and Patronage of Marguerite of Navarre (Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2004), 149-184.
CHAPTER 5

THE INFLUENCE OF FRENCH PASSION PLAYS ON THE DESIGN AND CONTENT OF THE VIE DE LA MAGDALENE

In Chapter 2 I discussed the traditional literary sources for late medieval Magdalene iconography, specifically the canonical Gospels, the *Golden Legend*, and the *VBMM*. Although the influence of these sources on the narrative and imagery of the *Vie de la Magdalene* was profound, there are a number of intriguing and incongruous elements within the Magdalene manuscript that require us to look elsewhere for their origins.

For example, the detailed scenes of the Magdalene’s worldly life and the inclusion of her paramour (folios 9r to 11r) as well as the unusual illumination depicting the Holy Women’s visit to the house of Herod (folio 47r) have no basis in the traditional sources, although these scenes are significant in the *Vie*. Furthermore, the Lazarus roundels have several unusual visual elements, including the raised vantage point of some of the miniatures (folios 26r and 30r), the placement of scenes in a city or town square (folio 45r), the scenographic depiction of the architectural elements, and the nearly cinematic sequencing of folios 30r to 36r.

After carefully examining the manuscript’s text and illuminations, I have determined that the sources for these unusual elements are fifteenth-century French Passion plays. These elaborate productions, which were written in the vernacular, were performed in cities and large towns across France and the French-speaking Netherlands throughout the mid-fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The largest number of performances occurred between 1486 and 1520, thus coinciding with the production of the Magdalene manuscript in 1517.¹

In this chapter I will discuss the relationship of the *Vie de la Magdalene* to contemporary vernacular religious theater and present evidence of the influence of the plays on the design, illuminations, text, and overall concept of substantial portions of the Magdalene manuscript. In addition, I will demonstrate that the design and composition of some of the roundels reinforces the references to royalty found elsewhere in the *Vie de la Magdalene*.
The Influence of French Passion Plays on Late Medieval Art

In Religious Art in France: the Late Middle Ages, Emile Mâle called religious theater “the second greatest contribution to the transformation of ancient French iconography,” following only Italian art in predominance as an agent of change in French art. In The Medieval French Drama, Grace Frank stated that the “visualization of biblical scenes upon the stage and observation of methods of portraying them could not but have affected any artists in the audience.” She suggested, as did Mâle, that the inclusion of certain scenes, such as the presentation of the gifts of the shepherds to the Christ Child and other previously neglected scenes from Christ’s life, indicate the influence of religious theater on the visual arts. Frank noted that while many of the details found in the depiction of Christian subject matter may all be found in the traditional sources from whence the dramatists took their inspiration, it is the “timing of various transformations in the visual representation of Church history and Church legend [that] indicates a true indebtedness to the theatre.” In particular, the strongest influence was exerted by the mystery plays presented between the mid-fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries. This type of vernacular religious drama did not become widespread until the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with the period of greatest popularity occurring about 1500. This corresponds with the “golden age” of medieval drama in general, which occurred in Europe between 1450 and 1550.

Mary Magdalene has been an essential character of religious theater since its inception in the mid-tenth century. Her twin roles as witness to the Resurrection and Apostle to the Apostles were considered the most significant episodes of her life and, thus, were the most commonly performed in early plays such as the Palatine Passion, Les Trois Maries, and Visitatio sepulchri. Later playwrights expanded the significance of the Magdalene’s role in religious dramas of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries with three plays in particular presenting her as a major character in the story of Christ’s Passion. These are the Mysteré d’Arras, written by Eustache Mercadé in 1415, the Mysteré de la Passion, written by Arnoul Gréban before 1452, and the Mysteré de la Passion by Jean Michel, which was first performed in Angers in 1486. As I will
demonstrate, these three plays provided the inspiration for many of the anomalous elements found in the *Vie de la Magdalene*.\textsuperscript{11}

Before beginning my discussion, however, it is necessary to address briefly the influence of *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, by the Pseudo Bonaventure.\textsuperscript{12} A popular book of devotion, *Meditations* proved to have a profound influence on many authors, playwrights, and artists in the late medieval and early Renaissance periods, due largely to its vivid narrative quality.\textsuperscript{13} Eustache Mercadé borrowed heavily from *Meditations* in the creation of the *Arras Passion*, and therefore it was also incorporated into the Gréban and Michel plays, as these evolved from Mercadé’s *Passion*.\textsuperscript{14}

However, while it is true that certain scenes and characters found in *Meditations* are present in the later plays, there are also specific aspects in which the plays deviate from this source. A good example is the episode in which John informs the Virgin of Christ’s arrest. In *Meditations* the scene takes place in Jerusalem where the Virgin is sheltered in the house of Mary Magdalene.\textsuperscript{15} In the Gréban play, however, the Virgin and the Holy Women await news at Martha’s house in Bethany, a detail that is included in the Michel Passion as well. The perpetuation of these details in successive plays indicates the later playwrights took their inspiration from their predecessors rather than returning to *Meditations* as a source.

To some degree the influence of *Meditations* is also evident in the *Vie de la Magdalene*. This is not surprising since Demoulins was himself a Franciscan and would have been aware of the emotional impact of this popular book of contemplation. Demoulins also includes the waiting scene from *Meditations* in the *Vie de la Magdalene*, but like Gréban and Michel, he, too, sets the scene in Martha’s house in Bethany rather than the Magdalene’s house in Jerusalem. Both city and domicile are clearly indicated by inscriptions in the illumination on folio 46r, inscriptions that are in accordance with the locations mentioned in the plays. Therefore, although the *Vie de la Magdalene* exhibits the influence of *Meditations on the Life of Christ*, details such as these indicate that this influence is more likely to have been mediated through the Passion plays rather than coming directly from the book itself.
Within the *Vie de la Magdalene*, the series of twenty-three roundels depicting the death and resurrection of Lazarus are particularly good examples of the influence exerted on the Magdalene manuscript by popular religious dramas. This group of images form over a third of the manuscript’s total number of illuminated roundels and the sequential design of these scenes form a miniature miracle play within the larger story of the Magdalene’s *vita*. This, too, is evidence of the influence of these Passion plays on the *Vie*. This was, in fact, a common technique used to include the story of Lazarus in the large Passion plays.\(^{16}\) Although the early versions of miracle plays such as the Resurrection of Lazarus were originally staged as individual performances, they were later absorbed into the larger Passion plays such as the Gréban and Michel *Passions* and, therefore, hold a prominent place in the Magdalene manuscript.\(^{17}\)

**Mary Magdalene in the Mercadé, Gréban, and Michel Passions**

The influence of the Mercadé, Gréban, and Michel *Passions* on religious theater in France was profound. The library in Mons has a group of *abregies*, director’s copies of the scripts with stage directions, dating from 1501 that testify to the fact that these plays were highly respected across France.\(^{18}\) The Gréban and Michel plays in particular were used as the basic texts for Passion plays performed in France and the French-speaking Netherlands throughout the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.\(^{19}\) Of the three, the Michel *Passion* was the most influential on the *Vie de la Magdalene* due to Jean Michel’s expansion of the saint’s role in the story of Christ and his vivid account of her worldly life.

It is important to note that the identity of the woman known as Mary Magdalene is never debated in the plays. She is presented in accordance with the orthodox Gregorian conflation, just as she is in the *Vie de la Magdalene*, but without Demoulins’s equivocation. Thus, the anonymous anointing sinner, the possessed Mary of Magdala, and virtuous Mary of Bethany are all presented as Mary Magdalene in the Gréban and Michel *Passions*.

As popular as these Passion plays were, however, it was not necessary to attend a performance to be acquainted with their specific scenes and characters, for the plays were
widely read as literature. The Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris has several copies of the plays written specifically as presentation manuscripts for the aristocracy, and seventeen editions of the Michel Passion were printed between 1497 and 1520. Given its widespread appeal, it is probable that Demoulins, Godefroy, and Louise were all acquainted with the Gréban and Michel Passions even if they had never attended a performance. Thus, whether by performance or devotional reading, specific aspects of these plays could easily have found their way into the text and illuminations of the Vie de la Magdalene.

The French Passion plays were elaborate productions that were performed over the course of one to several days, with each journée presenting a particular phase of Christ’s life. However, the content of the particular journée differed depending on the play. The plays of Mercadé and Gréban begin with a heavenly debate over the humanity’s worthiness for redemption. By contrast, the Michel Passion focuses on Christ’s ministry, miracles, arrest, Crucifixion, and burial, presenting these scenes with great energy and realism. Michel’s Passion is unusual in that it does not include the final episode of the story, the Resurrection of Christ, but it is believed that he wrote a separate play, La Resurrection d’Angers, which was presumably performed as a complement to his Passion. Furthermore, directors often incorporated the Gréban and Michel plays, and Gréban’s Resurrection scene would, therefore, have provided the necessary conclusion to these performances. Such incorporation is evident in the Vie de la Magdalene, which includes scenes from both the Gréban and Michel Passions.

In each of these plays, Mary Magdalene is an integral part of the drama, although her story was manipulated to fit the needs of the individual playwright. For example, Mercadé inverts the scriptural order of the Magdalene’s appearance in the Arras Passion, introducing her during the episode depicting the death and resurrection of Lazarus, which precedes the scenes depicting her vanity and conversion. The reason for the inversion of the two episodes appears to be thematic. Mercadé sets up the twin themes of worldliness and repentance by giving Lazarus a deathbed scene in which he expresses regret for his life of vain pleasures, a theme that is repeated by the Magdalene during the scene of her conversion a short time later. Gréban and Michel did not repeat the inversion, however,
and retain the scriptural order in their plays, although Michel also presents Lazarus as a carefree cavalier who comes to regret his misspent life. In the Michel Passion, Lazarus’s conversion also precedes that of his sister, although his death and resurrection comes later in the story.

During the Lazarus episodes of the Arras Passion, the Magdalene is an appropriately grieving sister who is deeply gratified by Christ’s intervention in her brother’s death. However, in her next appearance Mercadé presents her as a profligate beauty who revels in pleasure for its own sake and wants to enjoy her youth and allure while she can. In a soliloquy, she tells the audience of her delight in worldly possessions, and her enjoyment of music, song, and the admiration of men. Unlike a prostitute, however, Mercadé’s Magdalene adamantly rejects the idea of receiving money for her favors and offers her beautiful body freely to fulfill her lustful desires. She sings several love songs in the hope of attracting a lover, but fails to arouse interest. While she is waiting, she becomes introspective about her sinful behavior and thus begins the process of repentance. She purchases a precious ointment from the apothecary and goes to the house of Simon the Leper, where she kisses and anoints Christ’s feet, in accordance with the scriptural accounts.

However, Mercadé combined this first anointing scene, which in scripture takes place at the home of Simon the Pharisee, with the second anointing scene at the home of Simon the Leper in which Christ defends the Magdalene’s actions when Judas remarks that the cost of the ointment could have fed the poor. This conflation is unusual and not adopted by Gréban and Michel, who present the two anointing scenes separately. In the Gréban play, Simon the Pharisee and Simon the Leper are two different individuals, while in the Michel play, they are the same person who hosts Christ and his companions twice. Demoulins adopted the Gréban form for the Vie de la Magdalene and individuates the two men and the two episodes of anointing.

Unlike his successors, Mercadé did not include the Magdalene in the scenes with the Virgin that deal with Christ’s arrest, nor is she mentioned specifically as present at the Crucifixion, Deposition, or Entombment, although he indicates that the Holy Women as a
group attend these events. Mercadé does, however, give the Magdalene a prominent role in the scenes at the sepulcher and in the garden, as well as presenting her as Apostola.

Gréban’s Passion was the most famous and popular Passion play of its day. In Paris, the Confrérie de la Passion, which had a virtual monopoly on the play’s production, performed it at least three times before 1473, as well as in 1473, 1490, 1498, and 1507. It continued to be performed regularly in Paris until Louis XIV abolished the Brotherhood in 1676. Gréban, like Mercadé, was an ecclesiastic and theologian and is believed to have written the play while working as organist and choirmaster at Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Gréban’s association with Notre Dame in Paris is important, for the Gréban Passion was written particularly for a Parisian audience and presents the Virgin Mary in an extremely compassionate and sympathetic manner. This compassion and humanity extends to the other characters as well, with the suffering and lamentations of the Magdalene a particularly touching aspect of the play.

Gréban’s treatment of the Magdalene and her mondanité is quite different from either Mercadé or Michel. Gréban does not dwell on the Magdalene’s sinful life, but rather has her recall it as part of her process of repentance and conversion. She enters the play after Christ has pardoned the Woman Taken in Adultery, a character named Jhezabel. In a monologue, the Magdalene introduces herself to the audience and tells them that she was born of a distinguished family but because of her vain and sinful life, her name is reviled. Unlike the other two plays, which dwell on her wantonness, Gréban does not have the Magdalene mentioning a particular sin or indiscretion, but rather, focuses on the young woman’s expressions of guilt and her hope that Jesus will purify her sins “in a river of mercy.” Gréban makes great use of internal dialogue in his play and his Magdalene is the most introspective of the three versions of the saint.

The episode continues with the Magdalene’s soliloquy outside the house of Simon the Leper, in which she questions her worthiness to appear before Jesus, and concludes in accordance with the scriptural accounts of her tearful repentance. The scenes that follow, from the Resurrection of Lazarus through the Passion to Pentecost, also align with the descriptions of the same scenes in the canonical Gospels.
However, there are deviations in the Gréban *Passion* that are traceable to *Meditations on the Life of Christ*. These include the aforementioned scenes in which John tells the Virgin and Holy Women of Christ’s arrest, and the subsequent scene in which they seek Christ at the various places he has been held.\(^{34}\) Significantly, both of these episodes are referenced in the *Vie de la Magdalene*. Other apocryphal scenes based on *Meditations* are incorporated into the Gréban *Passion*, including the purchase by the three Marys of ingredients to make the burial unguent they will take to the tomb and Christ’s visit to his mother after his Resurrection. These scenes, however, are not referenced in the *Vie de la Magdalene*.

It is the Michel *Passion*, however, that contains the largest number of scenes involving Mary Magdalene and it is the most complete and compelling version of her story from this period.\(^{35}\) As mentioned above, Michel constructed his play on the model of the Gréban *Passion* but included only those scenes depicting Christ’s ministry, persecution, Crucifixion, and Entombment. However, Michel incorporates his own innovations with Gréban’s scenes and enriches the story with additional dialogue and character interaction. The result is an intense, emotional Passion play in which the characters are complex, animated, and representative of the spectrum of humanity. Of the 350 characters in the Michel *Passion*, Mary Magdalene is one of the most important and vividly drawn.

Although the Magdalene does not appear in the first journée, Martha, who enters the play lamenting the foolishness of her siblings, tells the audience of her sister’s flawed character early on. The Magdalene is not alone in her *mondanité*, however, for Lazarus also spends his days in the idle pursuit of vain pleasures.\(^{36}\) Lazarus’s valet Brunamont, who is dismissed after his master’s conversion, reinforces Martha’s negative comments about the Magdalene by declaring that he will go to work at her court where things are always amusing.\(^{37}\)

Much of the second day is devoted to scenes of the Magdalene’s vanity, conversion, and repentance. She is presented as a vain and heartless woman whose only concerns are her beauty, jewels, fine clothes, and the admiration these things engender. Through several long scenes, the Magdalene flirts, sings love songs, and admires her
reflection as she is costumed and adorned by her servants. They discuss the pleasures of
dancing, banqueting, and other enjoyments of a more carnal variety. The appearance of
Rodigon, her current lover, who enters the Magdalene’s chambers as she preens before
her mirror, alludes to these romantic liaisons. Listing the seven deadly sins one by one,
the Magdalene welcomes their corruption of her soul and arrogantly describes for her
entourage the manner in which each sin is manifest in her actions. Prideful and
extravagant, she orders her servant to purchase only the most precious ingredients for her
perfumes, unaware of what will be the true use of this ointment. Although Martha and
Lazarus try to dissuade their sister from her sinful life, the Magdalene cannot be shamed
by their pleas and arrogantly dismisses them from her presence.

Neither does her attitude change immediately when she hears of Christ and his
good works. Told of the presence of a new preacher in town, the Magdalene’s main
cconcern is over his appearance rather than the possibility of salvation, and when she is
told he is the most handsome of men, she sets out to dazzle him with her beauty. It is
only after hearing his sermon that she is humbled, and weeping with contrition, the
Magdalene follows Christ to the house of Simon the Pharisee where she is converted and
repents. Her depiction in the remainder of the play is in accordance with the Gréban
Passion and does not bear repeating. It is enough to say that she is major character in the
performances of the third and fourth days, functioning as Lazarus’s grieving sister,
Christ’s disciple and friend, and the Virgin Mary’s devoted companion.

As I will demonstrate, the Vie de la Magdalene reflects the influence of the plays
in several ways. In creating the manuscript, Demoulins and Godefroy employed specific
scenes, locales, themes, and figures that are found only in the Passion plays. Some of
these influences are obvious and definite while others are implications or allusions. All
have their foundation in these plays, however. Below I will discuss the influence of the
Passion plays in two ways. First, I will examine aspects of the staging of vernacular
dramas and how these traditions are reflected in a group of illuminations in the Vie that
depict episodes from the story of Lazarus and the Passion of Christ. Second, I will
discuss the inclusion of certain characters and episodes in the vita that are found only in
the plays and are not taken from the traditional sources.
The Staging and Viewing of the Gréban and Michel Passions as Reflected in the Vie de la Magdalene

The staging of late medieval Passion plays was an enormous undertaking that often involved entire towns in the production.\textsuperscript{42} The Michel Passion, which was one of the most elaborate, often ran from morning to evening over at least four days and involved over 150 actors performing 350 roles.\textsuperscript{43} The Michel and Gréban Passion plays were usually performed on a huge, three-sided stage space called a platea that filled the public square or market place.\textsuperscript{44} Although a stage was occasionally constructed and elevated, the platea was often simply a large open area cordoned off in the city square, in which separate sets called stations or mansions were arranged within the space.\textsuperscript{45} The houses and buildings that surrounded the plaza were occasionally used for entrances and exits or as backdrops for scenes, and spectacular effects such as fire cannons, levitating characters, and scenery moving on theatrical “flies” awed the thousands of spectators in attendance.\textsuperscript{46}

The performances were advertised weeks in advance and the audiences, which usually numbered in the thousands, represented the entire social strata from the peasantry to the aristocracy. Seating generally fell into four categories—ground level, tiered seats, scaffolding built specifically for the performance, and structures facing the platea that provided a good view, with all four types of seating used simultaneously in many cases. Invariably, the second level of the scaffolding and the second floor of buildings were reserved for the socially elite while the lower echelons were restricted to the ground level or tiered seating.

The elevated venue served two purposes. It raised the highborn and wealthy above the “rabble” and also provided them with a superior view of the performance. To further segregate the elite, private theater boxes known as chambres were built into the scaffolding and likewise elevated for privacy and a better view.\textsuperscript{47} For performances that used a longitudinal platea, such as the Michel and Gréban Passions, the best place from which to watch the performance was the second level of the scaffold or building that faced the center of the stage, a situation that was reserved for the highest ranking members of society, particularly the nobles and aristocrats in attendance.
The French painter and illuminator Jean Fouquet provided a visual record of the staging and seating for this type of performance in his illustration of the *Martyrdom of Saint Apollonia* from the *Hours of Etienne Chevalier* (figure 73). The manuscript was created between 1452 and 1460 and is, therefore, contemporaneous with the first productions of the plays under discussion. In the center of the stage area, the actors recreate the saint’s torture as the audience looks on. What is significant here is not the performance but the viewing area. The two-tiered scaffolding supports a variety of individuals including actors dressed as angels and demons, a group of musicians, and the audience members who watch from various points around the *platea*. A large throne, complete with canopy of honor, is centrally placed on the second level and testifies to the preferential seating of the aristocracy at this type of performance. On either side of the throne are seated well-dressed men and women, presumably members of the court and others of high rank, who watch the play from the relative comfort of the second level while other attendees are relegated to “groundling” status. Images such as this miniature establish a valuable precedence for the inclusion of theatrical material in illuminated manuscripts such as the *Vie de la Magdalene*, as well as providing contemporary documentation of the staging and viewing of such plays.

The *Vie de la Magdalene* likewise reflects the influence of contemporary religious theater in a variety of ways, including certain viewing angles and details of miniatures, as well as the incorporation of specific scenes, characters, themes and dialogue. I will first address the implications of the point of view and details of the miniatures, as these are the most obvious. In particular, a series of roundels depicting the resurrection of Lazarus and scenes from the Passion are presented from an elevated angle. This is evident when comparing folios 26r, 30r, 33r, 45r, and 46r, which are seen from a slightly raised viewpoint, with folios 27r, 29r, 36r, 37r, and 49r in which the viewer’s eye line has an orientation that is more level. The elevated angle is particularly evident in folios 38r to 43r, which depict Christ at the tomb of Lazarus. The bird’s eye view used in the design of these illuminations is significant because it imitates the elevated perspective that a spectator, particularly an aristocratic spectator, would have had when viewing a Passion
play from the second level of a building or scaffolding, as illustrated in the Fouquet miniature.

A second aspect of the angle of several of the miniatures is also significant. In folios 30r to 35r and 38r to 43r, which also depict scenes from the resurrection of Lazarus, the view is from the right of center looking to the left rather than straight on to the scene. The height and angle of these scenes duplicates the view that would have been exclusive to Louise at such a performance, given her place in Francis’s court. As the mother of the king and one of his most trusted councilor, Louise held first rank among the courtiers and attended her son at all events. Thus, Louise would have been seated on the second tier of the scaffolding and most likely in a place of honor to the right of the king, a placement that provided her with precisely the view that is recreated in these miniatures of the Vie de la Magdalene.

The same elevated right to left view is also used for the illumination on folio 45r, which depicts the Magdalene anointing Christ’s head during the feast at the House of Simon the Leper, an episode that follows the resurrection of Lazarus. In folio 46r and folios 49r to 52r, however, there is an intriguing shift of perspective. The view is now described from the left to the right, although the angle is less dramatic than in the previous scenes. Again, this is aligns with Louise’s placement as well as the process of viewing the play. As I discuss below, the mansions for the Gréban and Michel Passions were typically placed across the length of the platea in a roughly chronological arrangement from left to right, and as such Louise’s view of these later scenes would have been slightly to her right as the chronology of the story progressed. Thus, the illuminations that follow the Lazarus episodes, namely of Christ’s Passion, are primarily shown from left to right and, thus, are also created in accordance with Louise’s experience of the play and the angle from which she would have watched the subsequent acts of the play.

In addition to the obvious visual advantage of centralized seating at religious performances, there were spiritual advantages as well. It was believed that the better the view of a sacred event, the more sanctity to be gained by the viewing. The seating at such events was considered so crucial that disputes over the right to the best seats
occasionally were settled in courts of law.\textsuperscript{54} Thus, the centrally placed seats reserved for the aristocracy at sacred events afforded the royals not only the best view but also the greatest spiritual benefit of those in attendance. Equally important, indulgences were awarded for attending religious performances, with the more lengthy Passion plays garnering additional \textit{quadragenes} for the attendees.\textsuperscript{55} Therefore, in keeping with the belief that the king and his kingdom were one body, an exceptional blessing for the sovereign was likewise a blessing for the sovereign’s subjects.\textsuperscript{56} Consequently the presence of the sovereigns at a religious performance such as that depicted in the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene} involved spiritual benefits that went far beyond the simple devotional experience of attending such a sacred event. It could be understood as nothing less than a blessing for the entire French nation.

Thus, the inclusion of illuminations in the Magdalene manuscript that replicate the view Louise would have had at a religious performance served several purposes. First of all, the centralized elevated view specific to these images was intended to visually reassert the preeminence of the sovereigns in all things, including seating at dramatic presentations. Even more important, however, the artist has depicted the angle of the images to recreate the specific view that would have been reserved exclusively for Louise as she sat beside the king. This view and the scene-by-scene depiction of the Lazarus story create a virtual Passion play that enabled Louise to re-experience the royal performance each time she read the Magdalene manuscript. As I discuss in Chapter 4, such mimetic experiences were considered to have a profound devotional effect on the faithful. As with the pilgrimage images, these “performances in miniature” provided Louise with a more vivid devotional experience as she read the manuscript, and acted as a touchstone to her memories of this sacred event, thereby enhancing its spiritual benefit long after the performance was over.

Further evidence of the influence of vernacular Passion plays in the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene} is found by comparing the manuscript’s illuminations to the traditional staging of the plays. Most of the Passion plays of this period were presented in “simultaneous staging,” meaning that all the \textit{mansions} were placed in the \textit{platea} at the same time.\textsuperscript{57} Heaven and Hell were situated at opposite ends and the other stations filled
the area between these two extremes.\textsuperscript{58} The mansions represented the various locations of the sacred story such as the Garden of Eden, Herod’s throne room, or the Sea of Galilee depending on the specific play. As mentioned above, the mansions were placed in an arrangement that moved in a generally chronological flow based on the scenes to be depicted during that day’s performance.

The stations or mansions were usually placed on low stepped plinths and decorated with the props needed for the particular scene.\textsuperscript{59} The structures intended to represent buildings or homes could be basic constructions with four posts and a roof or quite elaborate in their design and decoration. The stations could be open on all sides for performances in the round or on three sides with a back wall when the audience had three viewing angles.\textsuperscript{60} As I discuss below, this second type of structure appears in several of the illuminations in the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene}, and is especially evident in the Lazarus roundels.

In many cases the same station was used several times for different scenes. Thus, the set for the Red Sea was also used for the River Jordan, and the House of Martha could double as the House of Simon the Leper, which appears to have been the case in the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene}.\textsuperscript{61} A comparison of the mansions in folios 30r to 35r and 46r, which represent the House of Martha in Bethany, and folio 45r, which represents the House of Simon the Leper, reveal similarities of structural type, proportion, and decoration. Both houses are placed on a low plinth, have shallow interior spaces, and similar architectural details, such as classically decorated pilasters and spandrels. The few subtle differences between the two structures, such as the design of the spandrels, can be attributed to an artistic license available to Godefroy during the illumination of the manuscript that was not afforded the set designers. Despite these differences, the overall appearance of the two structures is extremely similar and alludes to the repeated use of the same mansion for a variety of loci throughout the course of the play.

The relationship of these structures to the surrounding space is also significant. In the depictions of both Martha’s and Simon’s houses, the buildings are set apart from the rest of the town, with a considerable distance between these structures and the other buildings in the area. There is a large open space behind and adjacent to each building.
just as there would be if the *mansions* were placed in the open space of a city square. Furthermore, in folio 45r, which depicts the Feast at the House of Simon the Leper, a large fountain is visible behind the house to the right, an object typical of the squares and marketplaces of most European cities.\(^{62}\)

To avoid confusion when a *mansion* was used several times during a play, inscriptions identified the location of the specific scene. The necessity of changing the inscriptions during the course of the play naturally required the locations to be written on individual placards that were hung on the set at the appropriate time.\(^{63}\) While borrowing the idea, Godefroy was not burdened with this practicality and wrote the locations of scenes directly on the structures within the illuminations, usually on the plinth or frieze. He did use placard-like devices, however, elsewhere in the manuscript, usually for portions of dialogue as in folio 30r. In truth, the inscriptions on the *mansions* were not necessary as the location of the scene was usually specified in the narrative text that accompanied the illumination. Such labeling would have been necessary, however, to reproduce accurately the appearance of a religious drama, which, as I have indicated, was a primary motivation behind the design of many of the illuminations in the Magdalene manuscript.

In addition to the stations that were built specifically for the performance, pre-existing structures such as homes, shops, and inns were also incorporated into the *platea*, serving as backgrounds for scenes or for the entrances and exits of characters.\(^{64}\) This type of set also appears in illuminations for the *Vie de la Magdalene*. In folio 47r, which depicts the Virgin, Mary Magdalene, and other disciples seeking Christ at Herod’s house, the interaction between the Virgin and Herod’s surly porter takes place on the porch and in the street in front of a house, a depiction that correlates with the incorporation of pre-existing buildings into the performance space. Equally interesting is the Pentecost scene on folio 54r, which appears to have been placed within or before an architectural structure like a loggia or arcade through which we see the city square or street beyond. This miniature likewise testifies to the use of established structures within the performance space of religious dramas and to the depiction of this type of theatrical set in the *Vie de la Magdalene*. 

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An illustrated version of the Valenciennes Passion (B.N., Paris, ms. Rothschild 1.7.3) provides us with the actual appearance of the mansions and platea commonly used in French Passion plays in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The play was performed in 1547, and judging from the text, scenes, and characters, scholars have determined that it was based on several earlier Passion plays, including the Gréban and Michel Passions. Hubert Cailleau, the play’s director, wrote and illustrated the Valenciennes manuscript several years later. He included specific scenes and sets in his illustrations of each journée of the play as well as illustrations of the overall appearance of the platea including placement of each of the mansions (figure 74). In comparison, Cailleau’s depiction of the mansions used in the Valenciennes Passion is strikingly similar to some of the “sets” in the illuminations of the Vie de la Magdalene. Arranged across the long space of the platea, the mansions represent a salle or general room used for various loci over which are the radiating form of Heaven. Other mansions include the stable in Nazareth, the temple in Jerusalem, a palace, city gates, a boat on a miniature sea, a prison-like structure representing the Limbo of the Patriarchs, and the Mouth of Hell. Cailleau’s mansions also are open on three sides with columns, a roof, and a solid back wall, and are set on stepped plinths, as are many of the structures in the illuminations of the Vie.

Even more significant are several of Cailleau’s depictions of scenes from the eighteenth journée of the Valenciennes Passion (figure 75), scenes that are also similar to illuminations in the Vie de la Magdalene. In folios 31r and 36r of the Vie, for example, the angle of the house and the kneeling posture of Martha resemble the building and the figure of the Virgin Mary in to the left of Cailleau’s illustration. The placement of the figures behind Martha in folio 36r is also similar to the Holy Women behind the Virgin in the Valenciennes illumination.

A close comparison can also be made between scenes depicting Jesus washing the feet of the Apostles and the Last Supper from the Valenciennes Passion and two illuminations of the Vie de la Magdalene. In folio 46r John rushes to Martha’s house in Bethany to tell the Virgin and Holy Women of Christ’s arrest. The perspective of the mansion representing Martha’s house and the running figure of John are very similar to
the placement of the building and the posture of the water carrier in Cailleau’s depiction of Christ washing the feet of the Apostles. In a similar fashion, folio 45r of the Vie, which depicts the Feast at the House of Simon the Leper, strongly resembles the illustration of the Last Supper in the Valenciennes Passion. In particular, the perspective of the structures and their placement in the composition, the proportion of the interior spaces, the arrangement of the figures around the tables, the placement of the vessels in the center foreground, and Judas in the right foreground of the two illuminations bear a strong resemblance that alludes to the influence of Passion plays the illuminations of the Vie de la Magdalene.

Although the Valenciennes Passion play was performed and illustrated thirty years after the creation of the Vie de la Magdalene, a comparison between the two manuscripts is entirely relevant because both the manuscript and the play originated with the Gréban and Michel Passions. Thus, the similarities between the two manuscripts, the one an illustrated play created by the director based on actual scenes and sets from the performance, help to prove that the Vie was partially inspired by the same scenes and sets that are also illustrated in Hubert Cailleau’s Valenciennes Passion. Even more significant is the fact that both sets of illuminations were intended to serve exactly the same purpose as mimetic devices, reminding the reader of the experience of witnessing the Passion plays by recreating the placement and postures of the actors and the appearances of the sets, undoubtedly to enhance the spiritual benefit of attending such a profound and sacred event.  

The parallels between theatrical staging and the illuminations under discussion in the Vie de la Magdalene are reinforced by the placement of interacting figures in front or beside the mansions. This dramatic device, referred to as enmi la place, is illustrated in the scene to the left of the illumination from the Valenciennes Passion which depicts Christ taking leave of his mother. This dramatic device is also clearly illustrated in folios 30r to 35r of the Vie, which depict the meeting between Martha, the Magdalene, and Jesus when he returns to Bethany following Lazarus’s death.  

In the Gospel of John 11: 1-44, this meeting occurred on the road outside of Bethany, a point reiterated by the VBMM. However, in the Michel Passion the stage
direction indicates that Jesus enters the town of Bethany but stops “far enough” from Martha and the Magdalene. Learning that Jesus has come to town, Martha goes to meet him while the grieving Magdalene remains behind to be consoled by friends. Martha first kneels before Jesus (folio 30r) and then stands (folio 31r) as they speak of the tragedy. At Jesus’s request (folio 32r), Martha returns to the Magdalene (folio 33r) and quietly tells her that Jesus wants to speak to her (folio 34r). At this, the Magdalene stands and walks toward Jesus (folio 35r), then falls at his feet weeping (folio 36r). She stands as she speaks to Jesus of her brother’s death, and Christ, moved by her tears, weeps in sympathy (folio 37r) before asking the women to take him to Lazarus’s tomb.

The choice made by Demoulins and Godefroy to set the action of these scenes just outside Martha’s house reflects the influence of the stage device of enmi la place and, equally important, the staging of this scene in the Michel Passion. This is demonstrated by comparing this group of folios with the preceding illuminations on folios 26r, 27r, and 28r, in which the messenger sent by Martha and the Magdalene finds Jesus in Ephraim, across the Jordan from Bethany. If Demoulins and Godefroy had closely followed the Gospel of John 11:30 when they created the manuscript, the meeting of Jesus and the sisters depicted in folios 30r to 37r would have resembled folio 26r and taken place on the outskirts of town with Bethany in the distance. However, the action in this group of scenes takes place near Martha’s house within the town of Bethany, just as it is described in the Michel Passion. When examined in light of the other elements that point to the influence of the play on the Vie de la Magdalene, these illuminations clearly indicate that the staging of both the Michel and Greban Passions influenced Demoulins and Godefroy when designing these scenes.

The progressive action of the figures of Martha and Magdalene, who move back and forth from the house to Jesus in folios 30r to 37r, is particularly theatrical. In fact, the miniatures are nearly cinematic in their storyboard conception and seem to anticipate the photographic flipbook. The emphasis on the smooth visual movement of the figures through the depicted space recreates the movement of actors in a theatrical scene. This becomes even more evident when one considers that several of the scenes, such as the women leaving and entering the house, were not visually necessary and would have been
understood from the text. However, the inclusion of these otherwise unnecessary scenes function with the other elements to create an anamnestic representation of a theatrical production that can only be explained by the use of a Passion play, in particular the Gréban and Michel Passions, as textual and visual sources for the manuscript.

The compositions, settings, and interactions of the figures in the Lazarus illuminations of the Vie de la Magdalene demonstrate that the Greban and Michel Passions inspired Demoulins and Godefroy during the creation of the Magdalene manuscript. The overall concept of this group of scenes also reflects a common practice among the playwrights and directors of the day. They staged a series of short successive scenes at the same mansion to pick up the pace of the play and hold the interest of the audience. This technique is demonstrated in the Lazarus scenes of the Michel Passion, and it is obvious that Godefroy copied this staging for the same group of scenes in the Vie de la Magdalene.

Although these shifts in composition, the arrangement of figures, and the sequential arrangement of scenes are subtle elements in the manuscript, when taken together and understood in light of theatrical presentations of the day, the influence of the staging of Passion plays the illuminations in the Vie de la Magdalene is difficult to deny. The compositions of the Lazarus roundels, in particular, appear to have been purposefully manipulated to evoke not only Louise’s recollection of such a play, if indeed she attended one, but to represent Godefroy’s view as well. One is tempted to see the illuminations as the finished product of sketches made during a performance of the Michel Passion, and given the large number of productions presented in the years preceding the manuscript’s creation, this hypothesis is certainly possible.

The Influence of the Text, Episodes, and Characters of the Gréban and Michel Passions on the Vie de la Magdalene

The series of roundels depicting the resurrection of Lazarus also exhibits the influence of Passion plays on both the text and the images of the Magdalene manuscript. In earlier presentations of this episode, as seen in Giotto’s Arena Chapel, the risen Lazarus is shown wrapped entirely in his burial shroud and standing before Christ (figure
However, in the fifteenth century this representation changed, and according to Emile Mâle, the change was the result of the religious theater. As depicted by Nicolas Froment, Lazarus was now shown seated in or on his grave and partially wrapped in his shroud (figure 77.) He stares at Jesus with his hands in an attitude of prayer as an elderly apostle, presumably Peter, leans over him to remove his bindings.

A similar composition is found in the Vie de la Magdalene. Lazarus sits on the edge of his sarcophagus staring at Christ with his hands in a prayerful posture before him. Peter and John unbind him as Martha, the Magdalene, and others watch in wonderment. The strong similarity of this image to those of Froment and Joest would seem to indicate that all were inspired by the religious theater, as Mâle suggested.

The involvement of Peter in the process is a new detail and not found in earlier art or scriptural sources. The account in John 11:45 reads only that “Jesus said to them ‘Loose him and let him go” without indicating who among the apostles or gathered Jews should free Lazarus from his winding cloth. Mâle notes, however, that a specific direction is found in the plays of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. At Jesus’s command, Lazarus walks out of his tomb bound in his winding cloth. He attempts to kneel before Jesus. In the Michel Passion, Jesus commands, “Unbind him without delay.” Andrew responds to Christ’s command to unbind Lazarus with “My brothers, Let us unbind this man” to which Peter adds, “Let him be unbound for the Master commands it.”

In folio 43r, we see Lazarus sitting on the edge of his sarcophagus gazing at Christ while Peter and another apostle remove his winding cloth, precisely as described by Gréban and Michel in their Passion plays.

In addition to the visual elements, two particular passages of text found in the Lazarus roundels are strongly reminiscent of a dramatic presentation. These are the exhortations made by Demoulins to the audience in the narratives of folios 22v and 24v. He speaks directly to the nobles, clergy, and other powerful members of the audience, reminding them that death comes to all regardless of station or worldly power. What is curious about these two passages is that they are not addressed specifically to Louise, as is the rest of the manuscript, but to a larger social body of French nobles and
ecclesiastics. However, since presumably no one but Louise would have been reading the manuscript, one wonders why the author included this section.

One answer is that the inclusion is intended to echo similar passages found in the Passion plays, such as the prologues and epilogues in which the narrator speaks directly to the audience. Furthermore, in the Gréban Passion, the Magdalene introduces herself to the audience and speaks in a monologue to tell them of her sinful past and her hopes for redemption through Christ’s mercy. This type of exhortation, where a character turns and speaks directly to the audience, was a common device used by playwrights to emphasize a didactic point that they did not want the audience to miss. In these passages, Demoulins used the same technique to drive home an exhortatory message to Louise, and those that might be reading the manuscript, as well as making the political statements I discussed in Chapter 3.

The Mondanité of the Magdalene and the Gréban and Michel Passions

The scenes depicting the mondanité or worldliness of the Magdalene are among the most unusual in the entire manuscript, and they appear to have no source other than the Passion plays of Jean Michel and Andre Gréban. The sinfulness of the Magdalene’s early life was an essential aspect of her story and it is referenced in all the traditional iconographic sources including the Gospels, the Golden Legend, and the VBMM. It is important to note, however, that the references in the Gospel of Luke and the Golden Legend are more allegation than description of a life devoted to the pursuit of vain and sensual pleasures, although the VBMM is more emphatic in the nature of her sinfulness.

Michel in particular was intrigued by the dramatic possibilities of this topic and expanded these vague references to create a fully realized evocation of Magdalene’s sensual abandon. He seems to have taken great delight in describing her decadent existence, and includes several long passages in which she revels in her wantonness and openly embraces mortal sin. Defying her sister’s admonitions to repent, the Magdalene rejoices in her beauty, youth, and social rank. With pride and vanity, she surveys her lovely clothes and jewels, singing of the pleasures of love as she anoints herself with
costly perfumes. As her maids flatter and faun over her, Michel presents the Magdalene as a coquette and a seductress whose only thoughts are of her own selfish desires.

It is this same wanton beauty that dances and romances her way through the opening pages of the Vie de la Magdalene. Although the play does not present an actual scene in which the characters dance, the Magdalene and her maid Perusine speak at length of the pleasures of music, dancing, and feasting and it is obvious that both mistress and maids have enjoyed these diversions together and in the company of others. The entrance of the gallant Rodigon to the Magdalene’s bedchamber alludes to pleasures of a more intimate variety.

It is important to note that allusions such as these were an essential theatrical device used by both Gréban and Michel in the design of their Passion plays. By having characters describe important events that occurred off stage, the playwrights enabled the audience to envision these essential scenes without the necessity of seeing them acted out on stage. Demoulins and Godefroy seized on these allusions as sources for several of the manuscript’s illuminations, most notably the scenes depicting the Magdalene’s worldly life.

In folios 9r and 11r, we see these moments vividly played out in the manuscript as the Magdalene dances and flirts with her paramour. An interesting, if disconcerting, figure is found at the bottom of the dancing roundel. This gruesome, bug-eyed figure is the court jester who holds a fool’s stick in his right hand as he leers and grins at the lovers. Described by Lynette Muir as “a character on the fringe of the action,” a jester or fool was a common element in secular medieval theater, but he was used in only one of the late medieval Passion plays—a Passion play derived from the Passion of Jean Michel. Thus, his presence in the illumination both personifies the Magdalene’s foolishness as well as reinforcing the manuscript’s association with Passion plays, specifically the Passion of Jean Michel.

The inclusion of other women in these images is another important element that ties the Magdalene manuscript specifically to the Gréban and Michel Passions. These plays are the only sources that include any mention of an entourage or attendants who wait on the Magdalene and join her in her pursuit of pleasure. Neither do the traditional
sources mention a particular lover, but rather they state merely that she “gave herself wholly to the pleasure of the senses” and “lost her innocence and the innocence of others.”

However, in the manuscript, the foppish lover is the same figure in all four roundels. He accompanies the Magdalene in the dance (folio 9r), rides by her side as she hunts (folio 10r), and seduces her in a bedchamber as her maids look on (folio 11r). Ironically, the young man is also present when Christ frees her from the seven demons that had corrupted her soul (folio 13r). In each illumination, the lover is depicted with long pale hair and wearing similar clothing, right down to the plumed hat that he wears in three successive images. Undoubtedly, this figure is intended to represent the dashing Rodigon, who so ardently expressed his adoration of the Magdalene in the Michel Passion.

The hunting scene, folio 10r, is one of the most intriguing images of the Magdalene manuscript, and, as I mentioned in Chapter 3, is completely unknown in her iconography. There is no reference to this episode in the Gospels, the Golden Legend, or the VBMM. However, a scene in the Michel Passion is remarkably similar to this illumination with the exception of the gender of the central character. The scene describes the worldliness of Lazarus, a theme that I discussed briefly above. Lazarus, like the Magdalene, abandoned himself to a useless life of pleasure, albeit of the masculine variety. The directions for this scene indicate that Lazarus, dressed as a chevalier, enters the scene with a hunting bird on his wrist and in the company of his servant Brunamont, who leads his master’s dogs. He speaks of his carefree days as a “young adventurer” and the delights of youth, wealth, and nobility, themes that will be reiterated by the Magdalene in a later scene. Like his sister, Lazarus revels in his vanity and Brunamont, like Perusine, reinforces these sentiments by listing the things that make his master’s life so enjoyable, specifically horses, dogs, hunting birds, loyal attendants, and riches. The scene ends with Lazarus stating that he desires to go hunting on the outskirts of a town in the distance, where he hopes to find some new diversion. As we learn in a later scene, it is there that Lazarus is converted after seeing Jesus revive a dead child. He turns away from his old ways, frees his birds, and vows to live a life of
humility. To fulfill this vow he dismisses Brunamont, who decides to join the service of the Magdalene, for she “never ceases to give pleasure and enjoyment.”

Undoubtedly, the hunting scene in Michel’s *Passion* was the source for the hunting roundel in the *Vie de la Magdalene*. All the elements are present, including the horses, the dogs, the hooded hawk that sits on the Magdalene’s wrist, and the servant who accompanies his mistress. In the background, we see her riding toward a fortified town, presumably Magdala, echoing the same action alluded to in the Lazarus scene.

The major difference between this image and the scene with Lazarus is the addition of the Magdalene’s lover, who rides beside her in both foreground and background. However, there is also an allusion to this moment in the Arras *Passion*, when the Magdalene, finding no interested lovers in her immediate company, says that she “wants to go into the country to partake of bon temps.” Thus, in the background of folio 10r, we see her riding off with her lover for the romantic assignation that is illustrated in folio 11r.

As I discuss in Chapter 3, this extremely unusual scene was included because it pertained to the life of Louise of Savoy. Never far from her son, Louise resided at the court of François I, where hunting was the primary recreation. In addition to providing physical activity and mental stimulation, hunting also provided the courtiers with opportunities to engage in amorous dalliances. Demoulins, inspired by the plays, substituted the Magdalene for her brother Lazarus when conceiving of this scene for Louise’s manuscript, knowing that his patron would fully understand the implications.

There is one other possibility, however, for the origins of the hunting and dancing roundels. As Myra Orth has demonstrated, the *Vie de la Magdalene* was created in 1517. Therefore, these remarkable illuminations of the Magdalene’s worldly life were produced two years earlier than the famous print by Lucas van Leyden entitled *The Dance of Mary Magdalene*, which is dated 1519 at the base of the engraving (figure 78.) Here, too, the Magdalene and her lover dance to the music provided by a drummer and piper, while they are mocked by a fool hiding behind a tree to the left. All around them, other couples dance, flirt, and embrace. In the background, the Magdalene is seen hunting stag with her dance partner running at her side. Both scenes in the Leyden print strongly
resemble folios 9r and 10r of the *Vie de la Magdalene*. While it was believed that Van Leyden invented the iconography in the visual arts, Myra Orth’s correct dating of the *Vie* in 1517 proves that the theme was first presented in Magdalene manuscript.\(^\text{101}\) Since the *Vie de la Magdalene* was in the possession of Louise of Savoy, it is unlikely that Lucas van Leyden saw the Magdalene manuscript, and yet the remarkable similarities cannot be ignored. Mary Chauvin, in her 1951 study of the role of Mary Magdalene in medieval theater, proposed that Van Leyden was influenced by the earthy German Passion plays in his depiction of the worldly life of the Magdalene.\(^\text{102}\) Thus, it is possible that both Demoulins and Lucas van Leyden were acquainted with a now lost German play that depicts the Magdalene both dancing and hunting. However, the similarities of the hunting scene in the Michel *Passion* and the illumination of the Magdalene hunting in the *Vie* cannot be denied and allude to the strong influence from this play as well.

Considering the influence of the Michel play in other portions of the Magdalene manuscript, it is reasonable to assume that it was the *Passion* of Jean Michel rather than the hypothetical German play that was the primary influence on the *Vie de la Magdalene*.

**The Magdalene’s Conversion and Post-Conversion Life and The Gréban and Michel Passions**

Another excellent example of the influence of the Michel *Passion* on the Magdalene manuscript is found in folio 12r, which depicts the conversion of the Magdalene. This was the pivotal point in the story of the saint, and it is vividly depicted in both the *Vie de la Magdalene* and the Michel *Passion*. In the play, the Magdalene is told of a man described as the most beautiful in the world, wise and virtuous, with “eyes as clear as the moon.”\(^\text{103}\) Intrigued and aroused, she dresses in her finest gown and goes with her maids to catch a glimpse of this attractive man while he is preaching nearby. Her arrogance and desire quickly turn to shame as she listens to his words and she is filled with regret about her sinful, vain existence. According to the stage direction, by the end of the sermon she has “the manner and countenance of weeping.”\(^\text{104}\)

In folio 12r of the manuscript, Demoulins and Godefroy depict this moment in a very similar fashion. The Magdalene is dressed in a sumptuous gown of gold and white
with slashed sleeves and a gold peaked cap. Seated behind Christ, who is preaching to those gathered in front of him, she weeps unseen as she listens to his sermon. Curiously, this poignant and pivotal episode is not found in the Gospels, the *Golden Legend*, or *VBMM*. The latter work relates only that the Magdalene heard of Jesus’ kindness and good works, and was thus moved to repent her life of sin.\(^{105}\) The only source that closely aligns with this visual depiction of the Magdalene’s contrition is the conversion scene in the *Passion* of Jean Michel, of which this is a virtual illustration. We are left only to imagine how powerful a moment that must have been when performed before the faithful spectators, who saw in this feigned expression of sorrow and repentance the very real possibility for their own redemption.

In addition, there is another aspect of this scene that reflects the influence of the Michel *Passion*. In folio 12v of the *Vie de la Magdalene*, Demoulins tells us that Jesus freed the Magdalene from possession by seven demons: “Magdalene, you are in a blessed state. Jesus Christ delivered you from seven impure spirits... This number evokes the destruction of the seven mortal sins and the accomplishment of the seven works of gentle mercy.” The association of the seven demons that possessed the Magdalene with the seven mortal sins is not found in either the *Golden Legend* or the *VBMM*. The *Golden Legend* states only that Christ “drove seven devils out of her,” and the *VBMM* mentions, “because of her innumerable sins, she was said to be possessed of seven demons,” which Christ later “bound up.”\(^{106}\) However, in the Michel *Passion*, the Magdalene literally enumerates the seven mortal sins at two points in the story. In the first, she is in the depths of her *mondanité* and brags that she has embraced all the sins while enjoying her wanton lifestyle. She mentions each sin specifically and the pleasure that each sin has brought her.\(^{107}\) After her conversion, however, the Magdalene specifically rejects each mortal sin and replaces it with the virtues of patience, humility, diligence, charity, chastity, sobriety, and generosity.\(^{108}\)

One of the most intriguing and important scenes in the manuscript is the illumination on folio 47r, in which the Virgin, accompanied by the Magdalene, John, and Holy Women, goes to Herod’s house in search of information about Jesus. I have discussed the importance of this illumination as a reflection of Louise’s life in Chapter 3,
but there is a second reason for the inclusion of this unusual scene. It is important to note that this scene is not found in the Gospels, but that a specific reference to it is found in the Gréban Passion.

In the third journée of the Gréban play, lines 21989 to 22001 describe the Virgin’s anguish when John informs her of Christ’s arrest and interrogation by Annas, Caiaphas, and Pilate. After having gone to Pilate’s court, John and the women find that Jesus is not there. Weeping, confused, and uncertain where to go next, the Virgin cries, “O evil and felonious Jews, people banished from truth, where has my child been taken? Alas, in what place will I seek him? Alas, where shall I find him? Alas, who will tell me any news?” She then asks the women if they know where he is, and the Magdalene tells her that Pilate has sent Christ to Herod for interrogation. In lines 22,011 to 22,014, the Virgin tells the Magdalene, “In the name of God, my dear friend, let us find a way to follow him, for I have absolutely no joy if I do not know how he is.” Thus, we can assume from the text that the next scene would depict the Virgin and her entourage going to the house of Herod to ask Christ’s fate. The result of her inquiries are found in line 22,399-22,403, in which the Virgin and women continue their search, and the Virgin laments, “Alas they will keep him concealed and will hide him so well that we will not be able to talk to him, for they will shut the door tightly and we will be left on the outside.”

Folios 46v and 47r depict this episode in a nearly identical manner. The Virgin stands outside the door of Herod’s house, as indicated by the inscription. With her are John, Lazarus, and the Holy Women. A scowling porter bars the door to the house, refusing to allow the mother of Christ to enter the structure, thus depicting the scene described in the play. The accompanying narrative reinforces this association with the play. In folio 46v, the text reads, “Who would be hard and cruel enough to refrain from crying at the sight of Jesus Christ’s mother, so beautiful, so sweet, so pure, so neat, running through the city of Jerusalem, hurrying to the houses of Annas, Pilate, and Herod, searching for the King, her son, and asking for news. As soon as John had informed her of the state in which he had left Jesus, the poor lady had left Bethany to go to Jerusalem. Alas, nobody was paying attention to her or to the beautiful Magdalene,
and the guards of the great lords pushed her away and closed the door in her face without answering her humble questions.” The similarity between this illumination and the same theme in the play is undeniable.

Two other elements found in the manuscript’s illuminations bear mentioning as having been inspired by the religious theater of the day. The first is found in folio 51r in which the Risen Christ appears to the Magdalene in the garden outside the tomb, usually referred to as Noli me tangere. In this illumination Christ stands before the weeping Magdalene wearing a knee length workman’s tunic with the sleeves pushed up to his elbows. A large straw hat hangs across his shoulders, and he holds a shovel as he tells the Magdalene what he wants her to do. There is no doubt that he is in the guise of a gardener.

Emile Mâle notes that until the fourteenth century, artists depicted this crucial scene with Jesus wrapped in a winding cloth and carrying the cross with the banner of the Resurrection atop it. However, in the fourteenth and even more in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Christ often was depicted with a spade or other garden tool. Mâle suggests that this change in depiction reflects the influence of mystery plays. This is born out by the stage directions for the Gréban Passion, which tells the director that Christ enters the scene “dressed as a gardener.” He further notes that that straw hat is legacy of the theater, and was used by both playwrights and artists to indicate unequivocally that the Magdalene mistook Christ for a gardener when she first saw him.

In folios 55r and 56r, the Magdalene is shown in her role as Apostola and evangelist. In the upper left of both roundels, she is preaching the Gospel to a group gathered in front of her as she stands behind an impromptu pulpit that is formed by a horizontal branch supported by two trees. Mâle notes that artists of the fifteenth and sixteenth century used the same motif to depict the preaching of John the Baptist, as seen in the relief by Germain Pilon, (figure 79.) According to Mâle, there is no doubt that this motif was inspired by the mystery plays. In particular, he cites the manuscript of the famous Valenciennes Mystery, which was illuminated by the play’s director, Hubert Caillaux. In the miniature depicting the ministry of John the Baptist, the holy preacher is shown speaking behind this type of barrier. Mâle asserts, “It is certain that the artist
reproduced a detail from a stage production he had seen.” In the Vie, the same motif is used and thus, must have been inspired by the same source, the mystery plays.

**Serpents, Dragons, Quotes, and Mottoes**

One of the most prevalent, potent, and multivalent motifs in the Vie de la Magdalene are the many serpents and dragons found on the frames of the narrative roundels, such as those on folios 17v, 22v, and 56v. In Chapter 5, I discuss the iconographic associations of these animals in reference to Louise of Savoy and Mary Magdalene, but it is important to note that their inclusion may also be a subtle reference to the Passion plays as well. Because these creatures have been a common symbol for sin since the medieval period, it should not be surprising that they are a recurrent theme in Passion plays. In the Arras Passion, for example, one of the Roman soldiers sent to arrest Christ is named Serpentin, and one of the torturers in the Gréban and Michel Passions is Dragon. There are many references to serpents and dragons throughout the Gréban and Michel Passions, particularly when the devils, Satan, and Lucifer are speaking about to and about themselves. In both the Gréban and Michel plays, for example, Lucifer refers to Satan as “a dragon and a cruel serpent,” and in the Michel play, Lucifer calls him a “rotten dragon” and “hideous serpent.” Lucifer himself is described as the “poisonous old serpent” by the devil Astraroth, while he, in turn, calls Astraroth and the other devils as “my little dragons.” In addition, serpents and dragons are referred to as the agents of torment and evil, gnawing at the limbs of the damned in Hell, and generally contributing to the downfall of man. Undoubtedly, Demoulins and Godefroy included these evocative and decorative elements in the narrative frames to act as subtle references to the plays as well as reinforcing the manuscript’s theme of the triumph of virtue over sin.

One of the most important bits of evidence that ties the Vie de la Magdalene to the Passion of Jean Michel is not a specific scene or character, but a quote from the play. Placed on the frame of the illumination on folio 12r is a motto that reads, “God does not despise the contrite and humble heart.” These words are strikingly similar to a line in the Michel Passion that is spoken by the Magdalene as she stands outside the house of Simon
the Leper. Summoning the courage to enter a place where she will surely be reviled, the remorseful sinner reassures herself that “Jesus never denies a contrite and repentant heart.” Demoulins had used this technique elsewhere in the Magdalene manuscript, for the motto on folio 11r, which reads, “A Harmony Between Beauty and Chastity is Rare,” is taken from an excerpt from the *VBMM*. The author included these excerpts as specific references to the iconographic sources of his manuscript, but he also intended them as homage to the greatest of the storytellers of the Magdalene’s tale.

Two additional passages in the *Vie de la Magdalene* are strongly reminiscent of a dramatic presentation. Folios 22v and 24v have exhortations in which Demoulins admonishes the audience about the transience of life. He speaks directly to “All you who enjoy fame at court” to the clergy and the military that death comes to all regardless of station and the memory of men “will pass away with a grunt.” What is curious about these two passages is that they do not speak to Louise directly, as the rest of the manuscript does, but to the larger audience. Since presumably no one but Louise read the manuscript, it is questionable as to why the author included these passages written in this manner.

It seems clear that the inclusion of these passages was intended to echo similar passages in the Passion plays. This type of exhortation, in which a character such as the Magdalene speaks directly to the audience, was a device used by playwrights to drive home some didactic element that they did not want the audience to miss. Each *journée* of the Passion plays begins with a section in which the *prescheur*, narrator, addresses the audience directly with “Lords.” He reiterates the events of the preceding day and gives a preview of that day’s presentation, emphasizing the important lessons of each performance. In addition, Gréban used a similar device when he introduced the Magdalene in the second *journée* of his play. She addresses the audience directly about her sinful life and her self-admonishment is intended to warn them about pursuing a similar life style.

In great and subtle ways the *Vie de la Magdalene* reflects the influence of the Passion plays of fifteenth-century France. As I have demonstrated Demoulins used these plays as a major source for the reason eloquently stated in the prologue to the third
journée of the Gréban Passion: "And so that you may look at yourselves and sweetly contemplate there, we set before your eyes this devout mirror for your benefit, physically, through the characters. Observe yourselves and you will indeed be wise. Each one glimpses his form there. He who observes himself well, sees himself well. May God grant that we observe so well that through looking, we behold after this mortal life, the powerful immortal essence which reigns without ever ceasing."123

Conclusion

It is clear that Demoulins recognized the value of the Passion plays as didactic spiritual tools and that he incorporated specific elements from the text and staging of these plays into the Vie de la Magdalene. These elements include specific characters, such as the Magdalene’s lover, and unusual scenes, such as the hunting scene and the visit to Herod’s house, as well as lines of dialogue and other devices that do not have a source in traditional Magdalenian hagiography. Whether Godefroy was acting on Demoulins’s instructions or was inspired by his own experience as an audience member, he designed portions of the manuscript to mimic the staging of these plays. His use of an elevated vantage point, simultaneous staging, the progressive action of figures, and the placement of the action in front of the sets are a testament to this influence. As a close member of Louise’s court, Demoulins knew if his patron had read or seen the Passion plays mentioned above. As I have shown, he purposefully included elements from the plays to encourage her recollection of this powerful theatrical experience, thus making the reading of the manuscript a more intense spiritual event.

Although the presence of Louise of Savoy at a specific performance has not been ascertained, there are several productions that she might have attended with Demoulins and Godefroy, if not Francis himself. These include Passion plays performed in Mons in 1507, as well as the annual performances presented in Paris to the royal court and the public by the famous Confrérie de la Passion. The Confrérie de la Passion was a group of townspeople who had received a royal patent in 1401 to present a performance of a religious drama for the king annually and who held a monopoly on such dramatic productions in Paris into the mid-sixteenth century. Certainly there were other
performances as well as these that Louise could have attended in the years preceding the creation of the Magdalene manuscript, including the Passion play presented in Châteaudun in 1510 at the request of the Duc de Longueville.\textsuperscript{124}

However, the significance of the Mons and Paris Passion, at least in reference to the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene}, is that they were based on the three most important vernacular religious dramas of the fifteenth century, the \textit{Passions} of Eustache Mercadé, Arnoul Gréban, and Jean Michel, with the Michel play being the particular favorite of the \textit{Confrerie de la Passion} in Paris.\textsuperscript{125} Given the remarkable similarities I discussed above between these plays and certain elements within the text, images, and themes found in the \textit{Vie}, it seems likely at least Demoulins and Godefroy attended a performance in the years immediately preceding the creation of the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene}. Whether Louise also attended is impossible to say, but if she did not, these specific portions of the manuscript can be appreciated as implicit substitutes for her attendance at such a sacred event, substitutes intended to provide her with a spiritual benefit similar to her actual presence of a performance.

In addition to the Passion plays, there is a particular performance that may have influenced the creation of the Lazarus illuminations. This is the play of the life of Lazarus that was performed at Autun in 1516.\textsuperscript{126} The proximity of Autun to the royal residences of Amboise, Blois, and Romorantin make it possible that the king and his mother saw this performance, along with Demoulins and Godefroy, who recorded scenes that were later included in the Magdalene manuscript. Autun is also located between the royal residences and Lyon, where Francis was given a triumphal entry after his victory at Marignano, thus the play in Autun may have been held for the same reason. This would have ensured that Louise, Demoulins, and Godefroy as well as Francis were in attendance at the performance as they were all part of the king’s entourage on his return from Marignano. Thus, the artist and author witnessed the performances of the Lazarus play and thought to include it as a mimetic device when Louise commissioned the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene}.

What the \textit{Vie} borrows most from these Passion plays, however, is the humanity of the characters and the emotions they express, emotions that are echoed in the words and
images of the manuscript. From the design of the roundels to the staging of the scenes, Demoulins intended the *Vie de la Magdalene* to be a Passion play in miniature. However, the “passion” in this case is not the Passion of Christ, but of his devoted and beloved disciple Mary Magdalene. With the turn of each tiny page, her joys and sorrows are played out before our eyes with the same tenderness, vivacity, and humanity with which the Magdalene was depicted in the performances of the great Passion plays of the day.
Notes


2. Mâle, 35.

3. Grace Frank, 175. The term “mystery play” is used to describe several types of religious theater, including saint plays, miracle plays, and Passion plays. The Passion play, which focuses on the life of Christ, is most often performed during the celebration of the major holy days of Christmas and Easter. During the medieval period and early Renaissance, the most common form of Passion play presented the complete life of Christ, while the secondary form dealt specifically with the Passiontide, the two weeks from Passion Sunday to Holy Saturday. Resurrection plays, which depict the events of Easter Sunday, were not considered as the same as Passion plays in early religious theater, and were presented either as independent performances or as a complement to the plays that describe the broader events of Christ’s Passion.

In addition to the Bible and the writings of the early Christian fathers, two essential sources provided the foundation for late medieval Passion plays. The first were the liturgical dramas presented in churches and other religious structures to celebrate important holy days. The plays were presented by the members of the clergy, who performed for the laity in Latin originally, although a mixture of Latin and the vernacular was used for later plays. Often the altar was used as a prop, representing the manger on which the Christ child is laid at Christmas, or the table of the Last Supper, with the Host representing Christ in both cases. For further information, see Frank, 125-126.

The most influential source for later medieval Passion plays, however, was the *Passion of the Jongleurs*, a very popular and widely circulated narrative poem dating from the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. Wandering minstrels known as jongleurs traveled throughout England and France reciting or singing the verses during Easter Week. Although based on the familiar liturgical plays, the jongleur poems also included colorful episodes taken from the apocryphal legends that were gaining in popularity at the time. The poems presented the episodes and characters of the Passion with humanity, reverence, and dignity, but in an entertaining and engaging manner. Written in the vernacular, the jongleur poems had a direct appeal to the populous and were easily adapted to dramatic presentations, thus providing the foundation for the more formal Passion plays that followed.

The earliest extant French Passion play, *La Passion du Palatinus*, or the Palatine Passion, dates to the first half of the fourteenth century and is closely modeled on the *Passion of the Jongleurs*, in some places incorporating the poem almost line for line.
The *Palatine Passion* incorporated all the major scenes of the *Passion of the Jongleurs*, but the author expanded the story to include original characters and realistic episodes that emphasized the human strengths and failings of the participants, as well as including moments of tenderness, compassion, and even humor. This process sets the tone for the successive Passion plays in France, with each author borrowing from his predecessor and adding or removing material to align the story with his personal vision of Christ’s Passion. One example is another important and influential early play, the *Passion of Autun*, which was also founded on the *Passion of the Jongleurs*, and influenced the plays discussed in this chapter. For further information, see Frank, 126, 129-31; and Paula Giuliano, “Introduction,” *The Mystery of the Passion, The Third Day* by Arnoul Gréban, trans. Paula Giuliano (Ashville, North Carolina: Pegasus Press, University of North Carolina, 1996), ix.

The English theater of the medieval period had several religious plays that focus on Mary Magdalene and her role in the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, most notably the Digby *Mary Magdalene*, which also includes her post-Ascension life in Provence. Although I have not included a comparison between the *Vie de la Magdalene* and the Digby play in this dissertation, due to the improbability of Demoulins, Godefroy, or Louise having knowledge of it, I will continue my investigation in future research. For a recent study of Mary Magdalene in English theater, see Theresa Coletti, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of the Saints: Theater, Gender, and Religion in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Clifford Davidson, “The Middle English Saint Play and Its Iconography,” in *The Saint Play in Medieval Europe*, ed. Clifford Davison (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1986), 69-97; Donald C. Baker, John L. Murphy, and Louis B. Hall, Jr., eds., *The Late Medieval Religious Plays of Bodleian MSS Digby 133 and E Museo 160* (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the Early English Text Society, 1982), 24-95, and 197-218.


5. Ibid.

6. Mâle, 76.


8. Muir, *Biblical Drama*, 158. This follows the conclusion of the Hundred Years War. Muir notes that there was a general theatricalization of public ceremonies and official observances, particularly during the fifteenth century.

9. Frank, 20-21. The earliest religious performance was the liturgical play “*Quem queritis?*” “*Whom do you seek?*” which was performed as part of the Easter service at the monastery at Saint Gall, c. 950.
10. Frank, 85-86. In fact, Les Trois Maries is one of only three Biblical plays that survive from the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The verses were written in French with Latin used for the dialogue. The play describes the visit of the three Marys to the tomb on Easter morning, and is an expansion of the liturgical episode that begins “Quem queritis in sepulchro, O Christicole?” In the play, Mary Magdalene laments Christ’s disappearance from the tomb and begs God for a sign. An angel appears and asks whom she seeks. When told it is Jesus, the angel tells Mary that he is risen and that she should urge the apostles to go to Galilee. There is a break in the text in which, Frank theorizes, a lost scene between Mary and the risen Christ would have been appeared. The story continues with the other two Marys asking the Magdalene what news she has received, and her reply of what she has seen and heard. There are a few lines of rejoicing over the resurrection of Christ and the discomfiture of the Jews before the scene breaks off again. Another play, Visitatio sepulchri, depicts the same episode, and was a very popular Eastertide play, with over thousand copies extant.

The phrase “Quem queritis?,” “Whom do you seek?,” is not found in the portion of the liturgy that deals with the visit to the sepulcher, but rather is taken from John’s account of Christ’s arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane, when Jesus twice asks the soldiers, “Quem queritis?” to which the soldiers reply “Jesum Nazarenum;” Muir, Biblical Drama, 13-14.


12. Mâle, 35-40. Authorship of this book was originally attributed to Saint Bonaventure, then to the anonymous Pseudo-Bonaventure before finally being attributed to Giovanni de Caulibus, a Franciscan monk from Tuscany. See Mâle, 457, n. 61.

13. Ibid.

14. Frank, 178; Mâle, 35-40. Mâle notes that Mercadé was the first to use Meditations as a source. Both Mâle and Frank assert that Meditations was itself heavily influenced by the Dialogus Beatae Mariae et Anselmi, which imbued the Christian story with greater realism, humanity, and emotion than it had previously, especially in presentation of the Virgin Mary. This influence, whether direct or indirect, is evident in the Passion plays as well.

15. Mâle, 39.
16. Muir, Biblical Drama, 119-21. The story of Lazarus was very popular throughout the medieval period and afterward, with more than twenty versions written between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries.

17. Mâle, 37; Frank, 179. Mercadé’s name is also spelled Marcadé and the play also known as the Passion d’Arras, just as Michel’s Passion play was also known as the Passion d’Angers, indicating the towns in which they were first performed. Another early play, the Passion de Semur, which dates from 1488 and was written in Burgundy, is the earliest and simplest of the most significant fifteenth-century French Passion plays. It, too, was an outgrowth of the Passion des Jongleurs. Although shorter than the later plays, it required two day to perform and therefore was considerably longer than the earlier Palatine Passion or the Passion d’Autun. See Frank, 176. As mentioned above, the tradition of incorporating previous versions that started with the Passion of the Jongleurs continued with these later plays. Each playwright began with his predecessor’s play and expanded or deleted the text to fit his individual needs. See Giuliano, ix; and Frank, 181-82, 187-88. Jean Michel was, in fact, the editor of the Gréban Passion, and its influence on his play is particularly pronounced, although Michel’s inventiveness and sympathy for the Magdalene greatly expanded and enhanced her role in the latter play. For a thorough discussion of the relationship of the Gréban and Michel plays, see Accarie, 112-35. For an equally thorough discussion of Michel’s interpretation of the role of Mary Magdalene in his play, see Accarie, 139-54. See also Accarie, 155-92, for an analysis of her worldliness and the process of her conversion.

18. Frank, 171.

19. Frank, 181-82; 187-88. On abregies, see 163.

20. Giuliano, xi. The Gréban Passion survives in nine whole or partial manuscripts, referred to by the letters A through J by modern editors. These are: A (Paris, B.N., f. fr. 816); B (Paris, B.N., f. fr. 815); C (Paris, Arsenal, 6431); D (Rome, Accademia dei Lincei, Ms. Corsini col. 44 A 7); E (Chantilly, Musée Condé 614); F (Paris, B.N. f. fr. 15064-15065); G (Le Mans, Bibl. Municipale, no. 6); H (Paris, B.N., f. fr. 1550); I (Paris, B. N., Nouvelles Acquisitions françaises 14043); and J (Paris, B. N. Nouvelles Acquisitions française 12908.) See Giuliano, xi, n. 5. A and B are complete plays and include the prologue, C and D contain all four journée. G contains elaborate musical and staging directions, but five of the manuscripts (E, F, H, I, and J) do not have stage directions and were intended as presentation or luxury copies to be read. Manuscripts A, B, and C include numerous miniatures of events and characters from the play. Printed copies of the Michel Passion that are found in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris are the following: B.N. Reserve Yf 16 (ancien Yf 4355); Yf 17 (ancien Yf 4355); Yf 69; Yf 13; Yf 70; Yf 71; Yf 1597; Yf 1599; Yf 1600; Yf 105; Yf 107; Yf 1602; Velins 600; and Fondation Smith-Lesouëf 144. Another copy is found in the library at Angers in the personal collection of André Bruel. A copy of the Michel Resurrection printed by
Antoine Vérard is found in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, Reserve Y15. For a discussion of these editions, see Michel, x-xxi.

21. Frank, 189; Giuliano, ix, xiv. Earlier plays were one or two journées in length while others, such as those by Mercadé, Gréban, and Michel, were four journées long. It is important to note that a journée or “day” delineated a specific phase in Christ’s life that may or may not have corresponded to an actual day’s performance, meaning that under some circumstances the performance of one journée may have lasted more than one day. The longest was the Passion play performed at Valenciennes in 1547, which lasted twenty-five days and combined both the Gréban and Michel plays, but must have included other works as well to account for the great length of the performance.

22. Muir, Biblical Drama, 255, n. 63; Frank, 189. Both Muir and Frank note that the Angers Resurrection is attributed to Jean Michel but was probably by another author, whom Frank suggests as Jean du Prier.


24. Frank notes that her penitence seems to have been inspired more by her inability to attract lovers than from actual religious conversion resulting from her brother’s resurrection. See Frank, 181; Mercadé, Passion, Second Day, lines 9938-10002.


26. Gréban, Passion, Second Day, 13827-14007, and 15834-15931; Michel, Second Day, Passion, lines 11737-12043 and 14748-14988. In the Michel Passion, the scene of the Magdalene’s act of contrition at the house of Simon runs from lines 11737 to 12043, and Simon is referred to in the text initially as Symon Lepreux. After the Magdalene’s entrance following line 11963, however, he is referred to as Symon Pharisien. This would not be confusing for the viewer as the actor would remain the same, but for the reader it would cause confusion except that Michel has the Magdalene state, on lines 11857-11858, that she is going to meet Jesus at the home of “Symon le Lepreux dit Pharisien”. The identification of many of the characters in the Michel play is somewhat difficult to follow because of a lack of consistency in their identification. However, a careful reading of the text usually clears this up.

27. Frank, 181-83. Arnoul Gréban is believed to have collaborated with his brother Simon in writing of the play. Frank notes that the play was transcribed in whole or in part, and that it was incorporated into the Passion plays of later dramatists, most notably Jean Michel. Copies of the Gréban play were made in between 1452 and 1490 for the towns of Mons, Le Mans, Abbeville, Amiens, and Troyes. Gréban left Paris shortly after 1456 to return to Le Mans, which was his home town, where he died in 1471. The play was performed in a modernized form in England in 1951.
28. Muir, *Biblical Drama*, 33. These dates are known by the dated copies of printed play-texts of the Gréban play.


30. Frank, 182-83. Frank notes that Gréban, in a desire to escape from the tiresome duties of choirmaster, was given access to the cathedral’s library, and that it was there he consulted the theological works that inspired his play.


32. Ibid.

33. The scene preceding the Magdalene’s contrition at the Feast at the House of Simon the Pharisee is an excellent example of this introspection. Standing outside Simon’s house, Mary weighs the consequences of two opposing courses of action, agonizing over the scandal she will create for those dining in Simon’s house if she enters to seek Christ’s forgiveness, yet terrified of remaining outside the house mired in sin and certain of eternal damnation. See Gréban, *Passion*, Second Day, lines 13833-13892. Michel adopts a similar moment of introspection and concern for the reputation of the visitors at Simon’s house in his *Passion*, Second Day, lines 11905-11962.

34. Mâle, 39.

35. Frank, 187.

36. This is an extremely unusual scene that has no precedence in the traditional sources. Neither Lazarus’s occupation nor his pastimes are identified in the canonical Gospels, nor does the *VBMM* mention his occupation, although Voragine, 365, refers to him as a soldier in the *Golden Legend*: Voragine.


39. Michel, *Passion*, Second Day, lines 9692-9774. The character of Rodigon, who is a count of Herod’s court, is also a character in Gréban’s play, but he has no interaction with the Magdalene in the earlier version.


42. Frank, 169-170; Muir, *Biblical Drama*, 52-54. The duties for these productions ranged from supplying props, making costumes, building sets and
scaffolding, performing the many roles, and providing funding to support the production. This latter responsibility usually fell to wealthy townspeople, civic organizations, guilds, or confraternities. However, as thousands paid to watch the performances and many required housing and food during the performance period, the cost of a production was usually offset by the income it generated, an income that benefited not only the play’s backers but the entire town. For an analysis of the staging of many medieval religious plays, see A. M. Nagler, *The Medieval Religious Stage: Shapes and Phantoms* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976.)

43. Muir, *Biblical Drama*, 50. The Gréban *Passion* performed at Mons in 1501 was eight days long and quite elaborate, but even more elaborate were the production of the integrated Gréban/Michel *Passion* at Valenciennes in 1547, which lasted 25 days. See Giuliano, xiv-xx; Muir, *Biblical Drama*, 49-51; John Wesley Harris, *Medieval Theatre in Context: An Introduction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 120-22, 201-02; Nagler, 18-19; Frank, 163, 171, 174, 182; William Tydeman, *The Theatre in the Middle Ages: Western European Stage Conditions circa 800 – 1576* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1978), passim.

44. Tydeman, 138; Wickham, 79; Harris, 110-12; Muir, *Biblical Drama*, 48, 50-51; Frank, 171. The public square or market was used across Europe as a performance site for large theatrical productions. The three sided *platea* was particularly popular in France and Flanders, but other regions adopted different forms of staging, including theater in the round, an exclusively frontal view, and even stages constructed on wagons. See Tydeman, 142; Wickham, 90-91; Harris, 106-40; Muir, 47-52; and Frank, 161-75. The courtyards of castles were also used as performance spaces. See Tydeman, 137; and Muir, *Biblical Drama*, 43. For a discussion of the stage plans used for specific plays, see Nagler, 29-54. As Nagler discusses, some of these plans include detailed illustrations of the placement of the stations and depictions of specific scenes.

45. Muir, *Biblical Drama*, 45-50; Wickham, 90-91. The illumination depicting the *platea* for the Valenciennes Passion shows the *mansions* placed on a constructed and elevated stage, but most French plays were performed in a large open space in the market or town square.

46. Frank, 171-72; Muir, *Biblical Drama*, 54; Tydeman, 138. Mechanical devices called *secrets* or *feintes* were used to create many of the special effects. The Mons production of 1501 used houses and public buildings as the backgrounds for scenes and provided actors with entrance and exit sites. See Harris110; Giuliano, xv; and Muir, 49-51.

47. Tydeman, 150, 164-65; Harris, 116-17; Muir, *Biblical Drama*, 49, 198, n.36. At the performance of the *Play of Saint Lazarus* in Autun in 1516, there were 240 *chambres* built for those wealthy enough to pay for them. Houses at the edge of the playing space were also used by privileged spectators for viewing the performances. See
48. Mâle, 63; Harris, 115-17. *The Martyrdom of Saint Apollonia* is an illumination created in 1452-60 by Jean Fouquet for the *Hours of Etienne Chevalier* (Chantilly, Musée Condé, ms. 71.)

49. Harris, 115-17; Frank, 168; Nagler, 103. It is known that members of the aristocracy also acted in vernacular religious dramas, playing roles appropriate for their social station. Therefore, the empty throne in the Fouquet miniature may have been reserved for the monarch who either was not in attendance or was playing the role of the emperor in the scene, or it may have been intended for the aristocratic actor playing the emperor. However, the placement of ladies and men of high social rank on the same level and beside the throne would seem to indicate that it was reserved for the person of highest rank, namely the king.

50. Frank, 175; Mâle, 76. Both Frank and Mâle note that simultaneous staging in theatrical performances influenced the depiction of religious scenes in the visual arts. In particular, Mâle mentions the paintings of Hans Memling as examples of simultaneous staging, “Certain works of art are even more striking copies, for they represent action, simultaneously, as in the mystery plays. The paintings of Memling devoted to the Passion and the Life of the Virgin give us the most exact notion of dramatic representations. In them, we see ten different scenes taking place against the same background in which the actors proceed naively from one scenic “frame” to another.”

In his book *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico*, Samuel Edgerton comments that “Art Historian Charles Parkhurst has further shown that the painted background architecture in the early fourteenth-century frescos surely by Giotto in the Arena Chapel, Padua, and pictorially narrating the lives of the Virgin and Christ, actually represents convertible stage props that could be reassembled into different settings from one narrative scene to the next. In other words, the mural paintings of both Assisi and the Arena Chapel, long considered as the formative models of all subsequent narrative representations in Western Renaissance art, seem to have been motivated not so much by attempts to imagine the past but rather to represent the illusion of a stage setting for a contemporaneous miracle play.” See Samuel Y. Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 177. Edgerton is referring to a paper delivered by Charles Parkhurst entitled, “Giotto’s Arena Chapel Frescoes and Religious Theater in His Time,” which was delivered at the College Art Association Annual Convention in San Francisco in January of 1989.

51. Knecht, 45.

52. Muir, *Biblical Drama*, 46, 50; Harris 51-53; Tydeman, 57-63, 67-70, 125, 144-56, 160-2. The mansions are arranged on the platea in a roughly chronological fashion from Heaven to Hell, although movement back and forth was necessary as the
scenes changed. Some plans were circular or shaped like a horseshoe, but the more linear, chronological plan was typical for French Passion plays, as illustrated in the Valenciennes miniatures of Cailleau: Nagler, 29-54.

53. Fischer-Lichte, 41.

54. Ibid.

55. Muir, Biblical Drama, 42; Wickham, 85; Fischer-Lichte, 47. Fischer-Lichte notes, “The performance functions as a kind of sacrament which seems to have a magical effect on all those who participate. It is considered a “good work” which is automatically tied to the granting of divine mercy.” She continues that the church, “acknowledged attendance at a religious play as a pious work, and the actors and spectators were often granted indulgences.” The indulgence was generally equated with one quadragesimes, which was a forty-one day fast on bread and water in return for divine grace. However, the scale of the indulgence varied depending on the place, type, and length of performance. Muir and Fischer-Lichte both note that attendance or participation in the performance of a Passion play at Calw in 1502 was equated with seven quadragesimes, or an indulgence of two hundred and forty years, which was granted by the Papal legate, the Margräfen of Brandenburg, for whom the play was given. Other plays, such as a 1556 performance in Lucerne, equated to only seven years.


57. Frank, 165. Frank notes that this type of staging was the norm in France. The stations were also known as lieux, mansions, estals, estages, and logeis, and were set with furniture and other props appropriate for each scene: Frank, 163.

58. Frank, 90, 164. Heaven was on the dexter or left side of the stage area and Hell was on the sinister or right side. Heaven was designed with two levels. The upper level was for the Virgin Mary and angels who descended to address the mortals. Hell was often depicted with the cavernous mouth of a monster, and in later plays these gigantic jaws opened and closed. It also had two levels, with the pit of Hell on the lower level.

59. Frank, 120; Wickham, 90-91. For the more elaborate plays, the use of props was very complete and included fully outfitted throne rooms and a ship in full sail on a miniature sea.

60. Frank, 163.

61. Frank, 163; Tydeman, 147.

62. Wickham, 79.
63. Frank, 164; Tydeman, 147, 152. At Mons most of the stations were labeled with signs identifying the precise *loci* of the specific scene and were changed as needed during the performance. Accounting records from Mons indicate that a priest named Jehan Portier was paid to write out ninety-eight signs in large letters that were hung on the stations to indicate the various locations of the scenes.

64. Tydeman, 138.

65. Frank, 171, 188-89; Giuliano, xiv; Muir, *Biblical Drama*, 190, n. 23.

66. Tydeman, 152-53; Nagler, 82-88. The fact that Cailleau was the designer and director of the play gives his illustrations of the manuscript veracity that is generally accepted as accurate.

67. Frontispiece of MS Rothschild, 1.7.3, B.N., Paris; executed by Hubert Cailleau and Jacques de Moëlles. See Nagler, 85.

68. Nagler, 82, 86.

69. Frank, 163.

70. Mycoff, 49.

71. Following line 13652 of Michel’s *Passion*, the stage direction reads, “Ycy [sic] arrive Jesus assés loing de Marthe et de Magdaleine, et se arreste…”

72. In Michel’s *Passion*, lines 13693-13706, the Jewish mourners are speaking of the Magdalene’s weeping and grief. The following stage directions reads, “Ycy vont tous les Juifs après et arrive Magdaleine aux pieds de Jesus.” The Jews who have accompanied her are all indicated as weeping (*plourant*) as well.

73. In reference to the place where Martha and the Magdalene met Jesus, John 11:30 reads, “For Jesus was not yet come into the town: but he was still in that place where Martha had met him.”

74. Frank, 165. Frank notes that scenes could also be played quickly in two different parts of the stage, which allowed the spectator’s eye and mind to travel rapidly through time and space.

75. Mâle, 53-54.

76. Mâle, 53.

77. Ibid.
78. Folio 22v: “Oh, unyielding separation of lovers! Oh, death’s horrid divorce. Princes and princesses, ladies and damsels, and you gentle men who enjoy fame at court, listen ‘we have here no lasting city.’ One must die. Lazarus was a more gentle man than you are and especially because he was greatly in the grace of Jesus Christ. And yet he died. His sisters Martha and Magdalene were in great mourning and to the tomb they kept him loyal company.” Folio 24v: “Pope, white as snow; cardinal, red as a rooster. Bishop so sweet, I dare not say stupid; lay-brother good buffoon. You general with a great cap. Traveling knight. You noble. You cheerful one, as tender as dew; brother as cold as ice; hypocritical and gracious liars. You, monk, black as a devil. Don't you know that one must die? Don't you see that the Magdalene has forgotten her brother? Believe, I beg you, that the memory of men ‘will pass away with a grunt.’ When we are buried, nobody will hear about us anymore.”


80. Luke 7:36; Voragine, 356; Mycoff, 30-31. Luke states only that the anointing woman, with whom Mary Magdalene is associated due to the Gregorian conflation, was “a sinner in the town.” The Golden Legend states that “Magdalen gave herself wholly to the pleasures of the senses” and that “she abandoned her body to pleasure” so completely that she was referred only as “the sinner.” The VBMM runs along the same lines, stating that she “followed after the pleasures of the flesh” and “perverted whatever God had given her for the growth of honesty to the service of a lascivious and pandering life.” Both the Golden Legend and the VBMM emphasize her beauty and her wealth, but the author of the VBMM lays the blame for her corruption on her physical and financial attributes as well as her youth: “Vigorous youth, attractive shape, and many riches enervate good conduct.”


82. Michel, Passion, Second Day, line 8470.


84. Michel, Passion, Second Day, lines 8506-8645 and 9648-9688.

85. Michel, Passion, Second Day, lines 9708-9770 and lines 10879-10892. Chauvin, 43, notes that in German Passion plays, such as the thirteenth-century Benediktbeuren Passion, Mary Magdalene also delights in dancing and other worldly activities. Chauvin observes that the German play, which precedes the Gréban and Michel Passions by several centuries, is “presumably” the origin of the scenes devoted to describing the Magdalene’s worldliness, and that the Benediktbeuren Passion or one of its variations “seems to have been the point of departure for the Continental writers,” who both adopted and elaborated on these themes.
86. Michel, *Passion*, Second Day, lines 9692-9775. Both the *Passions* of Gréban and Mercadé include a character named Rodigon, identified as a count at Herod’s court, but he has no interaction with the Magdalene in these earlier plays.


88. Both plays include Perusine and Pasiphee as the Magdalene’s maids and attendants.

89. See note 82 above.


97. Voragine, 355.


100. The stout man dancing with the Magdalene is wearing a small rounded cap and holding a flat crowned hat with a long plume. The figure running beside the Magdalene is also plump and wears the same rounded cap on his head, with the plumed hat hanging on his back.

101. Chauvin, 42.

102. As mentioned in note 85 above, the origin of the dancing theme may be the German Benediktbeuren *Passion*, or a variation of that play.

104. “Au sermon de Jesus sont tous les Juifs et le Scribes et Pharisees et est Magdaleine size sur ung carreau, assés loing du peuple, et, en la fin du sermon, elle fait maniere et contenance de plourer.” This direction follows line 10630.

105. Mycoff, 33.

106. Voragine, 356.


109. In Giuliano’s translation, this passage is on page 59.

110. Ibid.

111. Mâle, 73.

112. Ibid.

113. Ibid. Mâle, 74, mentions that the iconography could have come from the Italians, but that the mystery plays “certainly contributed to its spread.”

114. Mâle, 74.

115. Mâle, 75.

116. Ibid.


120. Mycoff, 30: “Beauty is rarely allied to chastity.”


125. Muir, *Biblical Drama*, 33-34; Harris, 78, 152-53; Frank 145-47, 166-67; Tydeman, 201. The Confrérie de la Passion, which was formed in Paris in 1401 to present an annual Passion play before the king, had a monopoly on the performance of Passion plays in Paris until it was finally abolished by Louis XIV in 1676: Harris, 191.

CHAPTER 6

ICONOGRAPHY OF THE FRAMES OF THE
NARRATIVE ROUNDELS

In Chapters 3 and 4, I discussed the significance of the familial and regal motifs found on a number of the roundel frames of the *Vie de la Magdalene*, motifs integrated subtly into the decorative scheme of the manuscript to reinforce the book’s royal and biographical subtext. In addition, other decorative elements found on the roundel frames have equal importance as symbols and together form a complex iconography that emphasizes essential themes of the manuscript. This chapter will examine these symbolic components for their iconographic relevance to the hagiographic and thematic content of the Magdalene manuscript. Although the limited nature of this format precludes the analysis of every motif in the manuscript, I have included those that are the most significant to the Magdalene’s story and the overarching themes of the *Vie de la Magdalene*. Moreover, while I will not reiterate the personal or regal associations of the symbols I discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, some of these emblems and motifs, such as dragons, salamanders, and *cordelières*, also have meanings relevant to the Magdalene’s *vita* and thus, require elucidation here as well.

It is important to note that the symbolic components of the frames can have multiple interpretations depending on their context and location within the manuscript, and often function simultaneously on several levels. In addition, the interpretation and identification of some of the elements changes as the manuscript progresses, reflecting, among other things, the Magdalene’s evolution from sinner to apostle to Evangelist to penitent recluse.

As I will demonstrate, the decorative elements in the frames of the narrative roundels form a densely interwoven fabric of symbolic meaning. This hidden visual language imbued the manuscript with an important sub-textual commentary that provided the reader with a more profound devotional experience. Yet, as a single element can have several interrelated meanings, the complexity of these motifs can make their correct interpretation a challenge. Far from being a deterrent, however, to the devotional purpose of the *Vie de la Magdalene*, the intentional complexity was believed to aid the process of
spiritual revelation one hoped to gain from reading such a manuscript. Bernad of Clairvaux, in his first sermon on the Song of Songs, encouraged hidden meanings that required the reader to think beyond the initial level of understanding, “so that seeking what lies hidden in [those texts] should bring pleasure even were it laborious, and the difficulty of that which must be sought were not perchance tiresome.”

Thus, the esoteric meaning of certain motifs and their interrelationship with the other components and themes in the manuscript was designed by Demoulins and Godefroy to do four things. The first was to intrigue Louise by piquing her interest and causing her to question the meaning and purpose of the motifs. The second was to involve Louise deeply in the process of reading the Vie, and to encourage her to “read” it on several levels. The third was to challenge her powers of perception and her knowledge of medieval mysticism and spirituality, and, finally, to delight her with the sense of achievement that would result from her understanding of what had been at first hidden from her comprehension. The process of reading the Vie de la Magdalene would become, therefore, a more spiritually beneficial experience for Louise, giving her a greater appreciation of the saint about whom it was written and to whom she was particularly devoted.

Comments on the Frames of the Narrative Roundels

The frames around the narrative roundels are 5 mm. wide and painted in a variety of colors including shades of blue, green, yellow, pink, orange, and red, as well as white and gray, but black is the most predominant color. Godefroy reserved the colored frames for two specific sections of the manuscript--the narrative roundels opposite the illuminations of the Magdalene’s life, and those surrounding a poem to the Magdalene written by the ancient Roman poet Sedulius, although the artist does intersperse black among the colored frames. The ornamental motifs are painted overtop the colored borders in either flat gold or gold with touches of black that act as modeling for the motifs. However, flat gold is the most common technique, possibly because it was a less labor-intensive process. The single exception to the use of gold for the decoration of the frames is found on folio 6v, in which the designs are painted in white on black. This was
not an effective method, however, as much of the design is barely discernable. One can assume, therefore, that both the use of black outlines and white on black were techniques employed early on in the creation of the manuscript that were ultimately rejected by Godefroy as visually inadequate or too time consuming for the remainder of the frames.¹

The motifs vary greatly in style from simple linear designs to complex arrangements of figures, foliage, and other objects, all depicted with a delicacy and detail that is remarkable given their minute size. Some of these designs are primarily decorative and do not appear to have inherent symbolic interpretation, such as the wave pattern on folio 72v. In some cases, the decorative motifs mimic the ornamentation found in the illuminations, thus creating visual unity throughout the manuscript. For example, the Italianate floral motifs on the pilaster of Martha’s house in the Lazarus roundels also decorate a number of frames, including those on folios 20v and 30v. The ornate spandrel of Martha’s house is transformed into the C scroll on the frame of folios 32v and 35v, and the lozenge shapes over the doorways on folios 35r and 38r reappear on the frames of folios 9v and 25v. Thus, Godefroy created a subtle visual continuity throughout the manuscript that in some cases appears to be the primary purpose of these motifs.

**Linear Motifs**

Godefroy used linear motifs as decorative devices in many of the frames throughout the manuscript. Some of the ornamentation is made up of simple, abstracted designs, such as those on folios 75r, 95v, 97v, and 101v, which, like those mentioned above, do not appear to have symbolic content, but rather, were a part of the visual vocabulary of medieval decoration. These include, among others, various patterns of volutes, arches, chevrons, and lozenges, as well as the negative-positive designs on folios 90r to 91r.

However, other linear motifs invite symbolic interpretation. For example, folios 28v, 73r, and 81v have linked circles and ovals, shapes that can be interpreted in several ways. As I discussed in Chapter 1 regarding the roundel shape, the circle was the symbol of divine wisdom in Neo-Platonic philosophy as well as the ancient symbol of eternity.
and eternal life, all concepts applicable to the Christological theme of the manuscript. On folio 28v, Godefroy placed a pattern of overlapping circles opposite an illumination depicting Lazarus’s sisters mourning his death. In this case, the use of the circle is suggestive of the two ideas mentioned above. First, the circles refer to the eternal nature of God, a concept mentioned in the narrative text contained within this circular frame of circles. A second and more complex interpretation is also possible, as the circles on folio 28v may also refer to divine wisdom, in that Lazarus’s death and his miraculous resurrection were part of the divine plan to set into motion the events of Christ’s Passion.

In folios 42v and 43v, which conclude the Lazarus episode, Demoulins specifically mentions that in John:11, the evangelist relates that some of the Jews who witnessed the miracle were troubled by it and reported the event to the Pharisees. As Demoulins notes, Caiaphas’s response was that “It is better for one man to die, than that a whole nation should perish.” Although it was not included in the Vie, this passage continues in John 11: 53 with the words, “From that day therefore they devised to put him to death,” a death that was predetermined by God to save mankind. Thus, the resurrection of Lazarus, achieved through God’s response to Jesus’s prayer and depicted as such in the manuscript, was part of the divine plan that leads to Christ’s own Resurrection. The inclusion of the circles as part of the Lazarus roundels, therefore, refers to both the eternal nature of God mentioned in the text, and to the divine wisdom that brought about not only the resurrection of Lazarus, but of Christ himself, and ultimately, the eternal life of all faithful Christians. Given the popularity of Neo-Platonism and humanism in the French court during the early sixteenth century, it is likely that Louise would have understood the symbolic connotations of the circle motif as it relates to this portion of the story.

The mutability of certain motifs is illustrated by the fact that several folios have similar linear elements as the central design, but the meanings of these elements change depending on the theme and content of the narratives and images around them. For example, the undulating line found on folio 43v has an entirely different interpretation from a similar line used on folios 10v and 69v because of the adjacent narratives and illuminations. On folio 43v, Godefroy created an undulating line that becomes thicker
and thinner, giving it the appearance of a three-dimensional ribbon of fabric wrapping around the gold line that encircles the center of the frame. Although seemingly decorative, the true meaning of the design becomes evident when one realizes that this ribbon motif immediately follows the narrative and illumination on folios 42v and 43r, which describe the removal of Lazarus’s funerary bindings. In his depiction of Lazarus’s corpse prepared for burial, Godefroy depicted the sepulchral clothes as the slender bands of cloth mentioned in both the narrative of the Vie and in the scriptural account in John 11:44. These bands, which his sisters tightly wrapped Lazarus’s body in folio 22r, are now loose and flowing over the edge of the sarcophagus, indicating his freedom from death through the miracle of resurrection. Thus, the undulating line motif on folio 43v represents the narrow winding bandages from which Lazarus was unbound in the preceding miniature. Furthermore, this ribbon of cloth wraps around an unbroken circle in the interior of the frame. The eternal implications of the circle apply here as well, and taken together, the two motifs symbolize the resurrection of the body and the promise of eternal life for all Christians through Jesus Christ.

A second interpretation of the undulant line motif emphasizes the mutability of a single type of design element dependant upon the context in which it is used. On folios 10v and 69v ribbons of gold wind and curl around the frame, interspersed between salamanders on folios 10v and skulls on 69v. The symbolic meaning of these elements is evident when taken into consideration with the companion illuminations. Folio 70r is the key to the identity of this pattern. This miniature depicts the glass vessel that is the reliquary for the Magdalene’s most famous attribute, her flowing hair. This hair, which I discussed previously in terms of its royal associations, was symbolic of both the saint’s seductive beauty during her worldly life and her contrition and penitence following her conversion.

The color of the Magdalene’s hair varies in Northern art, but is usually either red or blonde. Red hair was a reference to the saint’s passionate nature, in both the physical and spiritual sense, while blonde hair, often associated with noble or aristocratic social rank, was an allusion to the Magdalene’s occasional identification as a princess or noblewoman. While this interpretation of blonde hair is applicable to Godefroy’s
depiction of the Magdalene as a woman of wealth and property, his choice of hair color was probably influenced equally by Petrarch’s description of her in his poem on folio 102v, in which the poet describes Mary Magdalene pulling her “flaxen hair” in the frenzy of her grief. Thus, the gold ribbons that twist and curl between the skulls on folio 69v are allusions to the strands of blond hair contained in the reliquary on the facing page.

This connection is reinforced by the illuminations of Magdalene’s skull reliquary on folios 71r and 72r, in which her hair is depicted with the same curls and waves as the golden locks on folio 69v. In addition, the small skulls on folio 69v are references not only to the Magdalene’s own skull to which the blonde strands were once attached but also allude to the penitential nature of this saint, who was often depicted meditating with a skull. As the miniature on folio 69v is a part of the series of roundels depicting the grotto in which the saint spent her last years in contemplation, this interpretation is equally, and simultaneously, appropriate.

Understanding the association of this particular motif with the Magdalene’s hair helps to explain the gold lines on folios 10v and 14v. In folio 10v, which is opposite the illumination in which the Magdalene embraces her lover, the strands of blonde hair are indications of her vain and sensual lifestyle, a theme reinforced by the accompanying salamanders, which can carry similar connotations as I discuss below. In the frame of folio 14v, however, another golden line, which likewise represents the Magdalene’s hair, conveys a different message. Between the miniatures of the Magdalene washing of Christ’s feet and Christ forgiving her sins, Godefroy placed this golden line, created with the same deep waves he used to depict the saint’s hair in the adjacent illuminations. Formerly an allusion to her sinful nature, the same motif now represented the instrument of her salvation.

Thus, similar linear designs strategically placed throughout the Magdalene manuscript represent the saint’s transformation from a life of vanity and worldliness on folio 10v, to one of repentance and devotion on folio 14v, finally symbolizing her piety and humility on folio 69v when it became all that covers her body during the years in the grotto. This last association is reinforced not only by the reliquary miniatures on folios
70r to 72r, but equally by the illumination on folios 68r, in which the Magdalene, clothed only in her hair, receives Final Communion from Maximinus outside the grotto.

The wavy line representing strands of golden hair represents, therefore, a major theme of the Magdalene legend and is an important iconographic element throughout the manuscript. However, folio 13v, which is opposite the miniature depicting the Magdalene washing Christ’s feet, presents another example in which undulating gold lines are used but here they have an entirely different meaning. In this frame, two slender lines intertwine to create a repeating pattern of figure 8s, shapes that resemble closely the Greek symbol for infinity. As with the circle, this motif may also refer to the eternal nature of God, to the eternal life made possible through Christ’s sacrifice, or, more importantly for this motif, to the infinite nature of divine love. The theme of divine love, both the love emanating from and returning to the Godhead, is another major theme of the Vie de la Magdalene that is reiterated throughout the manuscript in examples too numerous to mention. In this case, however, the divine love is not only Christ’s love for Mary Magdalene, which is expressed by his forgiveness of her sins, but also the Magdalene’s love for Christ, a profound emotion that she is experiencing at this moment in her story. It was this great love, as noted on folios 13v and 14v, which inspired Mary’s act of contrition and brought about her salvation, “because she has loved much.” It is also this great love, as noted in the prayer on folio 106v, that will enable her to live “with your true friend Jesus Christ, in perfect glory, and forever incorruptible.” Thus, the motif on folio 13v may be an allusion to the infinite nature of divine love.

The design may have a second interpretation as well. This frame is placed between the scene in which Christ frees the Magdalene from demonic possession and the illumination depicting her tearful act of contrition during the Feast at the House of Simon, after which she became Christ’s most devoted follower. This design of intertwined lines may allude to the intertwining of the lives of Christ and the Magdalene that began with the events depicted in these scenes. This interpretation is supported by the narrative on folio 5v which refers to human life in the classical sense as “the thread started at birth.” Thus these two slender lines, overlapping to create an unbroken circle
of infinity symbols, may refer to the lives of Christ and the Magdalene, which become intertwined at this moment and remain inextricably joined for eternity.\textsuperscript{9}

Several other linear ornaments can be interpreted symbolically as well. For example, the chevron pattern on folio 37v differs from those found elsewhere in the manuscript in that it is the only element in the frame and has thick and thin strokes that resemble calligraphy. This creates the appearance of a running pattern of $M$s, possibly intended as the monogram of both Mary Magdalene and Martha. The illumination on folio 38r opposite this frame supports such an interpretation. In this scene, the sisters have led Christ to their brother’s tomb. When Christ commands the removal of the stone cover, Martha interjects that Lazarus has been dead four days and will stink of decay. In this important moment, Martha falters in her faith but it also allows Christ to prove the power of God as it works through him. The Magdalene, however, who stands nearby, holds her hands in a gesture of adoration and says nothing, thereby proving her faith in Christ. Thus, the inclusion of the monograms of Martha and Mary Magdalene is appropriate here, as both play a part in this important scene. A similar use of the Magdalene’s monogram, which is described in the same manner, appears on the breastplate and reins of her horse in the hunting roundel on folio 10v, giving credence to this interpretation.

Other motifs that seem at first glance to be simple abstracted patterns also encourage symbolic interpretations. For example, the teardrop shapes found on folio 74v may refer to one of the most important themes of Magdalene hagiography, her tearful repentance. The theme is established by the mottoes on folios 7r, which reads “Tears and Pleasure, Pleasure and Tears,” and folio 14r, “What is Sown in Tears Will be Harvested in Exaltation,” and is reiterated throughout the \textit{Vie de la Magdalene} to include the Magdalene’s copious weeping at the death of her parents and Lazarus, as well as at Christ’s Crucifixion. The most eloquent expression of the Magdalene’s weeping, however, is found in Petrarch’s poem on folios 101v to 104v, in which he describes her, “drench[ing] the sacred feet ” during her repentance and “filling the wounds with tears” during the Crucifixion. The teardrop form, therefore, alludes to these moments in the Magdalene’s life, moments that are essential aspects of the manuscript.
Scrolls

On the frames of folios 4r, 94r, 96r, and 101r, Godefroy uses forms resembling scrolls shaded in gold on black. In each case, the motif is intended as a reference to a document of some kind. On folio 4r, the text above the roundel states that “Everything that follows is in the tradition of the church until the end of the stories,” thus implying the source of the Magdalene’s vita is found in official church documents. In folio 94r, Demoulins relates the story of Martha and Marcella, who accompanied the Magdalene to Provence. While there is no direct reference to a book or document in the narrative of that folio, Demoulins begins his discussion of this subject on folio 92r, and inscribed the page beneath the roundel on folio 93r with the statement that he studied books for information on the number of people who were with the saint when she left “Japha.” Folio 96r is a continuation of Demoulins’s discussion of the miracles associated with the Magdalene, and contains a passage in which “Madame” asks “Obedience” if the miracles could be assembled in a book. Finally, the last use of the shaded scroll motif is found on folio 101r, which is the beginning of Petrarch’s poem to the Magdalene, which is inscribed on a plaque at the grotto. In each case, the scroll motif indicates a written document as the source of the content of the narrative contained within the frame.

Floral and Vegetal Motifs

Floral and plant designs are plentiful throughout the Vie de la Magdalene and are employed for a variety of purposes. In some frames, motifs such as vines and tendrils are part of a larger vocabulary of ornamentation in medieval and Renaissance visual arts that may or may not have inherent meaning. In other cases, Godefroy and Demoulins relied on the medieval language of flowers and plants to provide important subtext to the narrative and images, as well as give emotional and visual richness to the Magdalene’s story. Folios 62v and 107r have wreaths of ovoid, pointed leaves that resemble laurel, a motif that carries several associations appropriate to the manuscript. Since antiquity, the laurel has been symbolic of victory, and whether on the battlefield or playing field, the victor received a laurel crown. In Christian iconography, laurel became a symbol for the victory of Christ over death and of Christianity’s triumph over paganism and sin.
Because of its evergreen nature, the laurel was also symbolic of eternity and as the consecrated plant of the Vestal Virgins, it also a symbol for chastity. The laurel wreath appears here, therefore, not only as a reference to the victory of Christianity, but also as an allusion to the Magdalene’s personal triumph over sin, her life of chastity following her conversion, and her eternal love for Jesus Christ.

The laurel motif on folio 62v, while retaining these connotations, also has an additional meaning that is equally significant. The clusters of fruit between the laurel swags can be understood as a reference to the “fruit of the Spirit” mentioned in Galatians 5: 22-23. This association is particularly relevant to the Magdalene because of verses 16-21, which immediately precedes this scripture. In this passage, Paul warns against lust and the works of the flesh, “.which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty, luxury . . . and such like . . . they that would do such things shall not obtain the Kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency, chastity. And they that are Christ’s have crucified their flesh with the vices and concupiscences.” Thus, the laurel and fruit motif is an allusion of the Magdalene’s victory over the vices and “works of the flesh” that tormented her before her conversion, and of the fruits of the Holy Spirit, i.e. the virtues she attained when she chose to live and walk “in the Spirit,” as the verse in Galatians concludes. Finally, since this motif is opposite the illumination depicting the chapel in the grotto, the fruit may also allude to the fact that the Magdalene did not receive physical nourishment during her many years of seclusion and deprivation. Rather she was nourished by the “fruit of the Spirit” when she received “celestial sustenance” during her many years La Saint Baume.

Irises and lilies, two of the most important flowers in Christian iconography, are prominent elements in the Vie de la Magdalene. Stylized lilies and irises are part of the composite designs found on folios 39v, 42v, 52v, and 58v, among others. These flowers are usually associated with Marian and Christological iconography, but in this case, their symbolism is also applicable to Mary Magdalene, who flourished spiritually when she went into seclusion. The frame on folio 58v and the motto on folio 63r make this interpretation clear. The curling petals and long stems and leaves of stylized lilies in
vases are a part of the decoration on the frame of folio 58v, in which the narrative relates the Magdalene’s choice to live in seclusion in the wilderness. The motto on folio 63r, which surrounds a view of the grotto chapel, emphasizes the importance of this motif. The motto reads, “She will be rejoicing in solitude and she will bloom like a lily,” establishing the lily as a metaphor for the Magdalene’s state of spiritual blossoming during her hermitic existence in the grotto.

Lilies are also associated with the mystical surrender of the faithful to the will of God and their trust that He will provide for their needs. The source of this interpretation is the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. In Matthew 6:28-29, the evangelist writes, “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they labor not, neither do they spin. But I say to you, that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these.” Luke 12: 27-31 repeats this passage and continues “And seek not you what you shall eat or what you shall drink: and be not lifted up on high…But your Father knoweth that you have need of these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his justice, and all these things shall be added unto you.” In this respect, the inclusion of lilies in the Vie de la Magdalene is an important reference to the Magdalene’s conscious rejection of her life of vanity and physical comforts, and her embracing of the austerity and deprivations of the grotto, even to being “arrayed” only in her hair. Mary goes into the wilderness and like the lilies of the field she flourishes with an unshakable faith that God will provide for her needs. This He does in the form of the spiritual sustenance she receives when she is “lifted up on high” each day, not by society but by the angels who attend her, an element of her vita that is referred to in the Vie by the image on folio 63r of the little chapel within the grotto at La Sainte Baume.

A final iconographic significance is associated with the tradition that lilies sprang up from the tears of the repentant Eve as she and Adam fled the Garden of Eden. The honor of the flower was reclaimed by the Virgin Mary as the Second Eve and became a symbol of purity and Paradise. This reference, too, has a connection to Mary Magdalene in the Vie. In folio 51v Demoulins writes: “Eve, our mother, disgracing the female sex, had brought news of sad death. And Magdalene, saving and restoring the honor of ladies, carried the news of the resurrection and of a happier life.” The many lilies found
throughout the *Vie de la Magdalene*, therefore, are a reference to the Magdalene’s annunciation of the rebirth of mankind to eternal life in Paradise through the Resurrection of Christ. Thus, Mary Magdalene shared the role of humanity’s *redemptrix* with the Virgin Mary for, in the words of Augustine, “humanity’s fall was occasioned by womankind, humanity’s restoration was accomplished through womankind, since a virgin brought forth Christ and a woman announced that he had risen from the dead.”

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Like the lily, irises are potent Christian motifs in medieval Northern Europe. Also known as the sword lily because of the blade-like shape of its leaves, the iris was the symbolic representation of the piercing of Christ’s side with a lance during the Crucifixion. Thus, artists used the iris to foreshadow Christ’s death in scenes depicting the Annunciation, Nativity, or his Baptism.19 The irises in the Magdalene manuscript have similar symbolic importance and are found on frames that surround narratives dealing with death and resurrection, such as those on folios 21v and 39v, which are both part of the Lazarus series of roundels.

The illumination on folio 22r depicts the preparation of Lazarus’s body for burial. The frame of the narrative opposite on folio 21v has two gold vases containing iris plants at the bottom of the design and a fleur-de-lis and two lances wrapped in ribbons at the top. While the ribbons resemble pennons, they are more likely another representation of the winding bands with which Martha and the Magdalene prepare their brother’s body in the illumination opposite. Taken together these three motifs, the winding bands, the lances and their floral metaphor, the irises, indicate that Lazarus’s death and resurrection foreshadows the death and resurrection of Christ. The iris may also be an allusion to the pain experienced by the Magdalene at the death of her brother, which she expresses in the narrative, “Oh love, what pain you gave me.” In this respect, the Magdalene’s grief is similar to that experienced by the Virgin at Christ’s death, a pain prophesied by Simeon, Luke 2: 34-35: “And thy own soul, a sword shall pierce.” Therefore, the iris, as a symbol of the Sorrows of the Virgin, here represents the grief experienced by the Magdalene at Lazarus’s death.

Furthermore, the fleur-de-lis at the top of folio 21v also functions as a symbol of death and resurrection, for the iris is the legendary source of this emblem of the French
monarchy. Thus, the fleurs-de-lis serves two iconographic purposes in the *Vie de la Magdalene*, as the reference to Louise and her family I discussed in Chapter 3 and as an allusion to the death of Christ. This is particularly evident on folios 47v and 27v. Folio 48r depicts the Crucifixion, and, like folio 21v, the frame opposite on folio 47v has lances surrounding with ribbons as part of the symbolic scheme. However, rather than using naturally depicted irises as the metaphor of the lance, Godefroy used the fleur-de-lis to allude to the *coup-de-grace* that will be struck by one of the lance-wielding centurions watching the Crucifixion in the illumination opposite.

Folio 27v also uses the fleur-de-lis as an allusion to the death of Christ. Decorating the frame are linked oval cartouches containing an alternating pattern of crosses and fleurs-de-lis. In Chapter 3, I discussed the association of this motif with the Savoy or Jerusalem cross and fleur-de-lis of the French monarchy, but a careful reading of the text of folios 26v and 27v alludes to a second interpretation for both motifs. The narratives emphasize the danger to his life were Jesus to return into Judea, “where some wanted to kill him,” to be with Lazarus and his sisters. In folio 27v, however, Jesus overcomes the protestations of the disciples and insists that they go to there, to which Thomas says, “Let us die with him.” Thus, the fleur-de-lis and cross pattern on this frame are references to that death prophesied by Thomas, to the Crucifixion and the stroke of the lance that will mark the end Christ’s life. The association between Thomas and the lance wound symbolized by the fleurs-de-lis is particularly significant here, as this wound in particular will convince Thomas of the truth of Christ’s Resurrection.

**Christological, Funerary, and Eucharistic Motifs**

There are a variety of Christological, funerary, and Eucharistic motifs found throughout the manuscript, some of which are obvious and others hidden within an iconographic scheme. These motifs include the Christoforms or sacred monograms of Christ. The most common is the *Chi Iota*, the Greek initials for Jesus Christ that appear as the superimposed XI cruciform on many frames, including folios 15v, 20v, and 58v where they are worked into the ornate design. It is unclear why this monogram appears in the *Vie de la Magdalene*, rather than the more common *Chi Rho*, but the XI motif is
clearly intentional and appears to have no purpose other than referring to Jesus Christ. The motif often appears on frames surrounding narratives in which the themes of death and resurrection are prominent, including folios 20v, 30v, and 36v in the Lazarus series and on folio 46v opposite the Crucifixion. Furthermore, a stylized A for Alpha appears on folios 41v and 42v, both of which deal with the Resurrection of Lazarus, with the letterform referring to his new beginning through Christ’s miracle. The Omega form (ω) appears on several frames, but most particularly on folio 74r, in which it is the only motif encircling the narrative. In this frame, Demoulins relates the miraculous discovery of the Magdalene’s body and its translation to its final resting place, thus the omega is a reference to the saint’s corporal death.

Two types of designs can be interpreted as references to the Trinity—the trefoil shapes on folios 84r and 91v, and the triangular motifs found on many frames throughout the manuscript, including folios 77v, 83r, 95v, and 97v. The Arma Christi are also depicted in various ways. Godefroy presents some of the motifs in a straightforward manner such as the many crosses and lances found throughout the manuscript, including the lances at the base of folio 86r that form an X. The frame of folio 87r contains a long rope with multiple knots that is unlike the three-knot cordelière motif found on folio 77r, possibly indicating that this motif represents the rope that bound Christ to the pillar during the Flagellation. The intertwined lines in the lower portion of the frame on folio 47v, opposite the Crucifixion scene, may also represent skeins of rope. The frame on folio 40v is decorated with a stylized pattern of what appear to be small pillars and flails with multiple lashes. In addition, the curving form at the base of the frame on folio 21v also appears to be a pair of whips with handles. Finally, the “gory nails” mentioned in Petrarch’s poem on folio 102r appear as terminal elements at the base of the frames on folios 33v, 38v, and 89v. Their association as instruments of Christ’s death is particularly evident on folio 48v, which is opposite the illumination depicting the Deposition in the background and the Entombment in the foreground. Other elements in the frame include a chalice, monstrance, and bucrania, reinforcing the Eucharistic and funerary theme of the roundels as well as the Arma Christi motif.
The upturned nail at the base of folio 38v is especially appropriate in light of the chalices that are also on the frame. The chalice motif is found throughout the manuscript, including on folio 65r, which is opposite the illumination depicting the spring found in the grotto at La Sainte Baume. The motto for this miniature is “The Fountain of Love and Charity,” and, the chalices therefore are intended as a reference to the blood of Christ that is the font of Christian love. The inclusion of a fountain at the top of the frame on folio 38v and the chalices found elsewhere on that frame reiterate this metaphor. The body of Christ is referred to in several ways. The frame on folio 85r has four flat disks that may be representations of the Host, an interpretation supported by the themes of bodily healing, Passover, the anointing of Christ, and his Resurrection found in the adjacent narratives on folios 84v to 85r. The most common references, however, are the many monstrances that are found throughout the manuscript, including the frames on folios 25v and 61v. The monstrances on folio 61v are opposite a view of the interior of the grotto, and in this case, the winged monstrances and cherubic heads that are included in the frame refer to the spiritual sustenance provided to the Magdalene by angels during her thirty years in the grotto. In addition, the wings on some of the chalices and monstrances in the manuscript could refer to a portion of the grotto legend that Demoulins relates on folio 67v in a typically equivocal manner: “Some say that when Saint Maximus presented the sacrament to the Magdalene, the host flew to her mouth, but I believe this is a fable. However, it is possible.”

Another motif that alludes to the body of Christ are the stalks of wheat, references to the bread of the Host, that are found several the frames of several folios, including 24v, 30v, and 42v. These frames are part of the Lazarus series and the frame on folio 42v, in particular, is opposite the illumination depicting Lazarus’s resurrection. Thus, the wheat motif at the top of the frame is intended to equate the resurrection of Lazarus with that of Christ. Furthermore, the four small figures on this frame have raised arms and legs that allude to the bodily resurrection of the Saved at the Last Judgment. Similar figures are found on folios 51v opposite the illumination in which the Magdalene informs the Apostles of Christ’s Resurrection. These elements reinforce the origin of humanity’s salvation in the sacrifice of Christ’s body, as symbolized by the objects of the Eucharist.
A unique arrangement of Eucharistic elements is found on the frame of folio 16v, which is opposite the illumination depicting Christ healing Martha of the Issue of Blood. On the frame that surrounds the narrative of this episode are elements of the Eucharist placed in medallions, including a chalice in the lower right and a monstrance in the upper right. The other two elements are not as easily identified, but the object on the lower left of the frame appears to be a vessel with a pouring spout, possibly representing the cruet from which the wine of the Eucharist was poured, thereby equating the body of Christ with that vessel. In the upper right is another unusual motif, but when considered in light of the other elements in the frame, it is seems to represent one of Christ’s stigmata radiating beams of light. The same motif appears in the Resurrection panel from the Isenheim Altarpiece by Matthias Grunewald (figure 80.) If these interpretations are correct, the various elements in this frame are intended to equate Martha’s issue of blood with the blood soon to be shed by Christ, and her miraculous healing as another prefiguration of the Resurrection. In addition, this last motif may also be a reference to the stigmata of Saint Francis of Assisi, which were applied to his flesh by beams of light that radiated from his vision of the Crucifixion. Given that Demoulins was a Franciscan as well as the presence of other Franciscan motifs, such as the cordelière, found throughout the manuscript, this interpretation is equally viable.

Several other elements bear a brief mention. These include the many amphorae found throughout the manuscript that refer to the ointment vessel that is Mary Magdalene’s major attribute. The most prominent examples are on folio 23v, in which the ornate vessels are references to the perfumed oils used to prepare Lazarus’s body for his burial, which the illumination opposite depicts. Other amphorae are found throughout the Lazarus series, referring to not only his death but also foreshadowing the Magdalene’s act of anointing of Christ’s head at the House of Simon the Leper shortly before his arrest and her later role as one of the myrrhophore who carried the perfumed ointment to his tomb.

Finally, the many winged creatures throughout the manuscript have important symbolic references to the themes and episodes in the Vie. A crowned peacock appears on the lower right of the frame on folio 39v, while on the left, a bird with a long bill and
raised leg resembles a crane or heron. All of these birds are highly relevant symbols that give a more profound meaning to the narrative on folio 39v and companion miniature on 40r, which depicts Christ at the tomb of Lazarus as he begins the prayer to God that brings about his friend’s resurrection. The crane, the symbol of vigilance, probably refers to the mourning vigil that preceded Lazarus’s burial, but it may also be a reference to Luke 12:36-40. In this passage, Christ advises the faithful to be “like to men who wait for their lord, when he shall return…Blessed are those servants, who the Lord when he cometh, shall find watching.” Thus, the crane in the Lazarus roundel may also allude to Martha and the Magdalene, who faithfully watched and waited for Jesus to return in the belief that he would save their brother from death, just as the faithful watch and wait for the Second Coming of Jesus and the Resurrection of the Saved at the Last Judgment. The peacock, a symbol of resurrection, is therefore a reference not only to the resurrection of Lazarus and, later, of Christ, but of all Christians who await the Second Coming with faith and vigilance.

I discussed the association of wings and cherubs with the symbolism of Louise of Savoy in Chapter 3, but these elements also have significance in Magdalenian iconography. The cherubic heads, found on folios 60v and 61v for example, are references to the angels that attended the Magdalene during her years in the grotto and elevated her each day to give her the glimpse of heaven that was the reward for her faith and devotion to Christ. Godefroy depicts the angels attending to the Magdalene in the illumination on folio 59r, and on folios 65r, and 67r, they raise the Magdalene from the cliff above the holy grotto.

In addition, the motif of wings, such as those on folio 36v, are also references to the *pneuma* or Spirit and are used to express humanity’s desire to transcend the human condition and approach the Divine, an interpretation that is highly applicable to the Magdalene’s story. The doves found throughout the manuscript are symbols of the Holy Spirit, and the winged *bucrania*, found on folios 61v and 63v for example, are also symbols of the release of the soul after the prison of the body at death. The winged genii have several associations. They represent divine inspiration and in this respect are equated with angels as heavenly messengers, an attribution especially appropriate for
folio 25v, in which the messenger delivers the letter informing Christ of Lazarus’s death. On folios 35v and 41v of the Lazarus roundels, the genii are also symbols of death, referring to the spirit that takes flight from the body. The association of genii and death is particularly significant for the design on folio 49v, which is decorated with a repeating pattern of winged genius, doves, and *bucrania*. This design is placed opposite the illumination depicting the Magdalene’s visit to Christ’s tomb and meeting with the angels. In this frame the genius motif clearly refers to Christ’s corporal death and the angelic messengers who tell the Magdalene of Christ’s Resurrection in the illumination. However, even more significant for this moment in the Magdalene’s story, the genii represent the saint herself who in the next illumination will become “the messenger of Jesus Christ” when she tells the disciples of the miracle of the Resurrection.²⁹

A number of winged motifs are found on folio 53v, which is opposite the illumination depicting Pentecost. The winged genius at the bottom of the frame is a reference to the divine inspiration of the event, and the pairs of wings symbolize the spiritual elevation and transcendence that is occurring among Christ’s followers. In addition, the wings also refer to the vehicle of this transcendence, the Dove of the Holy Spirit who is depicted in the illumination opposite hovering over the heads of the attendants. The feathers, while referring to the Dove as well, are also symbols of the quill pens used by the Apostles to write the Gospels that will result from this moment of divine inspiration.

**Dragons, Serpents, and Salamanders**

For many reasons, the most intriguing and important elements in the *Vie de la Magdalene* are the dragons, salamanders, and serpents that enliven the frames of many of the narrative roundels. I discussed the symbolic association of the motifs with the royal family in Chapter 3, but these powerful, archetypal creatures also have important associations with the story of Mary Magdalene as well.

Dragons and serpents are the most common animals in the manuscript, and in some cases, they have similar symbolic interpretations. As with most chthonic creatures, dragons and serpents have acquired both positive and negative interpretations through the
millennia, but in Christian iconography, they most often represent Satan, sin, paganism, and heresy. However, these creatures also have important associations with Magdalenian iconography, the most direct being the dragon that is the attribute of the Magdalene’s sister, Martha. This attribute refers to an episode from Martha’s vita in which she subdued the dragon that was preying on the people of Tarascon, Provence, by sprinkling it with holy water from an aspergillum before killing it. This particular dragon, known as the Tarasque, is used in the ornamentation of the manuscript on folios 17v and 56v. On folio 17v, Godefroy placed dragons at the top of the frame, serpents at the sides, and dragon-like creatures known as wyverns at the bottom. As the subject of this pair of roundels is Martha’s generosity to Christ and his disciples, the dragons are a reference to Martha and a foreshadowing of the future act of heroism that will prove her courage and faith.

Dragons also appear on the frame of folio 56v, which relates a portion of the story of the king and queen of Provence. In this frame, they refer not only to the Provençal Tarasque, but to paganism as well. The people of Provence worshipped the pagan idols depicted on columns in the preceding illumination on folio 56r, but as the Vie relates, were eventually converted to Christianity by Mary Magdalene. The decorative designs on the frame of folio 56v include four dragons. In this case, the dragons not only refer to the Tarasque, but also function as an allusion to the paganism of the region. The key to this interpretation is the two figures seated on plinths between the dragons on the frame of folio 56v, figures that resemble the pagan idols seated atop columns in the preceding image. Thus, these dragons are representative of the paganism of Provence, which ended when the Magdalene, and her sister after her, converted the pagan populous to Christianity.

The association of the dragon with paganism and the importance of the Magdalene’s evangelical role in the Vie provide another explanation for the inclusion of the miniature of Saint George and the Dragon on folio 3r, previously discussed in Chapter 3. As I mentioned above, the early Christian church equated the dragon with sin and evil, most especially with the sin of idolatry. Therefore, the image of a saint slaying a dragon with a spear symbolically referred to the conversion of a pagan country by a
saint. The miniature of Saint George preparing to slay the dragon on folio 3r, therefore, may be interpreted as analogous with the Magdalene’s conversion of the pagan people of Provence to Christianity, one of the most important themes in this vita.

However, there is a third interpretation of the image of Saint George and the symbolism of the dragon for Magdalenian iconography, that of the dragon as a representation of sin, evil, and humanity’s tendency to vice. According to Christian theology, sin is the source of human vice and its symbolic representation, the dragon, “is the obstacle which must be overcome to reach the level of the sacred, it is the ‘beast within’ which all good Christians much strive to slay like Saint George or Saint Michael.” It is not a coincidence, therefore, that many of the demons driven from the Magdalene by Christ in the illumination on folio 13r are in the form of miniature dragons. They are the embodiment of the sin and vice from which she suffered in her worldliness, but which she courageously overcame when she turned to Christ for purification and redemption.

The miniature of Saint George and the Dragon on folio 3r, therefore, can be also be interpreted as an analogy for the Magdalene’s choice to turn from her life of sin to seek Christ’s forgiveness and to live her life according to his teachings. In this, the Magdalene becomes the first female hero of the New Testament, the equivalent of Saint George, by slaying the ‘beast within’ her through the abundance of her love for Christ, a love that Christ himself says saved her. This interpretation is reinforced by the text of the narrative directly beneath the miniature of Saint George and the Dragon, which recites Luke 7:37, “There was a woman in the town who was a sinner.” Although this miniature of Saint George and the Dragon appears at first to be an incongruous addition to the Vie de la Magdalene, it is, in fact, an appropriate motif for a manuscript that depicts the life of Mary Magdalene, who literally struggled with beasts within her in the form of demons. These demons overcame her innate goodness and allowed sin to control her until Christ destroyed the demons as George destroyed the dragon, freeing her from her sinful desires and allowing her “to reach the level of the sacred.” Therefore, the figure of Saint George can be interpreted in three ways—as Francis defeating the Dragon of Milan, a topic I discuss in Chapter 4, as Christ destroying the draconian demons that motivated the
Magdalene to act in a sinful manner, and as the heroic Mary Magdalene overcoming the
sin within her through her great love for Christ.

The association of the dragon with sin also appears in the frame of folio 44v, but
the sinner in this case is not the Magdalene but Judas. Folios 44v and 45r relate the story
of Jesus’s visit to the House of Simon the Leper found in the Gospel of John 12: 1-8. In
this passage, which takes place six days before Passover, Jesus, Mary Magdalene,
Martha, Lazarus, and the disciples are dining at the home of Simon the Leper. As a
gesture of honor, the Magdalene anointed Christ’s head and feet with a precious
ointment, but Judas, keeper of the group’s purse, criticized her for the expense, which he
claimed was better used to care for the poor. “Jesus Christ said to him ‘Let her be, as this
will serve on the day of my burial. The poor you will always have with you--me,
however, you shall not always have.’” The episode indicates the greed of Judas and all
the elements on the frame of folio 44v emphasize this sin.

The motto QVID FOEDIVS AVARITIA, or “How Repulsive is Greed,” that
surrounds the illumination on folio 45r is the key to the interpretation of the elements on
the narrative frame opposite. Perhaps more than any other folio, these motifs work

together to create an iconographic scheme that provides important sub textual content to
the narrative and miniature. At the top of the frame, which is an appropriately somber
black, is a mask and on either side are two human figures kneeling before stylized
dragons. Intricately knotted ropes or cords run from the kneeling figures down the sides
of the frame to entangle two other figures that fall toward the bottom, where the rope
leads to a rat on the left side and another dragon with a gaping mouth on the right side.37
The terminal element at the base of the frame is a bucramium.

The meaning of this iconographic scheme is evident when the reader interprets the
elements as a group that reads from the top of the frame to the bottom. The mask
symbolizes the deceit and falsehood of Judas, who feigned concern for the poor in an
attempt to gain the money for his own benefit, and who soon will deceive and betray
Christ for thirty pieces of silver. As the motto tells us, Judas was afflicted with the sin of
greed, symbolized by the two dragons, and the two small figures kneeling before the
dragons indicate its control over him. Ultimately, Judas fulfills Matthew’s prophetic
words in that, “Man cannot serve two masters--God and mammon.” His greed for money caused his entanglement in the plot of the priests, as indicated by the gold cord, and like the two figures that tumble downward in the frame, Judas’s greed brings about his downfall.

The mouse, dragon, and *bucranium* at the base of the frame complete the message of this iconographic scheme. Because of their destructive nature, mice and rats symbolize corruption, decay, filth, evil, and, because of their insatiable appetite, greed. More importantly, because the mouse is a secretive animal that gnaws and destroys under the cover of darkness, it is also symbolic of the Devil who secretly corrupts the human soul as he secretly corrupted Judas through greed. Thus the dragon with the open mouth on the lower right of the frame indicates that the sin of greed consumed Judas, led to his downfall, and ultimately to his death, an interpretation supported by the *bucranium* that functions as a terminal element to the entire scheme.

Even more prominent than dragons as symbolic elements are the many serpents that writhe their way around the narrative frames. Their meanings are more varied than the dragons, and they, too, have both positive and negative connotations. Certainly, the serpent’s part in the downfall of Adam and Eve makes it a potent symbol of sin and Demoulins’s mention of Eve on folio 51v reinforces this interpretation. The best examples are found on folios 17v and 76r. On folio 17v, the serpents join dragons and wyverns as general symbols of sin, but on folio 76r, the serpent’s role is very specific and intentionally recalls the animal’s initial association with sin in Genesis.

In the narratives of folios 75r to 76r Demoulins criticizes members of the clergy whom he calls “false prophets.” On folio 76r he chastises the “the holy theologians of Paris” for using sacramental wine for entertainment and, more importantly, for allowing women to attend theological banquets. Thus, the serpents, skulls, and bones that surround this narrative are a reference to the Serpent that tempted Eve, brought about the corruption of Adam, and lead ultimately to humanity’s complete death, as indicated by the skulls and bones. The serpents in this frame, therefore, equate the women attending the theological banquets with the temptress Eve and warn about the possibility of corruption by the sin of lust that can result from such inappropriate contact. Diane
Apostolos-Cappadona notes that snakes or serpents were associated with the penalty of lust, which was symbolized by a woman being devoured by serpents. This interpretation would also apply to Mary Magdalene, who is depicted in the Vie de la Magdalene, the Golden Legend, and the VBMM as sexually promiscuous during her worldly life.

A more positive association with the serpent motif, however, is found on the frames of folios 39v, 47v, 51v, and 70v. On folios 39v and 40r, Jesus begins the resurrection of Lazarus by asking God to hear his prayer. At the top of folio 39v, two serpents are wrapped around staffs, recalling the Brazen Serpent of Moses in Numbers 21: 4-9. In this respect, the serpent is a creature of healing and resurrection, and is an appropriate motif for this frame. The same is true for folio 47v, which is opposite the illumination depicting the Crucifixion, on which Godefroy has painted a serpent on the side of the frame and two serpents on either side of the fleur-de-lis at the top.

Serpents also appear around the narrative on folio 51v, in which the Magdalene announces Christ’s Resurrection to the Apostles. Their symbolic reference to resurrection is reinforced by the small figures on the sides of the frame that raise their arms over their heads, alluding to the ascension of the Saved to heaven at the Last Judgment. In addition, the serpents on this frame also refer to the source of this episode in John 21:18, as serpents in a chalice are one of the attributes of John the Evangelist.

The salamander is another symbol associated with the royal family that has great significance as a Magdalenian symbol in this particular manuscript. The best example of this association is on the frame of folio 10v, which is opposite the illumination in which the Magdalene is enjoying a romantic embrace with her lover. The frame of folio 10v is decorated with four pairs of flaming salamanders and four golden ribbons, a motif previously discussed as a reference to the Magdalene’s golden hair and a symbol of both her vanity and her humility. As I will explain, the dual interpretation of the hair motif is especially significant in conjunction with the dual symbolism of the salamander.

The salamanders are surrounded by small, wavy lines representing flames and face each other in a heraldic arrangement indicative of their twofold nature. In Chapter 4, I discussed the motif of the salamander surrounded by flames as the most famous emblem
of Francis I. The motto that accompanies these creatures in Francis’s crest, *Nutrisco et Extinguo*, “I am nourished [by the good fire] and I extinguish [the bad fire],” is indicative of the double meaning of this motif. An understanding of this duality is essential to appreciate fully Demoulins’s representation of the Magdalene in the *Vie de la Magdalene* and his application of the salamander motif to the saint.

Like dragons and serpents, salamanders are potent dualistic symbols. Because of its cool, moist skin, the salamander was believed to survive in fire and to have the ability to put it out. Because of this association, the symbolism of the salamander and fire are interrelated and both have positive and negative connotations. From antiquity, fire was recognized as having two opposing values--that of purification and of destruction. In Neoplatonic philosophy, this duality was envisioned in the form of seraphim at the most positive level and Satan at the most destructive level. Thus, it is the divine fire that burns in the hearts of the saints and the evil fire that consumes the souls of the damned.

As Marie Lecoq notes, the same duality applies to the symbolism of the salamander. A thirteenth-century Tuscan-Venetian bestiary identifies the salamander “that lives only in fire” as a symbol of the Apostles and the Just who are “enflamed by the Holy Spirit and filled with the ardent fire of divine love.” This divine love is opposed to *luxuria* or the consuming and destructive passion of lust. Furthermore, according to medieval symbolism the salamander represented the righteous person “who never relinquished peace of soul and remained faithful to God in the midst of life’s tribulations.”

In 1521, Guillaume Brinçonnet wrote a letter to Louise’s daughter Marguerite of Angoulême in which he summed up the dual nature of the salamander as a Christian symbol. He noted that there are two types of salamanders, the *salamander diabolique*, that is “colder than a viper.” It extinguishes the fires of divine grace and is nourished by the fires of adultery, pleasure, and concupiscence, and will finish in the fires of Hell. The second is the *salamander divine* that extinguishes the fires of adultery and the maliciousness of sin, “living embraced by the love of Jesus, being nourished by the furnace of grace and the gifts of God.”
No motif could describe Mary Magdalene more perfectly. Before her conversion, she is the *salamander diabolique*, consumed by vanity, enticing men with her beauty, and burning with the passions of *luxuria*. After her conversion, however, she becomes the *salamander divine*, transformed by her ardent devotion to Jesus into a faithful disciple and the Apostle to the Apostles, who ends her days nourished only by her burning love of Christ and God’s gift of glimpses of heaven. Although the *Vie de la Magdalene* was produced several years before Brinçonnet’s letter, it is obvious that Demoulins understood the bishop’s view about the dual nature of the salamander perfectly and applied it to the symbolism of this manuscript. United with the gold strands of her hair in folio 10v, the salamanders, while retaining their association with Francis, are eloquent symbols of Mary Magdalene’s transformation from sinner to saint.

Finally, on folio 7v, Godefroy and Demoulins included dragons, serpents, and salamanders in a single frame in which all three symbols have positive connotations. This frame is opposite the illumination depicting Martha, Lazarus, and Mary Magdalene surveying the properties they inherited from their parents, with each town identified by an inscription. The motifs on the frame include a chalice of snakes at the top, salamanders, smiling cherubim, flaming urns or vases on either side, a crane on the lower left, a dragon on the lower right, and another flaming vase or urn on the bottom. Each motif has a symbolic interpretation that is pertinent to Magdalene’s story, but is also significant for Louise and Francis, which, because of the intertwining of the motifs, I will discuss below.

Here, too, the chalice of snakes located at the top of the frame is a reference to the Gospel of John 11:1-2, which identifies Martha and Mary as Lazarus’s sisters, specifically mentioning that, “Mary was she that anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair.” Although there is no mention of a woman named Mary Magdalene in this passage, this would have been understood by the reader because the Gregorian conflation associated both of the anointing women with Mary Magdalene. Furthermore, the snake-filled chalice, which indicates the source of this passage, and the inscription identifying Bethany are Demoulins’s way of identifying Mary Magdalene with Mary of Bethany.
At the top and bottom of the frame are pairs of salamanders placed in heraldic opposition. As I mentioned above, salamanders can symbolize both virtue and vice. In this roundel, I believe that they are intended to represent both the impulse toward generosity and the impulse toward greed that can result from wealth. The theme is reinforced a portion of the narrative which states “Division sets in everywhere, for what should be held in common, everyone wants to make his own.”

The vases and urns are clues to the overall meaning of this frame. A vase that does not contain flowers is symbolic of a treasure, undoubtedly referring to the great wealth inherited by the Magdalene and her siblings. However, a golden vase, as these are, stands for the treasure of spiritual life, while the flames that rise from the mouths of these vases symbolize religious fervor. Thus, the flaming golden vases or urns on this frame can suggest that a life filled with spiritual fervor surpasses all earthly wealth. This emphasis on the worthlessness of earthly wealth is reinforced by the motto on the companion roundel, “Fickle things are the goods of man.” Furthermore, flaming vases also represent charity, an interpretation that enhances the comprehensive theme of this pair of roundels. Godefroy used these motifs to refer to the charity Lazarus, Martha, and Mary Magdalene would soon extend to Jesus and his disciples, a charity that is in contrast to the worldly pleasures, such as the banquet on folio 7r, that they enjoyed before becoming disciples of Christ. Equally important, however, these motifs may also be intended as references to Louise and François, who are indicated by the cherubs and salamanders. The flaming golden vases may be intended as both a reference to their royal beneficence, and perhaps as a reminder to Louise that charity is one of the responsibilities of wealth and power.

Two other important elements found on this frame appear to be references to both the Magdalene and her siblings, and to Louise and Francis. As mentioned above, the frame also contains a crane and a dragon. The crane is symbolic of not only vigilance as mentioned above, but also of good works. The dragon is another attribute of Vigilance, a virtue necessary for any Christian, but also one of the virtues particularly associated with monarchs and others in public life. In this case, the reference is to Louise, who is
indicated by the cherubs I discussed in Chapter 3, and Francis, who is represented by his emblem, the salamanders.

Thus, the frame on folio 7v can be read as an object lesson for the wealthy and powerful, emphasizing the necessity to be vigilant in charity and good works, and to place the value of spiritual treasures over the “fickle things of man.” As indicated by the salamanders, the powerful and privileged must have the same burning faith exhibited by the Magdalene, Lazarus, and Martha when they rejected their lives of wealth and comfort and embraced the many trials and tribulations that awaited them as Disciples of Christ.

**Conclusion**

As the fourth didactic component of the *Vie de la Magdalene*, the symbolic motifs of the narrative frames serve several functions. First, they provide a delicate visual richness to the manuscript that is appropriate for a regal patron. Second, the motifs work in tandem with the illuminations to reinforce the thematic content of the images and narrative text. Third, the correct interpretation of the motifs brings depth and breadth to the Magdalene’s story by referring to episodes that are not touched on by the other components. Fourth, the mental stimulation required to decipher the intricate symbols and understand their complex interrelationships would intrigue and delight the educated reader through process of interpretation, revelation, and comprehension.

In addition, the complexity of the manuscript may have been intended to impress Louise with the erudition, sophisticated intellect, and spiritual resources of the man who wrote and directed the production of the *Vie de la Magdalene*, François Demoulins de Rochefort. The ploy was obviously successful because Demoulins continued to work for Louise and her family for the remainder of his life, benefiting from the patronage of the most powerful woman in France. From his appropriately humble beginning as Franciscan priest, canon, tutor, and chaplain, Demoulins, with Louise’s assistance, was elevated to the level of Grand Almoner to King Francis I in 1519, a position in which he oversaw all religious services for the royal family. Furthermore, his less than subtle request for a bishopric on folios 77r and 77v in the *Vie* was not in vain. By royal nomination, Demoulins was appointed the Bishop of Condom in 1522, a position that he
held for two years. The royal appointment, however, was at odds with the popular opinion of the chapter, and after two litigious years, the appointment was rescinded and his rival elected to fill the position. Francis I did not forget his old school master, however, and Demoulins was made the Abbot of Saint Maximin-de-Micy near Orleans in 1521, a position he held until his death sometime before 1526. While certainly a blow to his personal aspirations, this position was, in fact, more fitting for the “humble” Franciscan who had railed vehemently against his fellow clerics who were themselves “so greedy for honors.”

The intricate iconography of the frame motifs is indicative of the overall complexity of this extraordinary little manuscript. Deceptively small and elegant in design, the Vie de la Magdalene is a work singular in concept and execution that has no equal in Magdalenian hagiography. A sophisticated fusion of iconographic influences, the Vie challenges the reader to question what we see and read, requiring us to look beneath its primary level of meaning for a deeper understanding of the social, religious, and political forces that influenced its creation.
Notes

1. It was the belief of the Cistercian order that “auditors or readers will delight in the hard work of difficult inquiry.” See Alexa Sand, “Vision, Devotion, and Difficulty in the Psalter Hours of Yolande of Soissons,” Art Bulletin (March 2005), 21, n. 4.

2. Ibid. “Ut quod in ea latet, delectet etiam cum labore investigare, nec fatiget inquirendi forte difficultas.”

3. As I mentioned in Chapter 1, note 12, a close examination of the decorative motifs on some of the narrative frames suggests that a second hand may have been involved in the creation of the Vie de la Magdalene. At the end of the manuscript, there are several frames, including folios 85v, 86r, 87r, 88v, 94v, 106r, 107v, and 108v, which have motifs similar to those found in the previous folios. Upon scrutiny, however, it is evident that the designs on these frames lack the masterful definition of minute forms found in the majority of the narrative frames, such as those found on folios 8v and 39v. For example, the dragons found on the frames of folio 85v are more massive and less linear than those on folios 17v and 56v. Furthermore, they lack the knots and curlicues in their tails that are essential characteristics of the other dragons found elsewhere in the manuscript. Other elements, such as the figures in the frame of 85v, are equally clumsy and lacking in finesse when compared to similar elements, such as those on folios 42v and 43v.

The most obvious example is the pattern of leaves attached to a central undulating line that encircles the narrative frame on folio 88v. This is a popular motif in the manuscript and appears on several of the frames from folio 83v to the conclusion of the manuscript. In nearly all of these designs, the depiction of the plant is the same—two leaves rise on a single stem from the line at the center of the frame. The leaf is oval, elongated, and tapers to a slender line at the end of each leaf. However, in the frame on folio 88v, the leaf comes up from the line on two stems that meet and the leaves are larger, less delicate, and without the taper at the end. When compared with the many other examples of this motif, it is obvious that the artist who created the design on folio 88v and the other frames mentioned above was not Godefroy le Batave, but an unidentified artist working in the manuscript atelier at the court of Louise of Savoy.

4. Lecoq, 75, 410-11; Orth, “Progressive Tendencies,” 86, 131-41; Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 176-77.

5. “Madame, dieu eternal est sans tristesse.”

6. John 11:44 describes Lazarus as “bound head and foot with winding bands.” Accordingly, Demoulins describes these as bandez de toille in the narrative on folio 42r.


8. Irene Aghion, Claire Barbillon, and François Lissarrague, Gods and Heroes of Classical Antiquity (Paris and New York: Flammarion, 1994), 125. The Three Fates, Atropos, Clotho, and Lachesis, were the Roman divinities of destiny. They spin and unwind the thread of each mortal’s life, and cut it at the moment of death.

9. However, another interpretation is also possible. The overlapping of two undulating lines was a motif used by Francis as a stylized monogram for Claude. It appears on objects in his possession, such as the stirrups that he used at the Battle of Pavia. See Lecoq, 464-65. There are a number of elements within the decorative scheme of the frames that include C forms, such as the volutes found on folio 68v and 100r, and these may also be a reference to Claude or, equally appropriate, to Christ.

10. On folios 1v, 2r, 103v, and 105r, for example, the spiky, intertwined lines resemble a crown of thorns and may be intended to reiterate the themes of Christ’s Passion and Crucifixion. In addition, this motif may also tie in with the manuscript’s regal theme discussed in Chapter 3, as Saint Louis, Louise’s ancestor, possessed a relic from the Crown of Thorns and built Sainte Chapelle to house it. The crown is also one of Louis’s attributes. See Reau, vol. 2, pt. 1, 15; and Oxford Dictionary, 125, 231.


13. However, this motif may also have two personal references as well. The laurel wreath was awarded to victorious commanders and this motif can be interpreted as a reference to Francis’s victory at Marignano. In addition, it may also be a reference to Demoulins as well, as laurel wreaths were awarded as prizes for distinction in the writing of Christian books or poetry. Thus Demoulins may have included the laurel wreath in the Vie as an indication of his skill as a writer of Christian subjects or the honors awarded him by Louise that he mentions in folio 1r.


15. Galatians 5:25, “If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.”

17. Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 609.


19. Schiller, vol. 1, 51, 81; *Oxford Dictionary*, 182-83; Apostolos-Cappadona, *Encyclopedia*, 135, 188, 220. Examples are found in the *Portinari Altarpiece* by Hugo van der Goes (1475-76, oil on panel, Uffizi, Florence) and Gerard David’s *Altarpiece of the Baptism of Christ* (1502-07, oil on panel, Groeningemuseum, Bruges.)

20. Apostolos-Cappadona, *Encyclopedia*, 134, 220-21; Metford, 100. The French king Clovis (c. 466-511) chose the fleur-de-lis as his symbol following his baptism to signify his purification as a newly converted Christian. It has been associated with the French monarchy ever since.


24. Reau, vol. 2, pt. 2, 510. Reau notes that in the fifteenth century the motif of the stigmata or wounds of Christ were depicted in the form of gashes from which rays of light emanated.

25. Apostolos-Cappadona, *Encyclopedia*, 88; 173; Metford, 74. Cranes and herons have similar iconographies that make them especially fitting motifs for this roundel. These birds were believed to gather every evening and form a protective circle around their king. One of the flock was selected to keep watch for the night to insure the king’s safety. To keep from falling asleep, the guardian would balance on one leg holding a stone in the other, so that if it fell asleep the stone would drop and the animal would wake up to continue its vigil.

26. Schiller, vol. 1, 131, 172; *Oxford Dictionary*, 58; Apostolos-Cappadona, *Encyclopedia*, 289. The peacock is a symbol of the resurrection because it was believed that the flesh of the bird did not decay. The peacock is also associated with royalty, making it an equally appropriate motif for Louise and Francis, as well as the sin of vanity, from which Mary Magdalene suffered before her conversion. See Apostolos-Cappadona, *Encyclopedia*, 289.


29. Folio 51v: “The apostles were given this name, ‘apostles’ because they were sent into the world to proclaim the law of God. That explains why the Magdalene, who was to be the messenger of God, was named ‘Apostola.’”

30. The word *dragon* comes from the Latin *draco* which means both “dragon” and “serpent;” therefore these creatures as well as snakes can have similar symbolic interpretations. See Reau, vol. 2, pt. 1, 60, 84; *Oxford Dictionary*, 144; Apostolos-Cappadona, *Encyclopedia*, 144, 335, 342-43; Duchet-Souchaux and Pastoureau, 128, 307; Metford, 86, 224, 230; James Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 109.

31. After the Magdalene went into the wilderness, Martha settled in Provence near the town of Tarascon and established a convent of nuns. The region was plagued by a dragon known as the Tarasque, whom Martha subdued by sprinkling with holy water from an aspergillum. See Reau, vol. 3, pt. 2, 893-94; Duchet-Souchaux and Pastoureau, 231; Mycoff, 99-100; and Voragine, 391-95.

32. A wyvern is a type of flying dragon or serpent with two legs like eagles and a barbed tail coiled in a knot. They symbolized pestilence, because of the barbed tail, and Satan. See Metford, 268.


34. This association is based on the legend of Saint George, a Christian knight who slew the dragon that was terrorizing the inhabitants of a pagan country. George saved the king’s daughter, who had been prepared as a sacrifice to the beast, and in gratitude, the king, and all his subjects converted to Christianity. See Metford, 108, 158.

35. Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 307-08.

36. Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 856-57.

37. A comparison between this creature and the dragon on the upper left of the frame in folio 17v indicates that this is also a dragon.


40. The use of a dragon to symbolize the sin and greed of Judas is not innovative, for it appears in Renaissance and medieval art in this context. A carved twelfth-century pulpit from the cathedral in Volterra displays a dragon with bared teeth lurking beneath the table of the Last Supper as Judas kneels to take communion from Christ’s hand. See Schiller, vol. 2, 35.

41. Apostolos-Cappadona, Encyclopedia, 286. Apostolos-Cappadona notes that on twelfth-century portal sculptures from Moissac and Charlieu, the penalty for the sin of lust is depicted as a woman being eaten by snakes.

42. This passage of the Old Testament relates an episode from the story of Moses, in which the Israelites angered God and were stricken with an infestation of venomous serpents that killed and sickened many among them. The Israelites repented of their wickedness and impatience with God and asked Moses to beg His mercy so that they would be healed. God told Moses to place a serpent on his staff and all of those who had been bitten would be cured when they looked at it. Moses had a serpent of brass created and placed on his staff, and the Israelites were cured. For this reason, serpents, especially those that are on a staff or baton, are symbols of healing and resurrection. See Reau, vol. 2, pt. 1, 208-10; Oxford Dictionary, 66; Metford, 224; Apostolos-Cappadona, Encyclopedia, 334; and Schiller, vol. 2, 125-26.

43. Schiller, vol. 2, 224; Apostolos-Cappadona, Dictionary, 342-43. The snake’s sloughing of its skin was also a source of its association with resurrection and the soul’s liberation from the body after death.

44. Reau, vol. 2, pt. 1, 208-10; Oxford Dictionary, 66; Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 855-56; Metford, 224; Apostolos-Cappadona, Dictionary, 335. There are two staffs on the frame which have something wrapped around them, but it is impossible to determine if these elements are pennons or serpents. Serpents would be appropriate to a scene of the Crucifixion, however, as the Brazen Serpent of the Old Testament was a typology or prefiguration of the Crucified Christ and the salvation of humanity that resulted from his sacrifice. This is association is based on John 3:14: “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so shall the sons of man be lifted up so that in the end all who believe in him will obtain eternal life.”

45. Duchet-Suchaux and Pastoureau, 197-98; Metford, 224. John was unaffected after drinking a potion made of serpent’s venom.

46. Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 821-22; Apostolos-Cappadona, Encyclopedia, 326; Metford, 227; Lecoq, 35-48. In French François’s motto reads J’y vis et je l’etiens, “I live among them and put them out,” referring to the flames surrounding the salamander on François’s crest.
47. Lecoq, 43; Knecht, 11. The salamanders of Angoulême were sometimes depicted spouting water from their mouths.

48. Lecoq, 44.

49. Ibid.

50. Lecoq, 44.


52. Lecoq, 44; Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 821.

53. Lecoq, 44; Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 821.


55. This anointing episode takes place at the house of Simon the Leper. It is told in Matthew 26: 7-16, Mark 14: 3-11, and John 12: 1-8.

56. Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1060-61. As the body is symbolized by a vessel, an empty vase or urn can represent the soul’s separation from the body. See Apostolos-Cappadona, Encyclopedia, 370, 373. This connotation would also be appropriate for this frame, which is part of the group of folios that deal with the death of the Magdalene’s parents.

57. Chevalier and Gheerbrant, 1060-61.

58. Hall, 64, 318.


60. Bientenholz, 441. Demoulins is listed as “François Du Moulin de Rochefort.”

61. Ibid.
CONCLUSION

The Vie de la Magdalene is a deceptive work of art. Diminutive in size, restrained in design, and seemingly straightforward in content, the Vie is, in fact, filled to overflowing with a remarkable number of ideas and iconographic influences. It is completely a product of a particular time and place and of the interaction of three remarkable people--Louise of Savoy, François Demoulins de Rochefort, and Godefroy le Batave, all of whom put their stamp on the Magdalene manuscript in various ways. This dissertation has made the first detailed examination of the Vie de la Magdalene to determine how and why this extraordinary manuscript was designed and written in the manner that it was.

I have shown that the Vie de la Magdalene is, in some ways, traditional in its presentation of the Magdalene’s story. By incorporating the Gospels accounts, the Golden Legend, and the VBMM, Demoulins aligned his manuscript with earlier vitae that were accepted as canonical by the Catholic Church, a fact he stresses at several points in the Vie. It is in the episodes that he chose to include or reject, however, that we see part of his motivation for the production of this manuscript. By choosing portions from each source that emphasized the Magdalene’s privileged birth, her life of wealth and pleasure, the grief she experienced at the deaths of loved ones, her generosity and virtue, her life in Provence, and her courage and faith, Demoulins emphasized aspects of the Magdalene’s vita that paralleled experiences in Louise’s own life. This is made particularly clear when he shifts from the use of imitatio Magdalena to imitatio Mariae to involve Louise in the manuscript’s story by alluding to her most important role, that of the mother of the king of France. The unusual illumination of the Virgin at Herod’s house was included by Demoulins for only one reason--to encourage Louise to relive a traumatic event that caused her great anxiety over the safety of her son Francis I through the anguish of the Holy Virgin, who likewise sought to protect her own Son from the machinations of unscrupulous men. This type of mnemonic emotionalism is typical of Franciscan spirituality and as a Franciscan, Demoulins intended to heighten Louise’s devotional experience as she read the Vie de la Magdalene by including such episodes as anamnestic devices that helped her to tap into her memories of similar moments.
Not content with these sources, however, Demoulins turned to one of the most powerful forms of religious didacticism, the Passion plays that were performed across northern Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. As I have shown, three plays in particular are represented in the Vie de la Magdalene—the mystères of Eustache Mercadé, Andre Gréban, and Jean Michel. These plays were so popular that they were read as literature as well as seen in performance, and the Magdalene manuscript reflects their influence in two ways. The first is the incorporation of specific scenes, such as the Magdalene’s seduction of her lover on folio 11r, which are found only in these plays. The second is the design and execution of a large number of the illuminations, in particular the Lazarus roundels. In these miniatures this story is depicted in a scene-by-scene manner that is highly reminiscent of a theatrical performance.

Furthermore, a number of the illuminations are designed as if the viewer is looking down onto the stage from a centralized, elevated angle. In this seemingly unimportant detail, Demoulins and Godefroy emphasized the regal nature of their patron. The centralized bird’s eye view of the composition recalls the vantage point that Louise, Francis, and their entourage would have had from the raised platform or structure that was reserved for the aristocracy at the performances of the plays. Whether the instructions for this compositional technique came from Demoulins or the designs were Godefroy’s invention, the effect successfully mimics the viewing staging, and presentation of these popular theatrical productions. Here, too, the manuscript plays on Louise’s memory of the plays, whether read or witnessed, to create a more powerful devotional experience.

The third group of elements intended to prompt Louise’s memory are the illuminations depicting the Magdalene’s shrine and relics in Provence. While essentially a souvenir album of the pilgrimage, these images actually function on a much more important spiritual level. Highly detailed and carefully researched, the miniatures are arranged sequentially to mimic the process of moving through the shrine as Louise experienced it during her pilgrimage to La Sainte-Baume. The precision with which each scene was created assisted in her contemplations, allowing Louise to recall vividly her memories the actual site of the Magdalene’s penitential solitude. Moving visually from the exterior view of the massif through the grotto to the innermost heart of the shrine,
Louise gained the spiritual benefit of the pilgrimage during her daily devotions without encountering the dangers or hardships of the journey.

Not all aspects of the Vie de la Magdalene were spiritually motivated, however. Many of the motifs and themes found in the manuscript, such as the fleurs-de-lis and the Anointing of Christ, are references to the royal ancestry of Louise and Francis as descendants of the great houses of the French aristocracy, particularly the Angevin and Valois dynasties. In both subtle and explicit ways, Demoulins and Godefroy commemorate Louise and Francis as the latest in a long line of distinguished and powerful rulers who held Mary Magdalene in the highest esteem. Like their ancestors, Louise and Francis proved their devotion to the Magdalene by undertaking a royal pilgrimage to the saint’s shrine at La Sainte-Baume, and through their financial support of the holy grotto and the basilica that houses her relics. The illuminations of these sacred sites in the Vie de la Magdalene celebrate the generosity and piety of Louise and her family, as well as further underscoring the complex intermingling of sincere devotion and royal politics found throughout the Vie.

Even more significant in this respect are the aspects of the manuscript that emphasize the sacral anointing of divinely chosen kings. Specifically, these aspects are the two scenes in which Mary Magdalene anoints Jesus’s head and feet with precious oil, and the many depictions of the Magdalene’s hair found in the illuminations and roundel frames. Represented in both realistic and stylized forms, the Magdalene’s hair became a recurrent symbol for sacral anointing throughout the manuscript. By emphasizing this ancient convention of sacred kingship that was the foundation of French monarchy, Demoulins consciously promoted four concepts in the Vie. The first is that Francis was a divinely chosen king, whose favored status with God was proven through the miracle and ritual of the sacred anointing, the sacre, during his coronation ceremony. Secondly, that his sacred kingship united Francis with Jesus Christ, Louis IX, Charlemagne, and all anointed kings, French or otherwise, throughout history. Third, the Vie de la Magdalene was created for Louise of Savoy, Francis’s mother, who had done all in her power to bring her son to the throne and had the joy of witnessing his sacre and coronation just two years before the manuscript’s creation. The emphasis on sacred kingship found throughout the Vie, therefore, celebrates not only Francis’s triumph, but that of Louise as
The fourth concept emphasized in the manuscript is that through their veneration of Mary Magdalene, who had anointed the first Christian “king,” Louise and Francis kept a direct connection to Jesus through his devoted “Apostola,” as well as ensuring the protection and favor of the Magdalene that had been enjoyed by the anointed French monarchs from which they were descended. The saint’s protection and favor had already been proven by Francis’s safe return from the Battle of Marignano, in celebration of which the *Vie de la Magdalene* was created.

Other personalized elements of the manuscript reflect the concerns and activities of Louise and her family. These include the scene of the Magdalene hunting, an unusual episode that is indicative of the avidity with which Francis and his courtiers engaged in this aristocratic sport. Italianate motifs, classical references, humanist languages, and a hint at Neoplatonism and the Cabala also echo the interests and intellectual pursuits of Francis, Louise, Marguerite, and other members of the French court during these years. Implicit in the dragons, knights, and especially the battle scenes on folio 50v are references to Francis’s victory at Marignano and his appointment by Leo X as the Duke of Milan. Demoulins also insinuated his own agenda into *Vie de la Magdalene* by imbuing the manuscript with Franciscan spirituality, vehemently denouncing the corruption of the clergy, mincing around the Gregorian conflation, and audaciously promoting himself for a bishopric precisely at the time when Louise, through her son, had the power to raise him to that eminent level.

Lastly, there is the most intriguing aspect of the Magdalene manuscript—the decorative devices of the narrative frames. Placed against brightly colored or somber black backgrounds, the delicate gilded motifs are appropriate ornaments for the devotional book of a great lady, but as I have shown, they are much more than that. Multivalent in meaning and fluid in interpretation, these symbolic elements can refer simultaneously to a member of the royal family, a portion of the text, an episode from the Magdalene’s story, an important event in Louise’s life, or Demoulins’s own Franciscan spirituality. With the inclusion of these motifs, the reading of the manuscript becomes an intellectual exercise intended to enthral the reader in the process of deciphering the arcane messages for their potent meanings, and interpreting the profound spiritual and
A work of profound spirituality, intricate interpretation, and delicate beauty, the Vie de la Magdalene is as much a tribute to its author as it is to its owner and its subject, for in the elegant, eloquent pages of the Magdalene manuscript we can see something of the mind and soul of its creator. Like the manuscript itself, François Demoulins de Rochefort was a complex and often contradictory individual. At once innovative and orthodox, we see his various personas appear and disappear with the turn of each page: humble servant, pious priest, devout supplicant, profound scholar, patient teacher, progressive intellectual, upholder of orthodoxy, sycophantic courtier, and audacious self-promoter. Perhaps it took someone like François Demoulins, who functioned on so many levels in his own life, to create an object as multifaceted as himself.
CATALOGUE OF THE VIE DE LA MAGDALENE
(B.N. ms. fr. 24.955) BY FRANÇOIS DEMOULINS DE ROCHEFORT
AND GODEFROY LA BATAVE

Introduction

The Vie de la Magdalene is a complex, contemporary work created for a sophisticated patron who appreciated the refinement and elegance of the manuscript’s form and design, as well as the dramatic and emotional content of its illuminations and narrative. The manuscript is also extremely personal and was intended to be read by an audience of one, Louise of Savoy. Throughout the Vie, Demoulins addresses Louise directly, referencing specific people and events in her life, praising her qualities and responding to her questions and concerns through a dialectic between “Madame” and “Obedience.” I have endeavored, with the help of the translators, to keep this intimate and often informal tone throughout the catalogue.¹

The manuscript consists of 218 pages of narrative text and illuminations. It was rebound in the eighteenth century in green morocco leather with three gold filets and gilded fleurons on the corners.² The dimensions of the manuscript pages are 95 x 75 mm. Each page has a roundel as a framing device containing the narrative text and illuminations. The roundels measure approximately 44 mm. in diameter to the exterior edges of the frames with an interior measurement of approximately 42 mm. Sixty-eight pages have illuminations that are surrounded by gilded frames inscribed with mottoes in various languages. Sixty of illuminations are full-size, one is bipartite (folio 61r), two are tripartite (folios 55r, 68r), and five are quadripartite illuminations (folios 56r, 57r, 58r, 59r, 67r). The remaining 148 roundels have text surrounded by frames decorated with a wide variety of motifs and ground colors.

In addition to the sixty-eight image roundels, two roundels contain both imagery and text; folio 3v has a small illumination of St. George and the dragon silhouetted in gold on black embedded within the text, and folio19v contains a half roundel illumination of the declaration of Marcella. Folio 3r is the genealogical chart of the Magdalene’s immediate family.
All the images and the majority of text are contained within the roundel format with the exception of twenty-seven of the image roundels that have a small inscription outside the frame. Twenty-five of these inscriptions, which are placed to the left of the roundel, are translations into Latin of the foreign language mottoes in the illumination frames. Folio 4r has an inscription placed over the image roundel assuring the reader that information on the following pages is in keeping with the orthodoxy of the Catholic Church. Folio 93r has an inscription below the roundel addresses the number of the Magdalene’s traveling companions. It is a continuation of the commentary within the frame above it and as such, appears to be an afterthought on the part of the author.

**Comments on the Narrative Text**

The narrative text was written in a humanist, or “roman,” hand using minuscule and majuscule letterforms. The scribe, presumably François Demoulins, also used non-roman letterforms such as $f$ and $ff$ for $s$ and $ss$, as well as antique spellings such as using $i$ for $j, u$ for $v$, and $vv$ for $w$ in the interior of words. There are occasional flourishes in the letterforms, with $z$ particularly favored. Abbreviations are numerous and are indicated by dashes over the preceding letter. These dashes indicate a missing $m, n, t, ion, s,$ or similar common letters or letter combinations. In the case of words ending in $us$ such as $vous$, the scribe has abbreviated the $us$ suffix with a raised letterform resembling a 9. Colons are used when a word breaks at the end of a line and is wrapped around to the next line. Line and page fillers are two or three dots with a linear scroll flourish. The flourish is placed to the right of the dots in the case of line fillers and below the dots in the case of page fillers.

The narrative text, which was probably black originally but has faded to brown, has rubricated Latin passages that are primarily scriptural. There are no historicized initials or other typical text decorations with the exception of 1-line roman initials in red or blue. These are slightly larger than the text and are used at the beginning of pages and sentences, or as indications of paragraphs or other major breaks in the text. In a few cases, a large blue paragraph symbol, a composite $CI$ letterform, is used within the text to
indicate an important starting point in the narrative but it is most often used to signal the beginning of the mottoes in the frames of the image roundels.\(^4\)

The design and arrangement of the text within the individual roundels changes as the story progresses and is dependant on the content of the narrative. In folios 1r to 72v, which relate the Magdalene’s \textit{vita}, the text is often centered within the roundel space as it descends the page. In some of the folios, such as folios 35v and 53v, this effect is extremely exaggerated with the last word on the page broken into several parts to emphasize the centered effect. These pages often have a page filler motif placed below the text to further enhance the central design. The page design of the remainder of the text roundels, folios 73r to 108v, is in the left alignment style most common in Western manuscripts. This portion of the narrative usually fills the page from top to bottom and sentences run from one page to the next in a continuous flow.

A comparison of page design and narrative content within the manuscript reveals the reason for the change in the arrangement of the text as the reader progresses through the book. In the first section, the Magdalene’s \textit{vita}, it was necessary for the narrative text to correspond to the image in the companion roundels, and when there was less than a full page of text, the last lines and words were centered in an attempt to fill the page as much as possible. This centered design is not necessary after the image roundels, however, so the text fills the page and runs consecutively from one page to the next. This is evident on the pages that contain verses as well as block text, such as folios 98r to 99r and folios 101v to 103v.\(^5\) On these pages, the lines begin with a rubricated initial but align left.

Other textual elements include inscriptions within the image roundels that identify figures and places, or relate dialogue. These are in Latin and are written in black, white, or gold ink. Some of these textual elements are simple inscriptions that are free-floating or are placed on architectural elements to identify a locale, while others are written on banderoles, placards, and framed plaques. These elements vary in color, including white, black, gold, red, and pale yellow, with pale yellow the most common color, possibly to mimic parchment.
Synopsis of the *Vie de la Magdalene*

In folios 1r to 3v, Demoulins introduces the story of the Magdalene as he has related it in his manuscript. Folios 4r to 53r depicts the pre-conversion and post-conversion life of the Magdalene before her apostolate, with folios 20v to 40r relating the story of the death and resurrection of Lazarus. Folios 54v to 58r tell of the Magdalene’s Provençal mission, the legend of the king and queen of Provence, and the saint’s retreat to the wilderness. Folios 58v to 66r are views of the shrine of La Sainte-Baume. The narrative and illuminations on folios 66v to 67v describe the last days of the Magdalene and her burial by Saint Maximinus, referred to as “Maximus” in the manuscript. The Magdalene’s reliquaries are depicted on folios 68r to 72r, and the words on folio 72v, *Mors laborum finis*, mark the end of the Magdalene’s *vita*.

The remaining folios contain commentary on a variety of subjects related to Mary Magdalene, as well as a mystical revelation and poems addressed to the saint. Folios 73r to 74v relate the legend concerning the discovery of the Magdalene’s body in Provence and its translation to the abbey in Vézelay, and folio 75r is Demoulins’s comment regarding the veracity of that legend. Folios 75v to 77r reiterate Demoulins’s often derogatory comments about the various religious orders, a subject he begins on folio 24v, and folios 77v and 78r contain his request for a bishopric. Folios 78v to 80v address the issue of the number of Magdalenes and whether Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus, was a sinner. Folio 80v to 88r is the revelation made to the Franciscan monk Amadeus Menez da Silva by the archangel Gabriel. Among other things, the revelation identifies two women called Magdalene—the first the follower of Christ and the equal of the Apostles, and the second a repentant sinner. The importance of the revelation to the timely subject of the number of Magdalenes is emphasized by the fact Demoulins went to considerable pains to include it in both Latin and French so that Louise could read it clearly and easily.

Folios 88v to 92v contain a series of questions Louise addresses to Demoulins pertaining to the ingredients in the ointment used by the Magdalene to anoint Christ, the possibility of recreation the unction, and its value in contemporary currency. Folios 93r to 96r discuss of the number of people who accompanied the Magdalene to Provence and
what became of them. These roundels also include another of Demoulins’s scathing commentaries against the hypocrisy, avarice, and vainglory of contemporary theologians. The miracles of Mary Magdalene are the subject of folios 96v to 97v and Demoulins lists the two he considers worthy of repetition, although he notes that many are false reports. Folios 98r to 101r have two poems written by Cælius Sedulius about the Magdalene’s conversion. Also on folio 101r, Demoulins again addresses the question of the number of Magdalenes and introduces the poem Dulcis amica mea written by Petrarch for the saint during his visit to La Sainte-Baume. The poem encompasses folios 101v to 104v. Folios 104v to 105r contain Louise’s response to Petrarch’s poem, and a question about the correctness of praying to the Magdalene in French. Folios 105r to 106v are Demoulins’s instruction to Louise on how to pray to the Magdalene and include blessings for the royal family and requests for male heirs. Folios 106v to 108r are a continuation of Demoulins’s discussion of the conflation of the Magdalene. Folio 108v is the dedication to Louise, “pour Madame,” and has the astrological signs for Jupiter above and Pisces below the dedication.

Comments on the Illuminations

The illuminations within the roundels are created in an extremely delicate and sophisticated style that contains a remarkable amount of detail and illusionistic space for images a mere 44 mm in diameter. The artist used a predominately grisaille technique but adds touches of color and gilding to brighten the somber effect of the gray palette. A medium gray ground was applied inside the frame of the roundel, and the figures and architectural elements were then painted in darker tones of gray and highlighted in white, creating the illusion of mass and depth with a technique similar to chiaroscuro drawings.

The artist has applied outline to define both the outer shapes of the forms and the inner details of anatomy and costume, and there is a combination of tonal changes and hatching used to achieve modeling and depth. The tones and colors appear to have been applied by brush and the outlines put down with pen, although a very fine brush may also have been used. The hatching is done in various shades of gray from very light to quite dark, as well as the more typical black. It is primarily parallel rather than cross-hatching.
and is often curved to enhance the roundness in the forms. This technique achieves a
tonal variation that creates convincing depictions of depth and volume.

Within the miniatures Godefroy employed touches of bright color to enliven and
enrich each scene by highlighting details of costumes, architecture, landscape, and other
objects within the composition. These colors include light and dark blue, pale yellow,
golden yellow, white, pink, bright red, dark purple, and brown. He also used delicate
washes of blue, brown, and pale green to give color to the grisaille landscape. Gilding
indicates halos and other symbols of rank such as embroidery or gold vessels.

The predominant style of the miniatures is Antwerp Mannerism. This is evident
in the details of costumes and architecture, fluttering drapery, elongated figures, and
delicate hands and feet. The central figures—the Magdalene and her siblings, Jesus, and
the Virgin Mary—are consistently slender, graceful, and animated, although the secondary
figures, including the Apostles, are varied in their physical characteristics, facial hair,
depictions of age, and body type. However, all the figures have an expressive physicality
and are often quite emotional, relating this emotion through their postures, facial
expressions, and gestures.

Various types of halos are used throughout the manuscript to indicate the relative
importance of the figures. Christ and the Virgin are nimbed with a golden radiance that
surrounds their heads. In folio 53r, which depicts Christ’s Ascension, his legs and feet
are presented in an aureole. The Magdalene is also nimbed with a golden radiance, but
this occurs only in folio 5r, which depicts her birth, and folio 68r, which depicts her
death. In folios 64r and 65r, however, the sculpted figure of the Magdalene found in the
grotto at La Sainte-Baume is depicted with the same golden nimbus.

The Magdalene is surrounded in an aureole in folio 56r, where she appears in a
dream to the king and queen of Provence, and in folios 59r and 67r when she is elevated
by angels. The apostles have delicate circular gold halos that are barely perceptible in
many of the roundels. Neither Martha nor Lazarus has a halo, despite their eventual
canonization.

The depiction of the drapery, especially in reference to the Magdalene, is
important to the manuscript’s overall theme of spiritual transformation. There are two
basic types of costumes depicted in the manuscript. Christ, his apostles and followers, and other religious figures such as the Jewish priests, wears traditional robes, while secondary characters such as the Jewish friends and townspeople wear contemporary costumes of the sixteenth century. Their costumes remain consistent throughout the manuscript and become identifying elements that clue the viewer as to which faction a particular figure belongs.

The apparel of Martha and the Magdalene, however, changes through the course of the illuminations, as their costumes become the outward indication of their inner spiritual development. This is especially true in the case of the Magdalene. In the beginning of the Vie de la Magdalene, the sisters both wear elaborate contemporary costumes and headdresses that signify their wealth and elevated social position. As the story progresses, they are depicted in more modest costumes and headdresses that indicate their newfound humility. At various points in the story, they are also depicted in the traditional robes and veils that identify them as devoted followers of Christ, or indicate their state of mourning after the death of Lazarus. This transformation is especially important in the depiction of the Magdalene as the change in apparel signifies her conversion from a life of sensual worldliness and vanity to one of humility and piety.

The hairstyle and headdress of the Magdalene are also important indicators of her spiritual transformation. These elements are significant because one of the Magdalene’s most important attributes is her hair, which is a symbol of both the vanity and physical beauty of her youth and the penitence and piety of her later life. Demoulins and Godefroy have expanded on this idea to provide the reader with further visual clues to her spiritual transformation. In folio 7r, which depicts the family’s banquet after the period of mourning for their parents has ended, the Magdalene’s hair is long and flowing, and she wears a garland of flowers to indicate her maidenly innocence. In folios 9r through 13r, which are scenes of her worldly life, her hair is again long but she now wears an elaborate peaked headdress of gilt embroidery. In these illuminations, the Magdalene’s hair and headdress are symbols of her vanity, worldliness, and seductive beauty, a beauty that brought about her spiritual corruption.
In folio 14r, however, which depicts the Feast at the House of Simon the Pharisee, the Magdalene’s long, unbound hair becomes a symbol of her contrition and humility as she uses it to wipe the feet of Christ. From this point on in the story, either a veil or a simple headdress will cover the Magdalene’s hair as a symbol of her humility and modesty. It is not until the end of her life that the Magdalene’s hair will again be completely unbound and flowing as it was in her youth. In folios 59r and 68r, it shields her body from the eyes of those who witness her elevation heavenward, and in folio 68r, her hair covers her nudity, the result of years of self-imposed deprivation, as she is given Last Rites by Saint Maximinus. As I discuss in Chapter 2, this is a typical depiction of Mary Magdalene at this point in her life, and was widely used to emphasize the fact that her hair, previously a source of pride and seductive beauty, became the symbol of the Magdalene’s humility penitence, and renewed virtue.

Curiously, Lazarus does not go through the same outward transformation as his sisters, although he also became a follower of Christ, continuing to wear the cloak, boots, and hat that act as his identifying motifs. This was obviously purposeful on Godefroy’s part and intended to separate Lazarus visually from the other male members of Christ’s retinue, specifically the apostles. To reinforce this separation, Godefroy also sets Lazarus apart physically from the apostolic group in most of the images. The only scene in which Lazarus wears apostolic garb is folio 53r, which depicts the Ascension. In this illumination Lazarus wears a robe or cloak, but the blue sleeves of his tunic are clearly visible beneath, and his yellow hat hangs down his back. He is seated in the center of the composition and forms a transitional element between the apostles on the left and the holy women on the right. His allegiance is with the latter group, thus his costume indicates that, like his sisters, he is a disciple but not one of the male apostles of Christ.

The apostles are never identified as a group in the illuminations, unlike the Jewish friends and townspeople who are specifically indicated as such in several of the roundel images. Apparently, the creators of the Vie believed that the presence of the apostles in the company of Christ is enough to signal their identity to the reader. Only two of them are immediately recognizable. Peter is a man of older age, balding with a fringe of curly gray hair resembling a tonsure, a short gray beard and mustache on a square face, a
furrowed brown, and a “pug” nose. John, on the other hand, is youthful and handsome, with an elongated face and features, flowing hair, and is clean-shaven. These two apostles are the major protagonists among Christ’s followers, and therefore are usually in the forefront of the group where they often interact with Jesus. The other apostles are described simply with a variety of hair, beard, and body types. John is only apostle identified individually with a banderole or inscription, which appear in folios 46r and 47r. In these two scenes, John tells the Virgin, holy women, and Lazarus of Christ’s arrest and accompanies the group to Herod’s house where the Virgin pleads for knowledge of her son’s whereabouts. Like Lazarus, John remained steadfast in the last days of Christ’s life when the other apostles had scattered out of fear. Thus, he is identified to ensure the reader is aware of his participation in this important portion of the story.

The architecture within the miniatures is a combination of northern and Italianate styles, and many structures have the stepped roofs, spires, crenulations, and turreted structures common in France and the Netherlands in the fifteenth century. Other buildings are finely detailed with the arches, coffers, fluted pilasters, and decorative motifs common to the Italian Renaissance. The depiction of perspective and illusionistic space is very convincing and the detail of the buildings is remarkable given the minute scale of the picture space.

**Comments on the Frames of the Narrative Roundels**

As discussed in Chapter 6, the frames around the narrative roundels are approximately 5 mm. in width and painted in a variety of colors including black and ultramarine blue, and several shades of green, pink, blue, orange, white, and red. They are outlined in black and/or gold, and there is an inner border between the colored frames and the text within. Ornamental motifs are painted on the colored borders in either flat gold or gold with touches of black for modeling. Many of the motifs mimic the architectural ornamentation found in the image roundels, creating a visual unity and continuity throughout the manuscript. For example, the floral motifs on the pilaster of Martha’s house in folio 34r decorate the frame of folio 30v, and the ornate spandrel of the
same house is transformed in the C scroll on the frame of folio 32v. The lozenge shapes over the doorway of folios 35r and 38r are found on the frames of folios 9v and 25v.

The motifs vary in style from simple linear designs that appear to be purely decorative to complex festoons and intertwining tendrils, floral, and foliage elements. Other motifs have an obvious reference to the royal family, such as fleur-de-lis, salamanders, wings, cordelières, pearls, or dragons, or life at court, such as hunting or battle figures. I discuss the personal implications for Louise of some of the frame motifs in Chapters 3 and 4. An object resembling a scroll of parchment is used several times and is intended to imply a written or official document, as in folios 4r and 101r. Classical elements such as bucrania, urns, garlands, putti or cherubic heads, and winged genii indicate the importation of Italian Renaissance motifs into France, as well as providing religious symbolism. Some of the motifs found in the frames of the narrative roundels act as iconographic references to the episode described within the text and its companion illumination. These include funerary motifs, and Christological, and Eucharistic elements, among others.

The iconography of the motifs in the frames of the narrative roundels is complex and often functions simultaneously on several levels. In addition, the symbolism of the motifs sometimes changes as the manuscript progresses, reflecting the Magdalene’s spiritual and personal evolution throughout her life. The iconography of these motifs and their implications to the content and design of the manuscript is discussed in Chapter 6.

**Comments on the Mottoes**

Unlike the frames around the narrative roundels, which vary in their color and decorative elements, the frames of the images roundels are consistent. Each is a 4 mm. gold band that is edged in black and contains a motto inscribed with black roman majuscules. Most of the mottoes begin at the top of each frame and are marked with a terminal mark in the form of a blue composite letterform that integrates the letters C and I. The exceptions are found on folios 19r, 32r, and 57r, in which the length of the mottoes precluded the use of a filler element such as CI. In these cases, a simple vertical line separating the first and last words marks the beginning and end of the motto. Folios
50r and 57r have elements that form C without I, again a matter of space as each has the first letter of the motto beginning within the C form. Folio 64r also lacks the symbol, but the availability of space in this frame seems to indicate that its absence was an oversight rather than a matter of practicality.

The mottoes are written in seven languages: Latin, French, Spanish, German, Italian, and both common and classical Greek. The mottoes in Spanish, German, and Greek are identified as such, clearly indicating that they are foreign languages. The Italian is not identified, but like the “foreign” mottoes, is translated into Latin in a small inscription to the left of the roundel. I discuss the inclusion and use of the foreign mottoes in Chapter 1.

The individual words of the motto are often, but not always, divided by a dot or diamond pattern and the same motifs mark the end of the motto. The use of the diamond as a terminal element was common and may simply be a decorative element. However, it could also refer to the diamond’s symbolic association with divine love, and the inclusion of the motif is a reference to the Italian term diamante, which is similar to dio amante, meaning “God-loving” or “a loving God.” This simple motif, therefore, may have intentionally emphasized the overall theme of divine love that is found throughout the manuscript.

**The Vie de la Magdalene**

**Folio 1r: Introduction of the manuscript**

**Frame:** black with festoons of palms, heart-shaped palmettes, diamonds, circles or beads, and long stemmed flowers in gold.

**Translation:** “As you often grant me more favor and honor than I am worthy of, Madame, it pleased your grace to order me to put into writing the story of the beautiful and pure Mary Magdalene. I began to do this, animated by a great desire to please you. However, I feel unworthy of serving you, and even less of talking and writing about such a holy lady.”
Folio 1v: Introduction, continued

Frame: black with interlaced vine motif, possibly representing a crown of thorns, in gold.

Translation: “Madame, I must obey your command in continuing the story of the Magdalene, something more difficult to do than it would seem at first. I beg you very humbly to forgive me and to believe that if I failed, it was not by fault of desiring to do well and to obey you with firm perseverance.”

Folio 2r: An example of love and penitence

Frame: black with interlaced vine motif in gold.

Translation: “In this story, we find an example of love and penitence; Penitence which would be a source of pain if love were not leading it. In brief, it is good to love and serve you loyally, to show devotion, ardent delight, constant obedience, and firm constancy in order to see the triumph of the Cross and the passion of Jesus Christ, as the beautiful Magdalene did.”

Folio 2v: The Magdalene received her name from the town of Magdala

Frame: black with undulating vine and tendril motif in gold.

Translation: “Magdalene received her name from a little castle near Bethany on the Mount of Olives, and in this place there is now a chapel. It is true that there is another Magdalon, three days from Jerusalem, near the River Jordan, but it was not the one of Sirus, father of the Magdalene. Furthermore, in Hebrew, Magdalon is not a proper noun, for everywhere there is a fortress, a castle, or a tower, it can be called Magdalon.”

Folio 3r: Family Tree of Sirus and Eucharia

Frame: black with undulating line, trifoliate, and dot motif in gold.

Translation: Genesis: Sirus father, Eucharia mother, their children Lazarus, Martha, Magdalene.
Folio 3v: Mary Magdalene is the third child of Sirus and Eucharia

Frame: black with three undulating lines with dot and bracket motif in gold.

Note: This folio contains a miniature of St. George and the dragon in gold silhouetted against black. The illumination covers a portion of the narrative text, as can be seen by the upper edges of letters that are visible above the black ground.

The dragon breathes fire as Saint George plunges his lance into its open mouth. There are two intertwined trees behind Saint George to indicate a landscape. The dragon’s tail is very long and forms an elaborate curlicue at the top that is similar to the stylized Ls found in the frame motifs of other roundels. There is a delicate use of black and gold, especially on the dragon's wings, that creates the illusion of modeling.

This illumination may seem anachronistic to the Magdalene’s vita, but the dragon has a complex symbolism, a portion of which aligns it with the manuscript’s theme and purpose. I discuss this interpretation in Chapter 6, as well as the association of the dragon with Francis and Louise in Chapter 4.

Translation: “Sirus had three children with Eucharia his wife. The first was Lazarus, a true gentle man, Martha was the second, and Mary was the third. Saint Luke said “There was a certain sinful woman in the town.” But whether this woman, a sinner, was Martha's sister, I would doubt it were it not the conviction of the Church.”

Folio 4r: Demoulins identifies the Magdalene

Frame: black with nine scrolls shaded in gold.

Text over roundel: “Everything that follows is in the tradition of the Church until the end of the stories.”

Translation: “Magdalene was not well, and Jesus had to chase seven devils out of her body. Thus, the mercy of God was manifested through her. From the fact that she was more constant than the apostles, and acted as the messenger of the resurrection of her master, one can easily conclude that women can often be more trustworthy than men. Love, when loyal, makes faith and trust more perfect.”
**Folio 4v: The birth of the Magdalene**

**Frame:** black with undulating vine and tendril motif in gold.

**Translation:** “My work starts with the birth of the Magdalene and will end with her death. Her life was at first imperfect. However, Jesus, king of heaven and earth, recognized her value ‘because he had not come to call the just but the sinners.’ And if she had received some bad influence from Venus, the master of the sun, the moon, and the erratic stars showed her that nothing could harm the one it pleased him to keep and protect.”

**Folio 5r: Birth of the Magdalene**

**Motto:** EST VENUS AVXILIO MARS PUGNAT VINCIT APOLLO  
MARS FIGHTS APOLLO WINS VENUS IS A HELP

**Illumination:** The images begin with the birth of the Magdalene. A female servant is bathing the child in a large, rimmed basin in the right foreground, a motif that is taken from the iconography of the Birth of the Virgin. An inscription identifies the baby as Magdalena. She is the size of a toddler and stands in the bath, with her hands in an orans gesture and a radiant golden nimbus around her head. Her size and actions, not typical for a newborn, are indicative that she has preternatural knowledge of her spiritual purpose.

To the left of the composition are the Magdalene’s parents Sirus and Eucharia. Eucharia, who are identified by an inscription, is dressed in simple white gown and wears a turban-like headdress and veil. She reclines on the large bed with tasseled hangings as Sirus sits beside her on a chair as they hold hands and smile at each other in expressions of love and happiness. Sirus is dressed very elegantly in a costume with elaborate sleeves, boots, and a large hat. The servant is dressed in a costume with slashed sleeves, and wears a large headdress and house slippers. Her costume is very similar to that worn by Martha in the successive roundels, but as she is not identified with an inscription, she should not be confused with Martha. A white dog sits in the foreground looking at the reader. Its breed appears to be a whippet or greyhound, a popular pet in courtly households and a common element in northern and Italian Renaissance paintings. The
bedchamber is filled with typical Flemish motifs, such as the large bed with hangings, and appears to be the home of an affluent couple. There is a round sculptured medallion in the wall.

The roundel’s harmonious composition is created by the repetition of rounded shapes. These include the basin, the medallion on the right, the curved backs of the dog and nursemaid, and elements of the costumes of Sirus and Eucharia, such as her headdress and the shoulder of his sleeve.

**Coloration:** the use of color in this roundel is limited to gold on the Magdalene’s nimbus, the sleeves and hat of Sirus, the sleeve and headdress of the servant, and the tasseled hangings of bed.

**Folio 5v: The death of Sirus and Eucharia**

**Frame:** Dark pink with Italian Renaissance motifs of leaves, scrolls, and vessels with stoppers. There are putti or children on the upper right of the frame opposite a crouching winged figure on the left. The children appear to be playing a game. This may be intended as a reference to the children of Sirus and Eucharia mentioned in the narrative, or the fact that with their parents’ death, the “childhood” of Lazarus, Martha, and the Magdalene is over.

**Translation:** “By the final sentence of hard death which cuts the thread started at birth, Sirus and Eucharia left the mortal bondage, leaving their children as successors of their fortunes. Those went crying to the tomb of their parents, but it was madness, for when no human help can be provided, human tears are useless.”

**Folio 6r: Mary Magdalene, Martha, and Lazarus grieve their parents’ death**

**Motto:** PRIER SERT  PLEVRER EST FOLIE

TO PRAY SERVES  TO CRY IS FOLLY

**Illumination:** In an outdoor setting, indicated by trees, rocky cliffs, and the view of a town in the background, the children of Sirus and Eucharia mourn their parents. The setting is a cemetery outside a medieval walled city, which can be seen in the background. Two elaborate sarcophagi with rounded pediments, classical columns, and
carved medallions are placed side by side. They are inscribed on the top in gold to indicate that the coffins are those of Sirus and Eucharia. Clearly visible on Sirus’s sarcophagus is a carved medallion with three nude figures placed in right and left profile and frontally in the manner of the classical Three Graces. A medallion is also evident on Eucharia’s sarcophagus but the decoration is unclear. A large tree with leaves is placed between Martha and the Magdalene and directly above the two sarcophagi. It is prominently placed and somewhat incongruous with the rest of the composition, but may represent the family tree of Sirus and Eucharia in the manner of the Tree of Jesse iconography.

The siblings stand around the coffins in various attitude of grief. Lazarus, on the right facing the coffins, is bent over with his face in his hands. He is dressed in a simple robe, and carries a large moneybag with tassels, indicative of both his newly inherited wealth and his new position as the head of the family and keeper of the purse. His hair is long and youthful, and hanging down his back is a wide brimmed hat similar to that worn by Sirus in the preceding roundel.

Martha stands on the left facing her brother and wringing her hands in front of her face. Her mouth is open in a gesture of wailing. She wears a headdress and costume similar to that of the nursemaid in the previous scene. A sheer veil covers her eyes and she appears to moving rapidly as indicated by the fluttering appearance of her costume and the position of her legs.

Magdalene stands behind the coffins at the center of the composition facing the viewer. Her arms are over her head as she wrings her hands and pulls her hair. Her mouth is also open indicating that she is wailing or crying. Her attitude is one of abject grief and she is the most excessive in her expression. She is dressed in a stripped or pleated skirt with plain bodice and sleeves. She wears a girdle that, like Martha’s, is moving in the wind. Her long, curly hair is down and twists around her, either a result of the wind or the force of her movements.

The arrangement of the figures mimics that of the sculpted figures in the medallion on Sirus’s sarcophagus, with the figures facing left, right and forward.
Furthermore, the medallion echoes the shape of the roundel, a compositional choice that creates a visual harmony in the overall design.

**Coloration:** The Magdalene’s underskirt is golden yellow; pale turquoise and golden yellow are Lazarus’s costume, and blue and golden yellow on his purse; golden yellow on Martha's sleeve; pale turquoise on the medallion on Sirus's coffin; light blue in the sky.

**Folio 6v: After they mourn, Lazarus and his sisters have a banquet to chase away sorrow**

**Frame:** black with light gray and touches of gold; the motifs are Renaissance leaf and flower scrolls, and palmettes; there are also two figures on horseback in the upper right bearing down on a running figure with his arms raised over his head; crossed weapons, and shields.

**Translation:** “Crying cannot last forever, for the acts of humans are inconsistent, as can be seen through Lazarus and his sisters who soon abandoned the tomb of the ones who had engendered them. They organized feasts and banquets with their possessions, chasing from their company sadness and painful and mortal melancholy.”

**Folio 7r: The Magdalene, Martha, and Lazarus dining**

**Motto:** LARMES ET PLAISIR PLAISIR ET LARMES

TEARS AND PLEASURE PLEASURE AND TEARS

**Illumination:** The setting is a domestic interior. The siblings sit at a table laden with food and drink. Martha is seated at the head of the table with a cloth of honor behind her, with Lazarus seated on the right and the Magdalene on the left of the composition. The table is set with a large platter, which holds a partially eaten fowl, trencher plates, dishes, cutlery, saltcellars, and small loaves of bread. The white tablecloth has crisp folds, knotting, tassels, and two woven stripped patterns that run across it sideways. On the floor are two tall ornate vessels, presumably for wine, and a wide mouth chalice on a chain is placed on the table above the wine vessels.
Lazarus waves his hand to summon a drummer and a piper to entertain them. Martha, Magdalene, and Lazarus are identified by inscriptions and dressed in elegant clothes. Lazarus looks very different in this roundel than in the previous one. He has on his wide brimmed hat, but now wears a costume similar to his father's, with cut sleeves, britches, and a cloak. His long hair is not visible and his profile shows a prominent chin and hooked nose. Martha holds a dish with one hand while gesturing with the other as she smiles and converses with Lazarus. She is dressed elegantly in a costume with split sleeves, and wears a more elaborate headdress than in the previous image.

Mary Magdalene is seated opposite Lazarus. She appears to be listening to the conversation, and gestures with her left hand while reaching toward the dish of meat with her right. She wears a wreath of flowers in her hair, which emphasizes her youth and beauty. Her curling hair flows across her shoulders and ripples out behind her. Her costume is also more elaborate than in the previous illumination, with puff shoulders and split sleeves. A curling ribbon flies from her wrist, as it does from Martha's headdress.

**Coloration:** there are touches of blue on Martha’s bodice, Lazarus’s tunic and hat, and the Magdalene’s sleeves; golden yellow on used on Lazarus’s sleeves and hat, the Magdalene’s ribbon and garland, Martha’s headdress, as well as the wine vessels and chalice to indicate their precious quality.

**Folio 7v: The distribution of the cities they inherited to the siblings**

**Frame:** light blue with various motifs in gold including a chalice of snakes, smiling cherubim, salamanders with scrolling tails, flaming vases, columns, and a crane and a dragon whose tails form leaf scrolls; a flaming urn at the bottom acts as a terminal element.

**Note:** The artist has used lighter shades of gold and brown to create modeling on the motifs. Black is also used to give the appearance of cast shadows and outlines, thus enhancing the dimensionality of the space. This is the most detailed technique used on the frame decorations and does not appear again, possibly because it was labor intensive.

**Translation:** “Division sets everywhere, for what should be held in common, everyone wants to make his own. So the possessions of Sirus and Eucharia, united in
marriage under the law, were divided into three parts: Lazarus took what was in Jerusalem, Martha what was in Bethany, and the castle of Magdalon went to the beautiful Magdalene.”

**Folio 8r: Landscape with towns inherited by Lazarus, Martha, and the Magdalene**

**Motto:** VOLVBILIA SVNT BONA MORTALIVM

FICKLE THINGS ARE THE GOODS OF MAN

**Illustration:** This roundel shows a hilly landscape with three fortified towns. In the center of the background is the town of Magdalam, identified by the name inscribed in white on a black banderole. It is the smallest of the three. To the left is the sprawling city of Jerusalem, which fills the left side and flows down into the foreground to the right. It is identified in gold on a black banderole as Hierusalem. Lazarus’s name appears in black on a gold placard to the lower right. To the upper right of the composition is Bethany, which is identified by a black inscription below the town that reads Bethania. Martha’s name, however, is in gold on a black banderole overhead, a method used to identify the other two towns.

The descriptions of the towns are remarkable in their detail. The artist has used a wide a range of grays to describe the landscape with paler shades of gray and white in the background to indicate atmospheric perspective. The sky is depicted with white clouds aglow from the bright light on the horizon and the remnants of a radiant yellow sun behind Magdalam. Godefroy has carefully indicated the architectural elements of each town clearly, with the details of architecture and the landscape emphasized with black lines and white highlights. With the aerial perspective, these details give the miniature a convincing depiction of spatial depth and proportion. The greatest amount of detail and largest number of elements are found in the walled city of Jerusalem, which is filled with wide variety of architectural types. People are depicted on the path leading to the gates of Jerusalem, and on a rocky ridge in the immediate foreground, three tiny figures stand side by side overlooking the view. These figures may represent the three siblings as they survey their inheritance.

**Coloration:** the sky is blue; the sun is dark orange-yellow.
Folio 8v: The beauty of the Magdalene and her love of men

**Frame:** dark pink with figures placed among floral and leaf motifs in gold.

**Translation:** “The poor Magdalene was quite deceived, for she loved the sons of men and danced with them, not having been told that the son of God, whose beauty surpassed all human creatures, had come to this world for her salvation. But at the end, she who surpassed in beauty all women of her time gave herself to loving perfectly the most perfect of all men.”

Folio 9r: The Magdalene and companion dancing

**Motto:** ENERVANT ANIMOS CYTHARAE CANTVSQVE LIRAEQVE ET VOX ET NUMERIS BRACHIA MOTA SVIS THE MELODIES OF LUTE AND HARP, THE VOICE AND ARMS INSPIRED BY THEIR OWN RHYTHMS DULL THE SENSES

**Illumination:** The illumination shows couples dancing, with the Magdalene and her companion the most prominent pair. She is indicated with a banderole. The Magdalene is fashionably dressed in a gown with slashed and flowing sleeves, and she wears an elaborate headdress. Her blond hair falls forward across her shoulders as she smiles demurely at the handsome, well-dressed young man escorting her. He gestures with his left hand as he turns his head toward her. His prominent codpiece appears to be an allusion to his illicit intentions as he takes her hand to lead her in the dance. Both figures are described with a graceful sway to their bodies, and behind them, another couple is in a similar dancing posture. Beside Mary’s companion is the end of a bench with an ogee arch and a dark purple tasseled pillow on top. This may be intended as a seat for resting between dances.

To the right, a drummer and piper are seated playing their instruments. To the lower right of the composition is a baldheaded figure in a hooded robe. He holds a staff with a donkey-eared fool's head on it, indicating he is a jester. With bulging eyes and a leering grin, he watches the Magdalene and her companion, a clear allusion to the foolishness that will result in the Magdalene’s sinfulness. To the right sits another white
dog that passively watches the couple. The association of dogs with carnality and illicit sexuality could be implied by its presence in this scene.

**Coloration:** Mary has blue, yellow, and gold on her costume, while her companion’s costume has pink, blue, and yellow; light yellow is found on the hats of the musicians and the costumes of the other couple.

**Folio 9v: The foolishness of the Magdalene hunting**

**Frame:** lavender gray with diagonal lozenge shapes in gold.

**Translation:** “The poor Magdalene was going to the battle fields carrying a hawk, but she would not have been despised for that if her company had been as pure as the bird. If someone asked me if the Magdalene went out like this, I would answer that one could reasonably suppose she did, because she indulged in many similar follies.”

**Folio 10r: The Magdalene and her companion hunting**

**Motto:** SINE DIGNITATE NON EST VENANDA VOLVPTAS
PLEASURE IS NOT TO BE SOUGHT WITHOUT DIGNITY

**Illumination:** This image shows the Magdalene, indicated by her name on a banderole, going hunting on horseback. She wears a simpler costume than in the previous image and a squared cap that allows her hair to flow out from beneath it. She rides sidesaddle on a large white horse that is attired with decorative reins and a breastplate monogrammed with Ms. A hooded hawk sits on her wrist as a groomsmen carrying a spear leads her horse. Other riders, both men and women, surround the Magdalene, and dogs run by her side. A male rider with an extravagantly plumed hat rides beside her and looks at her with an admiring smile.

The foreground is covered with foliage, grasses, and small stones to indicate a field, and a turreted town is visible in the background. To the far left of the scene, the rear of a horse is visible at the edge of the composition. A number of other elements, such as a dog’s legs, the foot of the groomsmen, and the rear of Mary's horse are cut off by the circular shape of the composition. The effect gives the work a sense of immediacy.
In the background, another couple rides side by side. The man has on a similar dark purple hat, and the woman’s horse has the same dark reins and breastplate as the Magdalene’s mount, although there is no groomsman as the horses appear to be moving swiftly. These figures are probably intended to represent the Magdalene and her companion, and the absence of the groomsman alludes to the romantic rendezvous implied by the narrative. Members of the French court would have understood this, as hunting was often an opportunity for sexual assignations, as I discuss in Chapter 4.

The dogs in this roundel are different from the dogs in the other scenes. These dogs are not the small whippets that sit passively watching the scene, but rather, they are large, active hunting dogs. Two of them have spaniel like heads, while the other is a coursing dog, probably a greyhound, with a large collar.

**Coloration:** gold on the bridle and trappings; blue and yellow on the groomsman’s costume; blue and yellow on Mary's sleeve, gold on her headdress, and yellow for her hair; yellow on her companion’s costume and yellow, blue, and white plumes in his hat.

**Folio 10v: The pleasure of romantic love is brief and never without pain**

**Frame:** ultramarine blue with flaming salamanders and ribbons in gold. As I discuss in Chapter 6, these represent strands or locks of the Magdalene’s golden hair.

**Translation:** “Jesus Christ was betrayed by a kiss. And you Magdalene by letting yourself be kissed by the ones who lied to you, you were also betrayed. Oh Magdalene, such brief pleasures were going to cause you much grief. But in the end, you were going to know that pain never comes without pleasure and pleasure without pain. You did not have to endure your pain for long, but your pleasure and joy will be long lasting.”

**Folio 11r: The Magdalene in bedroom kissing her lover**

**Motto:** RARA EST CONCORDIA FORMAE ATQVE PVDICICIAE

A BALANCE BETWEEN BEAUTY AND CHASTITY IS RARE\(^{15}\)

**Illumination:** The scene takes place in a bedchamber. The Magdalene, indicated
by a banderole, sits on a bench in the embrace of her riding companion, who wears the same plumed hat. Her dress is slightly different than her riding outfit and appears to be similar to her dancing costume, with flowing, slashed sleeves and a small peaked cap. They smile at each other as they prepare to kiss. His hands are on the back of her head and beneath her chin, and her hand is on his arm, enhancing the intimacy of their relationship.

The setting is a domestic interior. In the left background is a bed with hangings and to the right of the bed is a large window through which a town is visible. There is a small bench with elaborate arched carvings below the window, and on it is a dark purple pillow. The Magdalene and her lover are seated on a similar low settle, with a wine vessel similar to those in the banqueting scene on the floor beside them. This is a reference to the Magdalene’s intemperate and hedonistic lifestyle. Near the lovers is a small white dog asleep on the floor in a posture reminiscent of the dog in Titian’s Venus of Urbino. The little creature may represent the carnal pleasures the lovers are about to enjoy, or he may symbolize the Magdalene’s “sleeping” fidelity, which has yet to be awaken by Jesus Christ.

In the background by the window stand a group of women who converse as they watch the lovers. The identity of these women is unclear but they may be the Magdalene’s attendants, party companions, or unexpected visitors.

**Coloration:** gold is used on the wine vessel; Magdalene has turquoise blue and golden yellow on her costume; the lover has yellow plumes in his hat; golden yellow colors the border of a cloak worn by a woman in the background; the sky and pillow are painted blue.

**Folio 11v: The Magdalene is urged to repent**

**Frame:** Dark pink with leaf and berry pattern in gold. It is important to note that some of the berries have spots or depressions on their ends that are typical of olives. The elongated leaf also resembles olive leaves, thus I propose that this leaf and berry pattern represents olive branches.
Translation: “Be converted Magdalene into your rest, for the Lord has been kind to you. Magdalene, as Jesus Christ preaches, you must repent because of your sins, by fear of pain and in hope of forgiveness. Magdalene, you offended God but you fear him. He knows the secret of your heart. May your faith be fortified, for if you repent, he will forgive you.”

Folio 12r: Magdalene hears Christ preaching and weeps with contrition

Motto: COR CONTRITVM ET HVMMILATVM DEVS NON DESPICIES
GOD DOES NOT DESPISE A CONTRITE AND HUMBLE HEART

Illumination: In this scene Christ is giving a sermon to a group of townspeople. Based on the olive motif on the frame of the narrative roundel, this miniature may represent the Sermon on the Mount of Olives, or Mount Olivet, which is found in the Gospels of Matthew, 24 and 25, and Mark, 13.

Christ stands at the entrance to a large building, where he is speaking emphatically to a diverse group of people from behind a cloth-covered barricade which functions as a lectern. The Magdalene is seated directly behind Christ and wearing an elaborate gown and peaked headdress similar to her costume in the two preceding scenes. She is weeping and wipes her eyes with her veil, but Jesus is unaware of her presence and has focused his attention on the people in front of him. An elderly man is seated before him and a young man in a yellow hat sits at his feet. The younger man is not identified but his prominent chin and nose give him a strong resemblance to Lazarus as he appeared in the banqueting scene. In addition, the yellow hat worn by this figure is the same as that worn by Lazarus in other illuminations. Between the men are two small children. Other figures, including men in headdresses and veiled women, are in the background.

Coloration: blue and golden yellow on costumes of several figures, including Mary Magdalene; Christ has no color on his costume but has a radiant golden nimbus; The Magdalene has gold on her headdress and sleeves, and figures in the back appear to be wearing gold turban or headdresses.
Folio 12v: Christ drives seven devils from the Magdalene

Frame: ultramarine blue with single fleurs-de-lis in gold.

Translation: “Magdalene, you are in a blessed state. Jesus Christ delivered you from seven impure spirits. To this end, we beg you to be an intercessor for three spirits and four--the three are Louise, Francis and little Claude, and if you add one you will find four--which means Louise, Francis, Claude, and Marguerite--three and four makes seven. This number evokes the destruction of the seven mortal sins and the accomplishment of the seven works of gentle mercy. Thus, Magdalene, please, intercede for us, for in you is our trust.”

Note: The “seven works of gentle mercy” mentioned in the narrative is another reference to the Sermon on Mount Olivet, Matthew 25:34-46, in which they are mentioned. With the olive motif on the frame of folio 12r, the inclusion of this passage from Matthew supports the identification of the preceding scene as the Sermon on Mount Olivet.

Folio 13r: Christ delivers the Magdalene from seven devils

Motto: QVIS SIMILIS TVI IN FORTIBVS DOMINE TERRIBILIS
LAVDABILIS ET FACIENS MIRABILIA
WHO IS LIKE YOU, AWESOME AND PRAISEWORTHY LORD, IN COURAGE AND THE DOING OF WONDERS?

Illumination: The scene depicts an episode referred to in Mark 16:9 and Luke 8:2, in which Mary Magdalene is identified by name as the woman from whom Christ exorcized seven demons, although the actual moment of exorcism is not described. In a colonnaded interior, the Magdalene kneels before Christ with her hands in an attitude of prayer. The colonnade may be intended to identify the site of the scene as the Court of Women at the Temple. The Magdalene, who is identified by a banderole, is dressed in the same peaked cap and elaborate costume that she wore in previous scenes. Christ holds his right hand over her head with his fingers in the sign of benediction. The Magdalene smiles and looks at Christ as the seven demons hover around her, their
mOUTHS AGAPE AS IF THEY ARE SCREAMING. THEY ARE COMPOSITE CREATURES WITH BEAKS, CLAWS, AND WINGS, AND STRONGLY RESEMBLE THE DEMONS OF SCHONGAUER AND BOSCH.

OTHER FIGURES WATCH CHRIST AND THE MAGDALENE IN AMAZEMENT OR COMMENT TO BYSTANDERS ON THE SCENE THEY ARE WITNESSING. BEHIND CHRIST IS A MALE FIGURE WEARING A HAT WITH BLUE AND YELLOW PLUMES, POSSIBLY MEANT TO REPRESENT THE MAGDALENE’S LOVER. HE IS ANOTHER REFERENCE TO THE MAGDALENE’S LIFE OF SIN AND WORLDLY CONCERNS FOR WHICH SHE IS NOW REPENTING.

THE NARRATIVE ABOVE ASSOCIATES THESE SEVEN DEMONS WITH THE SEVEN MORTAL SINS. OF THE SEVEN, LUST AND AVARICE WERE CONSIDERED THE MOST DANGEROUS IN THE MEDIEVAL PERIOD, WITH LUST ESPECIALLY ASSOCIATED WITH WOMEN. THESE SINS, ALONG WITH VANITY, ARE ALLUDED TO IN THE PRECEDING ROUNDELS BY DEMOULINS’S EMPHASIS ON THE MAGDALENE’S WEALTH, SEXUAL EXPLOITS, AND FINE COSTUMES. THUS, THESE PREVIOUS SCENES SET THE STAGE FOR THIS MOMENT OF SPIRITUAL CLEANSING.

COLORATION: pink, yellow, and blue on costumes; gold on Christ's halo and Mary's headdress; pink is used for the flesh of the demons.

**Folio 13v: The Magdalene’s act of contrition at the house of Simon the Pharisee**

**Frame:** bright red with two undulating, interlaced gold lines.

**Translation:** “Magdalene, the sinner, in the house of the Pharisee in Jerusalem, cleaned the feet of Jesus Christ with her tears, dried them with her hair, and covered them with precious ointments, by this winning her cause. For the merciful prince of pity does not condemn the criminals when he knows their loving contrition and true repentance.”

**Folio 14r: Feast at the House of Simon the Pharisee**

**Motto:** QVI SEMINANT IN LACHRYMIS IN EXVLTATIONE METENT
WHAT IS SOWN IN TEARS IS HARVESTED IN EXULTATION

**Illumination:** The scene depicts an episode from Luke 7:36-50. It is set in a domestic interior in which Christ is seated at a table with a cloth of honor behind him. The table is covered with a white cloth with two narrow stripes and is set for three with trenchers, glasses, knives, and saltcellars. A large platter of meat and rolls of bread
indicate a meal is taking place. At the right corner is a smaller plate, and one, or possibly two, wine vessels are placed on a shallow plinth in the floor in the foreground.

The Magdalene, identified by an inscription, is on her hands and knees in front of the table. She is dressed in the same costume that she wore the previous roundels, although it is now disheveled. She no longer wears a headdress, however, which allows her hair to fall around her face and shoulders. Her grimacing facial expression indicates her excessive weeping as she tenderly wipes Christ's left foot with her hair. In front of her is a vessel, similar to a chalice, with the lid overturned on the ground. The chalice has a light brown pattern on it, perhaps intended to resemble the veining of marble, alabaster or another stone used to make storage vessels.

Christ is speaking and gestures with his right hand while the left hand is on the table. He is surrounded by four figures, three of which are dressed in elaborate costumes and headdresses. On the left, a bearded old man wearing a yellow turban points to the Magdalene and laughs he ridicules her. With the other hand, the man touches Christ's gesturing arm as if to draw his attention to the Magdalene in the foreground. Across the table on the right is another elderly man with a long beard and hair. He is dressed in simple robes and does not wear a hat. His gesture implies that he is questioning Christ. Although this figure is not identified in this miniature, he is identified as Simon the Pharisee in the following image.

**Coloration:** Christ’s nimbus is gold; the Magdalene’s sleeves are yellow; her hair is pale yellow; the costumes of other figures are dark reddish-purple, blue, and yellow; two of the men wear yellow turbans; the cloth of honor is dark reddish-purple; the wine vessel, chalice, plate, and the edges of the glasses are touched with gold.

**Folio 14v: Simon rebukes Christ for touching a sinner**

**Frame:** green with a wave motif in gold

**Translation:** “When Jesus had finished his meal at the house of the Pharisee, he took him aside and said ‘Simon, I have something to say to you.’” And what he said can be found in chapter seven of the Evangelist Saint Luke. The Pharisee was complaining because a sinner had touched the flesh of Jesus Christ, but in the end, he recognized that
the one, man or woman, who loves strongly is worthy of great grace, like the Magdalene.

‘Many sins have been forgiven her because he has loved much.’ And by her faith she was saved.”

**Folio 15r: Simon reproaches Christ for permitting the Magdalene to touch him**

**Motto:** GRAN COSSA E LAMOR SI AL SVO PRINCIPIO CVRRE

LOVE IS GREAT IF IT RETURNS TO ITS SOURCE

**Inscription in margin:** Magnares amor, si ad suum recurrat principium

Love is great if it returns to its source

**Illumination:** This roundel continues the episode related in Luke 7:36-50. Christ stands in the center of the roundel with the Magdalene, identified with an inscription, kneeling to the left and the elderly bearded man, now identified as a Pharisee, on the right. Simon’s costume is more detailed than in the previous illumination. He wears a knee length tunic over a longer robe, a hat behind his head, a sash across his body, gold tassels, and a purse at his waist. The table is now to the left behind the Magdalene, indicating that the action of the preceding roundel has continued but shifted to the right. The Pharisee stands in front of a darkened space, while the Magdalene and Christ are in the lighted area. The covered ointment vessel is beside her on the floor.

Christ is explaining to the Pharisee why he has allowed a known sinner to touch him. Simon gestures towards himself with his hand on his chest, while Christ gestures towards the Magdalene, who wipes her eyes with the veil that covers her head. Below the veil, her hair flutters out behind her.

Two banderoles contain Latin text. The first is over Mary and reads "FIDES TVA TE SALVA FECIT VADE IN PACE" "Your faith has saved you, go in peace." The second, between Christ and the Pharisee, reads "REMITTVTVR ET PECCATA MVLTA QVO NIA DILEXIT MVLTV" "She is forgiven for her many sins for she has loved greatly."

**Coloration:** Christ’s nimbus is gold; Simon's costume has blue and gold; yellow and rose pink on Mary's costume; a banderole is rose.
**Folio 15v: A woman named Martha is cured of the flux of blood**

**Frame:** black with various motifs in gold, including crossed palms or feathers, stylized XIs, Renaissance floral and urns, and two standing figures in profile; other motifs are indiscernible.

**Translation:** “Jesus walking by the castles and little places around Jerusalem had with him twelve apostles and a few women he had delivered from bad spirits. As he was walking, he met such a throng of people that he had to stop. Then a woman named Martha, who had been tormented by an issue of blood for twelve years, came behind him and simply touched his 'fimbrie', which means the hem of the Redeemer’s robe. And immediately she was cured.”

**Folio 16r: Christ and the woman with the issue of blood**

**Motto:** GRANDE E DIO QVAL COMANDA AL FLVSO DEL SANGVE FINISA PRESTISSIMO

GREAT IS GOD WHO COMMANDS THE FLOW OF BLOOD TO END QUICKLY

**Inscription in margin:** Magnus est deus qui iubet fuxui sanguinis ut desinat celerrime

Great is God who orders the flow of blood to end quickly

**Illumination:** This scene depicts the episode found in Matthew 9:20-22, Mark 5:25-29, and Luke 8:43-48, in which Christ is walking amidst a crowd of people. A woman who had suffered from an issue of blood for many years touched the hem of his garment and was instantly healed. Although the suffering woman in the Gospels not identified as Martha, she is called by this name in both the *Golden Legend* of Jacobus Voragine and *The Life of Saint Mary Magdalene and of Her Sister Saint Martha* by the pseudo-Rabanus Maurus. Thus it is repeated here, as these two books formed the basis of the Magdalene legend as it was known in the late medieval and early Renaissance periods. As I discuss in Chapter 2, portions of these books were incorporated into the version of the saint’s life told in the *Vie de la Magdalene*. See Chapter 2 for further discussion.
Christ is depicted walking toward the right surrounded by a group of people, in accordance with the Gospel accounts. Small rocks and vegetation on the ground indicate a landscape. The town of Bethany is identified with a banderole in the right background. A woman, who is identified on a placard as Martha, kneels behind Christ. Her hand is visible at Christ’s side and she touches the sash on his waist as he passes. Her mouth is turned down and she seems to be grimacing or fearful, which is in keeping with the scriptural accounts. The placard in front of Martha is in Latin and reads "MARTHA A FLVXV SAGVINIS LIBERAIA," "Martha is freed of the flow of blood." The Magdalene stands behind her identified by a banderole. Her blond hair is down and covered with a veil, and her hands are in an attitude of prayer. Over the Magdalene’s right shoulder is visible a woman in a blue robe who is, presumably, the Virgin. Another woman and a group of men, presumably the apostles and followers of Christ, are placed in the background between Christ and the Magdalene. To the right of the composition are other male figures, and in the distance, a group of people have gathered at the outskirts of the city. A male figure, wearing the headdress of a Flemish burgher, enters the composition from the right.

**Coloration:** Christ has a golden nimbus; Martha wears pink sleeves and a gold girdle; the Magdalene has pale blond hair; the Virgin wears a blue robe; the Jewish men have blue, yellow, and dark pink on their costumes and headdresses; the sky is bright blue.

**Folio 16v: Christ blesses Martha**

**Frame:** Lavender gray with motifs, all in gold, of winged bucrania at the compass points and medallions surrounded by flowing lines resembling ribbons or flourishes. As I discuss in Chapter 6, the motifs in the medallions are all references to the Eucharist, specifically to the Blood of Christ., which correlates with the theme of flowing blood present in folios 15r to 16v. The object in the medallion on the upper left of the frame resembles a monstrance, and on the lower right there is a chalice. On the lower left, the object within the medallion resembles a wine cruet, a spouted vessel used to transport the sacred wine to the altar. The object in the medallion in the upper right resembles a
mandorla or aureole from which radiate four beams of light. Within the aureole is a small almond-shaped motif that represents a stigma or wound of Christ. In addition to referring to the flow of blood that is the theme of these illuminations, stigmata are one of the symbols of the Franciscan order, and thus a reference to Demoulins’s religious community. See Chapter 6 for further explanation.

Translation: “When Martha touched Jesus Christ's robe, he turned around and said ‘Someone has touched me.’ Then the good Martha was very frightened, and all trembling she kneeled in front of him. Proclaiming the miracle before all the people, she told how she had been cured of the flow of blood. Then Jesus Christ said, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”

Folio 17r: Christ blessing Martha and Mary

Motto: GRANDE E NOSTRO SIGNOR E GRANDE LA VIRTV SVA
GREAT IS OUR MASTER AND GREAT IS HIS VIRTUE

Inscription in margin: Magnus dominus noster & magna est virtus eius
Great is our master and great is his virtue

Illumination: This roundel continues the scriptural episode related in the preceding image. It shows Christ turning toward the left in the center of the composition with his right hand in a gesture of blessing toward Martha and the Magdalene. Christ is very animated in his movement, which correlates with the biblical reference to the healing of the woman with the issue of blood. Mark 5:30 and Luke 8:46 state that Christ felt "the virtue go out of him" after the woman touched his hem, and he turned rapidly back toward the crowd following him, asking who was it that touched him. This act of rapid turning is indicated by his actions in the illumination. The woman, i.e. Martha, fell to her knees trembling with fear and told him what had happened. She then proclaimed to the crowd that she has been cured. In keeping with the scriptural reference to the throng that followed him on this occasion, other figures surround Jesus, Martha, and the Magdalene, including the Peter and the other apostles on the right, and the Jews on the left. Curiously, the placement of the two groups is reversed from the previous illumination. The town of Bethany is identified in the background with a banderole.
Martha kneels before Christ with her hands across her chest in the traditional gesture of faith and acquiescence. Her fingers have the extreme elongation and exaggerated posture typical of the mannerist style. The Magdalene stands behind her and is identified with a banderole. Both women are now dressed in simple robes with their heads entirely covered by veils. Martha is identified by a placard in front of her that reads, “DECLARAT MARTHA QUO MODO SVVS CESSAVERT FLUXUS,” “Martha declared ‘you have made the flux of blood cease.’” Christ’s response to her is contained in a banderole: "FILIA FIDES TVA TE SALVA FECIT", "Daughter, your faith has made you well."

**Coloration:** there are touches of dark pink, blue, and yellow throughout the crowd; Christ, Martha, Mary, and the other religious women are dressed only in white; the figure who represents Peter has pink and blue on his robes; the two banderoles are dark pink, the sky is blue, and Christ’s radiant nimbus is gold.

**Folio 17v: Martha and Mary Magdalene receive Jesus into their home**

**Frame:** Gray with dragons, wyverns, and serpents in gold. The two wyverns are at the bottom end of the frame and two dragons are at the top, with the front legs of the dragon on the right differentiating the two types of creatures. The wyverns and serpents have long tails that create interlaced knots. Between the dragons is a shield with two crossed lances. This element is shaded with black to give it dimension, as are the wyverns at the bottom.

**Translation:** “Abraham for his generosity was worthy of having the angels in his lodgings, and Martha, for her charity was hostess to Jesus Christ. When she and her sister received him benignly and gave him good food, they gave us an example of how we must receive pilgrims, feed the suffering, clothe the poor, visit those who languish, and free the prisoners. By such works will we enter into the grace of God and we will not have to fear eternal pains.”
Folio 18r: Christ approaches the house of Martha and Mary

Motto: A IOVE SVNT OMNES HOSPITES PAVPERESQVE
BY JOVE, ALL MEN ARE GUESTS AND PAUPERS²⁶

Illumination: This scene depicts an episode found in Luke 10:38-42, in which Martha entertains Christ in her home. Christ and the apostles approach Martha’s house, indicated by DOMVS MARTHAE in the doorway. The Magdalene and Martha, who are indicated with an inscription and a banderole, kneel in the doorway with arms and hands outstretched in a gesture of greeting. Martha smiles as she greets Christ. They are dressed in simple white robes and Magdalene’s hair is fully covered by a veil, indicative of her newfound humility and modesty. The house is constructed in the classical style with a raised step, an arched portal, cornices with decorative motifs, a small arched window, and coffers or medallions on the interior of the arch. Another structure in the Roman style is seen behind Christ in the background.

Christ gestures to the women with his right hand to his chest as if he is about to bow as a gesture of greeting. The bearded face of Peter and the youthful face of John are discernable behind him. They are the only two disciples distinguishable in the group of apostles.

Coloration: the sky is blue; Christ’s nimbus and one of the banderole are gold.

Folio 18v: Christ at the House of Martha and Mary

Frame: pale green with floral garlands and scrolls in gold; this is the same motif found on the column in folio 19r.

Translations: “When our savior arrived at the house of Martha, the Magdalene ‘was sitting next to the feet of the Lord and listening to the words of that man. Martha had her hands full with busy service [of the meal].’²⁷ Martha stopped before Jesus Christ and she said ‘Lord, is it not a concern for you that my sister makes me serve all alone? So, tell her to help me.’ And Jesus Christ answered ‘Martha, Martha, you are anxious and upset about many things. Mary has chosen the better part and will not be deprived of it.’”
Folio 19r: Christ at the house of Martha and Mary

Motto: CONTEMPLATIVA PERFECTORVM OPVS ACTIVA PLVRIVM TV EI CVI APTVS ES ATTENDE MAGIS
ACTIVE CONTEMPLATION IS THE TASK OF GREATER
PERFECTION; BE MORE ATTENTIVE TO HIM TO WHOM YOU
ARE DEEMED SUITABLE

Illumination: This miniature is a continuation of the preceding scene, which is based on Luke 10:38-42, and is set in the interior of Martha’s house. It is a large house with doorways to other rooms visible in the background. An elaborately decorated column with a gilded base is in the center of the room, dividing the composition in half side to side and front to back. The column is decorated with a yellow foliated scroll pattern and has relief sculpture on the base.

Christ is seated in the foreground to the left of the roundel. A lamp glows above his head, possibly indicative of the knowledge or illumination he is giving Mary Magdalene. He is speaking solemnly and enumerating points with his fingers. On his lap is a banderole which reads, “MARIA OPTIMA PARTE ELEGIT QVAE NO AVFERE TVR AB EA,” “Mary has chosen the best part that shall not be taken from her.” The Magdalene, identified by an inscription, is seated at Christ’s feet in the center foreground, where she listens to his words intently. Dressed in modest robes and wearing a small headdress that allows her hair to fall across her shoulders, the Magdalene is smiling as she gestures with her hand to indicate her animated interaction with Jesus.

Martha, identified with an inscription, stands to the right of the composition and wears a modest dress and apron, with her hair hidden beneath in a round headdress. A large number of keys hang from her waist, indicating her role as hostess and housekeeper. Beside her are the pots and fireplace with which she is preparing a meal for the large group of people gathered. Frowning, she tilts her head toward Christ and gestures with her left hand while pointing to Mary with her right. The Magdalene pays no attention to Martha’s admonitions, but is entirely focused on Christ’s teachings. She forms the transition element between Martha and Christ, with the column acting as a dividing point between them.
The apostles are gathered in the back of the room watching the action in the foreground. Some of them are listening to Christ and others are conversing among themselves, mimicking Christ’s gesture of point making and enumeration. A youthful figure, recognizable as John, kneels with his arms around the column and his face turned toward an older bearded apostle who is placed to the far left of the composition.

**Coloration:** the floral design on the column and the lantern are yellow; the sleeves of Martha’s dress are dark golden yellow; Mary’s hair is dark yellow and the sleeves of her dress are pale pink; the pots, fire, and column base are gold, as is Christ’s nimbus.

**Folio 19v: Marcella’s proclamation; Lazarus is taken ill**

**Frame:** dark yellow with linked spirals in gold; there are vertical elements at the center of spiral pairs.

**Translation:** “Marcella, Martha's maid, attended one of Jesus Christ's sermons, and as women are impatient in their joy, she started screaming, ‘Blessed the womb which bore you and the breasts you nursed.’ At the time, Lazarus was sick with a disease which was to kill him, but it was not because of bad treatment, for he had two sisters who served him with great courage.”

**Note:** the roundel is half image and half text; it is the only folio with this design.

**Illumination:** The miniature is set in a dark, rocky landscape. Christ is in the center of the composition in the act of exorcising a man who kneels as a demon flies from out of his mouth. Behind Christ is a crowd of people, identified as Jews by an inscription, including veiled women and men with turbans and hoods. At the front of the group is an elderly bearded man in a large headdress and robes that indicate he is a person of some importance. He gestures in astonishment. A white whippet is in the foreground watching the scene with interest.

Marcella, Martha’s maid as indicated by banderole, stands to the right of the scene in an orans gesture and declares “BEATVS VENTER QVI TEPORTAVIT,” “Blessed is the womb that bore you.” Christ is blessing the man, but has turned to face her.
**Coloration:** the demon is pink and yellow; the hat of the possessed man is blue and yellow; the headdresses of the Jews are dark yellow, light yellow, and blue; Christ’s nimbus is gold.

**Folio 20r: Lazarus on his deathbed**

**Motto:** MORTI VIVENTES INFLAMVS INANIA
DEATH LIVING AFLAME EMPTY/LIFELESS

**Note:** The placement of these words at the four compass points of the roundel and the lack of connecting verbs or proper sentence structure appears to indicate that they are meant to be read as individual single word statements. Read together, however, the implication is that “In the emptiness of death, there is a living flame” which is the Christian soul.

**Illumination:** The scene depicts the beginning of the story of Lazarus’s death and resurrection, the greatest of Christ’s miracles. It is related exclusively in John 11:1-44. This series of images is remarkable for the large number that deal with the same episode from the life of Christ, and for the extreme accuracy with which it is told. This scene, for example, describes only the first two verses of John 11.

Lazarus, identified with an inscription, lies dying on a large bed with hangings. The bed is raised on a platform and the bed sheets fall over the base on which a small pitcher or chamber pot has been placed. He is propped up on two pillows and dressed in a nightshirt and cap with his hands crossed in front of him. Friends and family in various states of distress surround him. Martha, indicated with an inscription, wipes her eyes as she stands by the far side of the bed. She wears the same costume as in folio 19r when she entertained Christ. The Magdalene, also indicated with an inscription, kneels in the foreground at the foot of the bed. She is also weeping and wiping her eyes, and likewise wears the same costume as in folio 19r.

**Coloration:** Martha’s sleeves are dark yellow; the sleeves of the Magdalene’s dress are light pink; there are touches of yellow, blue, and pink on costumes of other figures; the ewer is painted gold.
**Folio 20v: Martha and Mary Magdalene send a messenger to find Christ**

**Frame:** Pale pink with decorative motifs in gold, including a bucranium at the top and XI motifs at the bottom with scrolls, palmettes, and floral motifs all around the frame. The paleness of the gold against the light pink makes it difficult to discern the identity of each element precisely. There is a smudge from the inner border on the interior of the roundel.

**Translation:** “When Martha and her sister Magdalene saw their brother languishing, they immediately sent a messenger to Jesus Christ and told him ‘Lord, behold the one you love is ill.’ The two women told Jesus Christ that their brother was sick and beg him to come and cure him, for they knew that he was the most merciful man in the world and they hoped he would give them a cure as soon as the necessity would be known.”

**Folio 21r: The Magdalene sends a messenger to tell Christ that Lazarus is ill**

**Motto:** DE SOMNI BVSARDI BEFATI BEFANTI VAGAMO IN TERRA

BY LAYING DREAMS DECIEVED, DECEIVING WE WANDER THE EARTH

**Inscription in margin:** Mendacibus somniis delusi ludentes erramus in terra

**Illumination:** This depicts the passage in John 11:3. The scene again takes place in Lazarus’s bedroom, where he continues to languish in bed. There are fewer figures in the room and a round window, a decorated cabinet, and a candlestick are visible. The lack of a candle and the light behind the window indicate that it is day.

The only figures in the room with Lazarus are the Magdalene, Martha, and a messenger in the foreground. The siblings are indicated with inscriptions. The messenger holds a staff and the end of a pennon or flag is visible above his head. He kneels and doffs his hat as he accepts a letter from the Magdalene, who appears, from the gesture of her hand, to be giving him instructions. She and Martha are dressed as they were in the preceding illumination. A sheer veil flutters behind the Magdalene. Martha wrings her hands in anxiety and the two sisters have solemn looks on their faces.
**Coloration:** Mary’s hair is dark blond and her sleeves are pink; Martha’s dress has gold sleeves; the messenger wears a yellow tunic and light blue shirt; the candlestick is yellow.

**Folio 21v: Lazarus is prepared for burial**

**Frame:** royal blue with motifs in gold including fleur-de-lis at the top of the frame, lances with pennons topped with fleurs-de-lis at the upper corners, a pair of spiraling scrolls at the base of the frame, and two vases of irises at the lower corners.32

**Translation:** “The custom of the Jews was to bind and wrap the body of the dead with linen and to put a well-folded prayer shawl on the head as a sign of future resurrection. The beautiful Magdalene, who was a Jew, did that for her brother. Showing by her merciful work that it is necessary to love after death, she said, one believes, "Oh love, what pain you gave me. Alas my friend, my brother. By death, our love has been destroyed. ‘For we have been separated by death.’”

**Folio 22r: Martha and the Magdalene prepare Lazarus for burial**

**Motto:** IVVENTVS GLORIA GENVSQVE CADVNT ET OPES INFIDAE

THE PRIDE AND ORIGIN OF YOUTH AND ILLUSORY WEALTH

**Illumination:** This particular episode of the Lazarus story is not found in Gospel of John, but may have been included by Demoulins to allow him to demonstrate his knowledge of Judaic burial customs, as he states in the narrative. The scene takes place within a domestic interior, as indicated by the architectural column in the background. The space is deep with a dark area in the back right of the scene in which people appear to be coming into the room.

Lazarus is in the foreground of the scene with his head placed on the pillow on which his name is inscribed. He is wrapped in a burial shroud and has a folded prayer shawl on his head as mentioned in the narrative. The Magdalene, who is identified by the inscription on the ground beside her, is winding Lazarus’s body with linen. She is in the foreground in front of the body and Martha, indicated by inscription, is on the other side of the body. She assists with the winding of the linen, but is wailing in grief. The
Magdalene, on the other hand, is calmly attending to the task. Both women wear the costumes that they wore in the previous illuminations.

A frowning man to the right of the composition gestures to the sisters and appears to be directing the sisters’ actions. He has a large moneybag at his waist. In the background are mourners in various stages of grief, including a woman who has fallen to her knees and is wringing her hands over her head, other women who weep and cover their faces, and men who wring their hands. These extreme expressions of grief are in keeping with Judaic mourning customs. Four men in headdresses gesture and comment on the scene, while a small white dog watches the scene from the lower left foreground.

**Coloration:** Martha has dark yellow sleeves; Mary’s dress has pink sleeves and her dark blond hair is visible; the frowning man has a blue headdress, a red cuff, and a very large golden yellow purse; the other figures have red, dark blue, light blue, and yellow on their costumes and headdresses.

**Folio 22v: It is necessary for all to die**

**Frame:** ultramarine blue with hearts alternating with serpents with knotted tails in gold; the serpents have open mouths with tongues that strike the hearts.

**Translation:** “Oh, unyielding separation of lovers! Oh, death’s horrid divorce. Princes and princesses, ladies and damsels, and you gentle men who enjoy fame at court, listen ‘we have here no lasting city.’ One must die. Lazarus was a more gentle man than you are and especially because he was greatly in the grace of Jesus Christ. And yet he died. His sisters Martha and Magdalene were in great mourning and to the tomb they kept him loyal company.”

**Folio 23r: Funeral procession of Lazarus**

**Motto:** TAL E TVTA DI MISERI HOMINI VITA

ALL MAN’S LIFE IS SUCH MISERY

**Inscription in margin:** Talis est universa hominum miserorum vita

All man’s life is such misery
**Illumination:** This scene is not found in John 11. The illumination depicts the funeral procession of Lazarus. Four men carry a coffin that is draped in an embroidered, scalloped edged pall bearing Lazarus’s name. Preceding the coffin are Jewish priests and other officials who hold something in front of them, possibly the scrolled Torah. Martha and Magdalene, indicated by inscription, walk behind the coffin at the head of the entourage of mourners. They are heavily swathed in voluminous white pleated robes that hide their arms and other physical features completely. Their heads are covered with veils and white caps that are pulled low over their eyes, although their features are slightly visible. Their eyes are cast down and they wear mournful expressions.

The procession moves through a landscape indicated by a tree in the background and the gnarled roots of an unseen tree in the extreme foreground. They pass by a walled town from which other people appear to be walking to join the cortege. The classical arches and arcades of the structures give it the appearance of an Italian Renaissance town.

**Coloration:** Lazarus’s coffin in draped in a deep purple fabric that is embroidered in gold; Martha and the Magdalene are dressed in white, but the other figures have blue, red, and yellow on their costumes and headdresses; the priest’s vestments are dark golden yellow.

**Folio 23v: The Magdalene weeps**

**Frame:** black with motifs including bottles with stoppers, human skulls, and wave patterns in gold.

**Translation:** “Magdalene, you show well now that in perfect love no woman could surpass you, but it doesn’t matter for you, for if love gives you pain, it will also give you joy, and your true, loyal friend will make you content. You are not doing a bad thing by crying, for it is certain that your tears are natural and not inspired by despair, despite or distrust. And our true master Jesus will not reproach you for your tears but will cry with you for your brother Lazarus.”
Folio 24r: The Burial of Lazarus

Motto: OMNIA HIC MORS PVLVIS VMBRA ROS FLATVS PENNA VAPOR SOMNIVM.

HERE ALL THINGS ARE DEATH, SHADOW, DUST, DEW, A BREATH, A FEATHER, A VAPOR, A DREAM.

Illumination: This scene, which depicts the burial of Lazarus in his sarcophagus, is not found in John: 11. The setting is the interior space of the tomb, the darkness of which is illuminated by three hanging lamps in the background and a torch carried by one of the mourners. The sarcophagus, engraved with Lazarus’s name, is placed horizontally in the middle ground of the composition. The lid is on the ground beside it. Two priests hold Lazarus’s head and feet as they place his shrouded body in the sarcophagus. The folded prayer shawl is clearly visible on his head. Other religious figures perform the burial rites, while a cantor holds an open book and sings. Behind them, the mourners express their grief in various ways. The women cover their faces; the men wring their hands, and one woman in the back left pulls on her hair.

Martha and the Magdalene, indicated with inscriptions, are in the foreground in front of the sarcophagus. Martha sits on the lid while Magdalene kneels on the ground. Both are weeping in abject grief and cover their faces with their hands and sleeves. Their hands are not visible, however, as they are covered with the sleeves of their garments. This gives the appearance that the sisters have been entirely consumed by their grief.

Coloration: the only color is the gold in the vestments of the two priests who are placing Lazarus in his sarcophagus.

Folio 24v: Death comes to all men

Frame: black with motifs in gold including bucrania at the top and bottom, an XI motif in the upper right, and floral motifs with calyx leaves.

Translation: “Pope, white as snow; cardinal, red as a rooster. Bishop so sweet, I dare not say stupid; lay-brother good buffoon. You general with a great cap. Traveling knight. You noble. You cheerful one, as tender as dew; brother as cold as ice; hypocritical and gracious liars. You, monk, black as a devil. 34 Don't you know that one
must die? Don't you see that the Magdalene has forgotten her brother? Believe, I beg you, that the memory of men ‘will pass away with a grunt.’ When we are buried, nobody will hear about us anymore.”

Folio 25r: Lazarus’s tomb

Motto: OMNIBVS VNA DOMVS
ONE HOME FOR ALL

Illumination: This scene depicts the interior of Lazarus’s tomb. It is a simple but beautifully designed composition. The sarcophagus, inscribed with Lazarus’s name, is placed, as in the previous scene, in the middle ground and horizontally. It is carved with architectural moldings and raised on a plinth. The room is narrow and the three lamps seen in the previous scene hang above the sarcophagus. Between the lamps hang what appear to be two ropes. The lamps are burning, as indicated by the yellow flame in each and the light within the tomb. The second lamp is lower and hangs closer to the sarcophagus than the other two, possibly representing Christ, “The Light of the World,” and the promise of eternal life. Thus I suggest these lights represent the Holy Trinity.

Coloration: the only color is the golden yellow of the lamps and flames.

Folio 25v: The messenger takes the letter to Jesus Christ.

Frame: lavender blue with motifs in gold including lozenges interspersed with bucrania, seated winged genii, winged hearts, XI motif, chalices, and an orb or monstrance with scrolls on either sides.

Translation: “Whether or not the messenger of Martha and of Magdalene carried letters to Jesus Christ, the Scriptures do not mention it, but it is easy to believe, for at that time, letters were quite common. If he did not carry any letters, he just said what the women had told him to: ‘Behold Lord, he whom you love is sick.’ Jesus Christ responded ‘This sickness is not unto death.’ We must remember that the merciful redeemer was on the other side of the Jordan near Effrem, and he had gone there because he was afraid of the Jews who wanted him dead, and his time had not yet come.”
Folio 26r: The messenger delivers Mary Magdalene’s letter to Christ at Effrem

**Motto:** AD MEDICAM DVBIVS CONFVGIT AEGER OPEM.

**THE WAVERING SICK MAN RUSHES TO MEDICAL MIGHT**

**Illumination:** This scene depicts John 11:3-4 when Christ meets the messenger sent from Martha and the Magdalene on the banks of the Jordan River, which is indicated with an inscription. On the left is the town of Effrem and on the other side of the Jordan is Bethany. Both towns are indicated with inscriptions. The Jordan runs between the two towns. The towns are depicted in a combination of Gothic and Renaissance architectural styles, with a steeple, crenellated walls and turrets, and an arched gate. The bridge over the Jordan has rounded arches, and there are other rounded arches throughout the architecture.

The messenger kneels before Christ with his staff across his legs. Christ stands in contrapposto facing the right and takes the message from the young man as he points toward Bethany. The messenger’s declaration, “UNE ECCE QUEM/AMAS INFIRMATVR,” “The one that you love is sick,” is on a banderole, as is Christ’s response to the messenger, “INFIRMITAS HAEC NON/EST AD ORTEM,” “This sickness is not unto death.” The apostles are gathered behind him with Peter and John at the front of the group. Delicate halos are just visible around their heads. As in the previous roundels of the apostles, Peter is older with a gray curly beard and hair, while John is young, beardless, and has long hair parted in the middle. They also point toward Bethany. The river flows from the mountains on the horizon as the sun sets behind them.

**Coloration:** Peter is dressed in a blue mantle; the mountains and river are painted in a pale blue; Christ is nimbed in gold that matches the golden rays of the sun; the apostles also have gold halos.

Folio 26v: Jesus tells the apostles of the message

**Frame:** green with leaf and berry motif in gold; the leaves are trifoliate and resemble fig leaves.

**Translation:** “If indeed, Martha and Magdalene wrote to Jesus Christ, we can presume that he communicated the content of the letter to the apostles when he told them
‘Let us go again into Judea.’ And one might not be surprised if, to save his friend, he decided to go to Judea where some wanted to kill him, for when one loves, fear of death does not stop him. As it is written in the Scriptures ‘Jesus loved Martha, her sister Mary, and Lazarus.’

**Folio 27r: Christ discusses the letter with the Apostles**

**Motto:** CHRISTVS AMOR EST

CHRIST IS LOVE

**Illumination:** This scene is taken from John 11:7. Christ is indicated as standing in front of the town of Effrem. The fortified town is depicted in the background, with the spire of the church directly over Christ’s head. The ground beneath their feet is rocky, and the landscape in the background has trees, clouds, and mountains indicated in the extreme distance. Christ is standing in the foreground and gestures with his right hand toward the messenger’s letter he is holding in his left hand. The apostles surround him and they appear to be discussing the contents of the letter. Peter and John are gesturing on their fingers as if enumerating points of discussion and the other apostles stand behind them. At Christ’s feet is a framed plaque on which is written “EAMVS IN JUDEA/ITERV,” “Let us go into Judea.”

**Coloration:** the apostle to the far left of the composition has a red hat hanging down his back; the bodice of John’s robe is dark purple; the sky is blue; brown is used for the frame of the plaque; the apostles’ halos and Christ’s radiant nimbus are gold.

**Folio 27v: Jesus tells the apostles that Lazarus is not dead but sleeping**

**Frame:** ultramarine blue with oval cartouches linked with lines and beads in gold; within the cartouches is an alternating pattern of fleurs-de-lis and crosses used on the coats of arms of Savoy and Jerusalem.

**Translation:** “Two days after Martha’s messenger had arrived, Jesus was a little afraid to go to Bethany and the apostles said to him ‘Rabbi, just now the Jews have been seeking to stone you and now you are going back there!’ Jesus answered ‘Are there not twelve hours in a day?’ The ones who are going by day have the light of the world with
them and cannot commit any offense. But the ones going by night cannot be without ill intent, for they are without the light of this world. After these words, Jesus told them ‘Lazarus our friend sleeps. But I will go to awaken him from sleep.’ And after a while he again said openly, ‘Lazarus is dead. Let us go to him.’ Then, Saint Thomas said to his companions ‘Let us go and die with him.’

Folio 28r: Christ leaves for Bethany, urging the apostles to accompany him

**Motto:** MILITES BONI FORTESQVE SVB OPTIMO DVCE
GOOD AND STRONG SOLDIERS UNDER THE VERY BEST LEADER

**Illustration:** This scene depicts John 11:8-11. Christ and the apostles arrive by boat on the outskirts of Bethany, which is indicated in the background with an inscription. Christ is pointing toward the town and trying to walk there, but the apostles gather around him. John and Peter also points toward Bethany and Peter tugs at Christ’s sleeve, as Christ turns to look at him. A banderole in front of Christ reads, “LAZARVS AMICVS NOSTER DORMIT,” “Lazarus our friend sleeps.” A banderole behind Peter reads “RABI NVC QVEREBAT TE IVDAEI LAPIDARE,” “Rabbi, the Jews sought to stone thee.” A boat and boatman are at the shore of the river to the left of the composition; the boatman doffs his hat to the group. Bethany is depicted as a large town with a turreted wall and various types of architecture. The ground on which the figures stand has small rocks and a tree trunk is visible at the right edge of the roundel. A rocky hill with a cave is in the middle ground.

**Coloration:** the boatman and figures on the shore have hats of yellow and blue; the sky is blue; the halos and nimbus of Christ and the apostles is gold.

Folio 28v: The Jewish friends console Martha and Magdalene

**Frame:** black with interlocking gold rings.

**Translations:** “After the death of Lazarus, the Jewish relatives and friends of the Magdalene came to comfort her, and in my opinion, they told her “Madame, the eternal God is without sadness. Therefore, if we want to follow his example, we must live
joyfully. You do not gain anything by your tears, for what death has done cannot be undone. Lazarus is more at ease than he used to be, for he is out of misery. He can no longer be hurt by the fear of death. Weakness of the body, sadness, worries, old age, disease, slander, lack of possessions, fraud, lies, and diabolical temptations will not harm him anymore or give him problems since he is no longer alive.”

**Folio 29r: The Magdalene weeps and is comforted by friends**

**Motto:** DELIBERATO HAN LI CELESTI LI HOMINI VIVER TRISTI ET QVELI SONO SENZA TRISTITIA

THE GODS THINK THAT MORTALS HAVE A SAD LIFE BUT THAT THEY THEMSELVES ARE WITHOUT SADNESS

**Inscription in margin:** Decrere cælestes mortals vivere tristes, ipsi vero sunt sine tristitia

The gods think that mortals have a sad life but they themselves are without sadness

**Illumination:** This scene depicts John 11:19. It is set within a domestic interior. Martha and the Magdalene are in the middle ground. Martha’s name is an inscription above her head, and the Magdalene’s name is written on a banderole on the floor behind her. Martha stands with clasped hands behind her sister, as the Magdalene sits weeping and wiping her eyes. Both are dressed in robes and their heads are covered with veils. There are also several men in the room, who are identified as Jews by an inscription. Two men in the foreground, one wearing an elaborate costume, are speaking to the Magdalene in a very animated and forceful manner. The first, an impressive elderly man wearing a large purse, yellow boots, and a garment resembling a short cope, stands above the Magdalene. He points upward as if making a point or referring to heaven. The second man, who wears a blue hat, bends over the inconsolable Magdalene and gestures as if he is trying to reason with her. The other figures look on with anxious expressions. A small white dog is curled up on the floor behind the Magdalene.

Slender columns, a doorway in the background, and the edges of a wall and the floor indicate that the figures are in an interior room. This also gives the scene a
claustrophobic quality that is compounded by the large number of figures in the room, and their looming presence over the Magdalene.

**Coloration:** there are touches of yellow, blue, and red on the costumes of the mourners; the man in the foreground wears a costume of gold, yellow, and blue; the sisters’ costumes are white.

**Folio 29v: Martha meets Jesus on the road to Bethany**

**Frame:** medium green with gold motifs including bucrania and cornucopias arranged like volutes.

**Translation:** “Our lord, as you know, started on his way to return to Judea at the request of Mary Magdalene who had sent for him. ‘Behold, he whom you love is ill.’ And he walked so far that he finally arrived in Bethany. Martha was the first to be aware of his arrival, and leaving her sad sister in the house, she went towards Jesus and told him ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.’ He responded to her ‘Your brother will rise again.’”

**Folio 30r: Martha greets Christ on his arrival in Bethany while the Magdalene is consoled**

**Motto:** LAMANTE A LE FIATE PIV DA QVEL DEMANDE LAMATO

**Inscription in margin:** Amorati quando plus tribuit quam petat amatus

**Illumination:** This image is based on John 11: 20-21. To the left, the weeping Magdalene, who is indicated by banderole, sits in an interior and is comforted by three friends. The postures of the Magdalene and the man in the foreground are the same as in the preceding image. Martha, indicated with an inscription, meets Christ and the disciples on the road outside the house. In the background are a wall and gate with buildings behind the wall and two figures walking on the road. This is in keeping with a scriptural reference from John 11:30, which states “Jesus was not yet come into the
town…” Thus, the wall and gate indicate that the action takes place at a house on the outskirts of the city.

Martha kneels before Christ and gestures plaintively with her hands. A framed placard beside her reads “DOMINE SI FUISSE S HIC FRATER---MEVS NO FVISSET MORTVVS,” “Lord, if you had been here, our brother would not have died.” Christ gestures to her with his right hand in an attitude of blessing. A banderole from his mouth reads “RESVRGET FRATER TVVS,” “Your brother will live again.” A large greyhound or whippet sits to the left of Martha and watches the scene. The angle of his head seems to indicate that he is reading Christ’s words.

The buildings of the town are a composite of Renaissance and medieval styles, with crenulated towers, arched windows and doorways, and pilasters and friezes that are decorated with Italianate designs of urns and floral motifs. A Northern architectural element is the carved spandrel in the corner of the arched opening of the room. The cabinet and vessels on the wall behind the Magdalene indicate the domestic nature of the building.

**Note:** The architectural elements in the background change as this series of images progresses. In folios 30r and 31r, there is a wall with a gate and two towers behind a lower building. The smaller of the towers is crenulated and has arched openings that give it the appearance of a campanile. In folio 32r, the towers are more slender and in folio 33r, the smaller tower is transformed into a building with a peaked roof. In folio 34r these buildings are replaced by a large, rounded, multilevel structure, with a similar structure barely visible in folios 35r and 36r. In folio 37r, however, the campanile of folio 30r reappears. The reason for this change in detail is not clear.

**Coloration:** the sky is blue and there are touches of blue and yellow on the costumes of those who comfort the Magdalene; Peter has yellow on his costume; Christ’s nimbus is gold.

**Folio 30v: Martha questions Jesus**

**Frame:** white with decorative elements in gold including bucrania, wings, palmettes, XIs, and stylized floral and vase motifs.
Translation: “Magdalene was crying in the house and the Jews who were keeping her company were crying too. Martha, as it was said in the preceding text, had gone outside to greet Jesus Christ. And not satisfied with his answer ‘Your brother will rise again,’ she spoke again saying ‘I know that my brother will rise again on the last day.’ 46 And Jesus told her ‘I am the resurrection and the life.’ 47 Notice that we have, at this point, told the same story three times, in order to put value in the words of Jesus Christ and the good Martha.”

Folio 31r: Christ tells Martha he is the Resurrection and the Life

Motto: DIO NIENTE DA SENZA FEDE
GOD GRANTS NOTHING WITHOUT FAITH

Inscription in margin: Dominus nihil tribuit sine fide
God grants nothing without faith

Illumination: This scene is based on John 11: 24-25, and repeats the setting of the previous roundel. The Magdalene, indicated with a banderole, is seated in the house where she is being comforted by friends. Martha, indicated with an inscription, is now standing before Christ in the street outside the house. She is gesturing on her fingers. Beside her is a framed placard that reads “SCIO VOD RESVRGET FRATER MEVS IN---NOVISSIMO DIE,” “I know that my brother will rise again [in the resurrection] on the last day.” Christ responds, in a banderole, “EGO SV RESVRRECTIO ET VITA,” “I am the Resurrection and the Life.” The dog is laying behind Martha and watching the scene. Beneath the window behind Martha is a motif resembling a bucranium that was not in the previous illumination.

Coloration: the sky is blue; there are touches of blue and yellow on the costumes of the consoling friends; blue and yellow on the cabinet and the architecture of the house; Christ’s nimbus is gold.
**Folio 31v: Martha and Jesus continue their discussion**

**Frame:** lavender gray with alternating fleurs-de-lis and ovals in gold. The fleurs-de-lis and ovals are connected by curving lines that give the appearance of a crown.

**Translation:** “Jesus Christ went on with what he was saying, as quoted ‘He who believes in me, even if he die, will live. And all who live and believe in me will not die into eternity. Do you believe this?’ Martha responded ‘Indeed, Lord, I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the son of the Living God who has come into the world.’ Consider if you please, how Martha's faith greatly served this mystery, for our lord often makes miracles at the request of those who believe perfectly in him, and the prayers of the men who have imperfect faith are never answered.”

**Folio 32r: Christ asks Martha if she believes in him.**

**Motto:** FEDE E SVBSTANZA DE COSE SPERATE ET ARGVMENTO DELLE NON PARENTI

FAITH IS THE SUBSTANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR AND THE EVIDENCE OF THINGS NOT SEEN

**Illumination:** This scene depicts John 11:25-26, and repeats the setting of the previous roundel. The Magdalene is now overcome with weeping and is bent over with her veiled hands covering her face. The friends are speaking between themselves. Martha stands before Christ with hands together in a prayerful attitude. Christ gestures to her and says “QVI CREDIT IN ME ETIA SI MORTVVS FVERIT VIVET. CREDIS HOC?,” “He who believes in me even if he will have died will live. Do you believe this?” The dog sits behind Martha and supports the placard that reads “VTIQVE DOMINE CREDIDIOVA TU ES FILIUS DEI,” “Yes, Lord, I believe you are the Son of God.” The apostles stand behind Christ.

**Coloration:** red and blue on the costumes of the friends; blue on Peter’s robe; the sky is blue; Christ’s nimbus is gold.
Folio 32v: Martha returns to the house to tell the Magdalene what Jesus Christ said

Frame: dark pink with gold linked C scrolls and ovals in gold; there are horizontal elements and vegetative patterns interspersed throughout the linked motifs.

Translation: “Martha left Jesus Christ and went to fetch her sister Magdalene, whom she found all distressed. But her master has arrived who will reason with her, and make her understand that tears that come from a penitent heart are not lost. However, one has to have patience in front of adversity, for by this means we escape despair and reach penitence, and by patience we will gain possession and enjoyment of our souls. ‘For in our patience we will possess our souls.’”

Folio 33r: Martha returns to the house; Christ speaks to the apostles

Motto: NVI VER AMOR IN ADVERSITA NON ABANDONA
OUR TRUE LOVE DOES NOT ABANDON [YOU] IN ADVERSITY

Inscription in margin: Nos verus amot in adversita te non deserit
Our true love does not abandon you in adversity

Illumination: The scene depicts John 11:28, and repeats the setting of the previous roundels. Martha returns to the house where the Magdalene is now sitting upright with her head in her hands in the traditional posture of Melancholia. The consoling Jewish friends are speaking among themselves. Christ has turned and is speaking to Peter and the other apostles. Peter gestures to him as they speak, pointing toward the house. The dog playfully bounds up beside Christ with his head turned upward to look at him.

There has been a slight change in the details of the architecture. The lozenge pattern that surrounds the arched doorway into the sister’s house is now repeated on the upper plinth of the opening through which we view the Magdalene. This pattern is not placed there in the previous roundels of this series.

Coloration: the costume of the elderly Jewish friend has touches of yellow, as do the garments of some of the apostles; the cabinet has brown shading; Christ’s nimbus is gold and the apostles have gold halos.
**Folio 33v: Martha secretly tells Magdalene of Jesus’s intent**

**Frame:** ultramarine blue with an interlaced and knotted cordelière in gold; at the corners of the frames, the cord forms four knots and at the bottom, a small element resembling a nail is the terminal point.

**Translation:** “Martha, wanting to keep the affair secret, in accordance with the will of Jesus who did not want the Jews to know of his presence, leaned down, and speaking softly to her sister, she said ‘The master is present and he is calling you.’ And God knows how the poor Magdalene who loves her master so much went right away to see him and greet him.”

**Folio 34r: Martha whispers Christ’s message to the Magdalene; Christ continues his discussion with the apostles**

**Motto:** VENEZ AV ROY EST VNG GRACIEVX MOT OV VENEZ A MADAME.

“The they go to the king” or “they go to my lady” is a gracious word.

**Illumination:** The scene depicts John 11:28, and repeats the setting of the previous roundels. In the house, Martha leans close to the seated Magdalene and whispers to her “MAGISTER ADEST ET VOCAT TE,” “The master has come and calls for you.” Martha and Magdalene are indicated with inscriptions. The friends stand in the back of the room looking at the sisters. Christ continues speaking with Peter and both men gesture emphatically. Christ points upward with his left hand while Peter points down with his left. The dog sits behind Christ, and looks over his shoulder toward the sisters.

As mentioned above, the architecture in the background of the scene has changed from the rectangular tower of the preceding scenes. The building in this roundel is round and tiered with rows of small windows. The skull motif is no longer beneath the window beside the doorway, and the lozenge pattern is now on the lower plinth of the opening.

**Coloration:** the only colors are the blue of the sky and the gold of Christ’s nimbus.
Folio 34v: Mary Magdalene goes to see Jesus Christ

**Frame:** ultramarine blue with gold fleurs-de-lis.

**Translation:** “Magdalene, all feeble with fasting and crying, got up to go see her master, her god, her creator, her father, her savior, her redeemer, her protector, her guide, and her friend. Martha, as a good and honest sister, graciously led her. The Jews who were with her, not knowing what she wanted to do and thinking that she was going to the tomb of her brother, started expressing mourning even more. They began to say ‘She is coming to the grave so that she may grieve there.’”}\(^ {52}\)

Folio 35r: The Magdalene approaches Christ

**Motto:** VIDETE QVID PRO AMORE FACIT AMOR
SEE WHAT LOVE DOES FOR LOVE

**Illumination:** The scene depicts John 11: 29-31, and continues in the setting of the previous roundels. Martha and the Magdalene, indicated with inscriptions, have left the house to join Christ, who, in accordance with scripture, is where Martha left him. Christ continues speaking with the apostles, specifically Peter, who gestures in the process of conversation. John is visible between them. The Jewish friends, here indicated with an inscription, continue their conversation in the house, apparently ignorant of what has passed between the sisters and Christ. The Magdalene’s hands are crossed over her chest in an attitude of faith and acquiescence while Martha’s hands are raised in an *orans* gesture. The dog is sitting with his back to Christ, watching the sisters descend from the house. The round, tiered building is seen in the background, and the lozenge pattern is on both levels of the stepped opening. The angle of the house has become more oblique to accommodate the presence of both Martha and the Magdalene in the doorway.

**Coloration:** the Jews are dressed in blue and yellow; the sky is blue; Christ’s nimbus is gold.
**Folio 35v: The Magdalene arrives in the presence of Jesus Christ**

**Frame:** dark pink with linked C curves that create small ovals at their union. There are various elements within the opening of the C forms, including volutes, vessels, doves, and winged genii.

**Translation:** “The Magdalene, sad and tearful, arrived in the presence of Jesus Christ and said to him ‘Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.’ And Jesus started to cry and asked ‘Where have you placed him?’ It is a clear sign that he wanted to bring him back to life, for never had he failed a friend in need, being of such a compassionate nature.”

**Folio 36r: Magdalene tells Christ that if he had been present Lazarus would not have died; Christ weeps and asks where his body is laid**

**Motto:** ORATIONES DEVVM LENIVNT SED LACHRYMAE COGVNT.

**PRAYERS APPEASE GOD BUT TEARS COMPEL HIM**

**Illumination:** The scene depicts John 11: 32-34. The setting is similar to the previous images of this series, but the view has been moved in to focus on the emotions and interactions of the figures. The Magdalene, indicated with an inscription, kneels before Christ in the center of the composition, as Martha, also indicated with an inscription, stands behind her. Two of the Jewish men who had been comforting the Magdalene in the house stand beside Martha. One of them wears an impressive costume of a short chasuble, a turban, and an elaborately embroidered, scalloped, and tasseled apron, indicating he is a figure of importance. Both men wipe their eyes, in keeping with the scriptural reference that the Jews that accompanied the sisters were also weeping.

The Magdalene implores Christ and says, “DOMINE SI FVISSES HIC NO ESSET MORTVVS FRATER MEVS,” “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.” This text is placed in a black banderole that trails to the Magdalene, indicating that it is her speaking. Christ puts his hand to his eyes as he weeps. He responds “VBI POSVISTIS EVM,” “Where have you laid him?” The apostles stand behind Christ, and Peter gestures with his left hand. The rounded building is just visible in the background, and the dog is absent from this scene.
**Coloration:** the sky is blue; the blue and yellow is used for the costume of the Jewish friend, and a touch of blue highlight the collar of Peter’s robe; Christ’s nimbus is gold, as are the halos of the apostles.

**Folio 36v: The Jews join Martha and Magdalene with Jesus Christ**

**Frame:** lavender gray with motifs including bucraania, XI, wings, amphora, heart-shaped palmettes, and floral or vegetative patterns in gold.

**Translation:** “When Jesus Christ saw the Magdalene crying, as well as the ones who were with her, ‘he was grieved in spirit and disturbed, and said, “Where have you laid him?”’ The poor ladies, so sad that they could not bear it anymore, answered with great humility, ‘Lord, come and see.’ And therefore, when they saw Jesus Christ crying, the Jews said ‘Behold how he loved him.’ But some of those discussing this miracle said ‘Would he who had opened the eyes of the man born blind not be able to prevent this man from dying?’”

**Folio 37r: Christ weeps as the Magdalene asks him to come and see Lazarus’s tomb**

**Motto:** VVULNERATI CORDIS LACNRYMAE PRAEBENT SIGNA.

**Illumination:** This scene depicts John 11:34-37 and is set outside Martha’s house as in previous roundels, although the view now focuses on the figures and little of the house is visible. Martha and the Magdalene, indicated by inscriptions, stand before Christ, their sorrowful faces indicating that they are grieving. The Magdalene clasps her hands in a gesture of anguish while Martha is in an attitude of prayer. Christ is weeping and wipes his eyes with a cloth as the apostles stand behind him. The Magdalene and Martha say to Christ “DOMINE VENI ET VIDE,” “Lord, come and see.” Their words are in a black banderole that trails to both their hands, indicating that they are both saying this. Christ responds “VBI POSVISTIS EVM,” “Where have you laid him?”

Behind Martha and the Magdalene are the Jewish friends, now five in number with the addition of three heads behind the two front figures. The important man in the foreground no longer wears the elaborate apron. He is speaking and gesturing to his
companion, and his words are written on a banderole: “ECCE QVOMODO AMADAT EVM,” “Behold how he loved him.”

The town is indicated in the background, and the campanile tower has replaced the rounded structure. The dog is again absent from this image.

**Coloration:** the costumes of the Jewish friends have touches of blue and yellow; the sky is blue; Christ’s nimbus is gold.

**Folio 37v: Jesus, Martha, Magdalene, and the Jews arrive at the tomb**

**Frame:** green with running chevron pattern made up of thick and thin strokes in gold; the strokes resemble an M, possibly to create the monogram of Mary Magdalene.

**Translation:** “‘Jesus moaning again inside himself,’ which means that he went to the tomb expressing his attachment by sighs and a woeful voice.59 ‘He was in that very cave and the stone had been placed on it.’60 For this reason, notice that the artist might have made a mistake, for instead of a tomb or sepulcher, he should have represented a hole covered by a stone. So Jesus said ‘Take away the stone.’61 And Martha, despite her great desire to see her brother alive, anticipating the difficulties of such a miracle, could not refrain from saying ‘Lord, it is now four days – by now there is a stench.’”62

**Folio 38r: The Magdalene, Martha, and Christ at Lazarus’s tomb**

**Motto:** DOMINVS VIVIFICAT ET MORTIFICAT

THE LORD GIVES LIFE AND MAKES [ONE] DIE

**Illumination:** The scene depicts John 11:38-39 and takes place in Lazarus’s tomb, indicated by the darkness of the background. The tomb spacious, affording enough room for many people to stand and witness the miracle. Lazarus’s sarcophagus is on the left of the composition and angled front to back using a convincing foreshortened perspective. It is inscribed with his name and decorated with a medallion on the front panel and architectural moldings all around, including small arches and flared corners on the cover. The medallion appears to be a carved portrait head wearing a helmet and has a circular frame around it, mimicking the shape of the roundel frame.
The Magdalene, indicated on a banderole, stands at the head of the sarcophagus, while Martha, indicated with an inscription at her feet, stand in front of it. Both women are dressed and veiled in the robes of mourning that they wore in the preceding roundels. The Magdalene’s hands are raised before her in a gesture of worship and wonder, while Martha turns toward Christ, who is beside her. Christ advances toward the sarcophagus and says, “TOLLITE LAPIDEM,” “Take away the stone.” Martha gestures with her hands as she says, “IAM FOET ET QVATRIDVANVS EST,” “Now he stinks, it is four days.”

Many figures stand behind the main characters and the sarcophagus. Behind Christ are some of the apostles, although others, including Peter and John, are beside the sarcophagus to the left. Peter is gesturing with his hands. In the background are other figures wearing various types of colorful headdresses. These are the Jewish friends who witness the miracle. All of the secondary figures watch Christ or discuss the events amongst themselves.

**Coloration:** the hats of the Jewish friends are blue, red, and yellow; the halos of the apostles and Christ’s nimbus are gold.

**Folio 38v: Martha tells Jesus that Lazarus has been dead four days and will smell**

**Frame:** white with motifs include calyx leaf scrolls, bucrania, and chalices covered with patens. The calyx leaves form wings on either side of some of the elements, such as the bucrania. At the top is a fountain and at the bottom an object resembling an upturned nail acts as a terminal element.

**Translation:** “Martha, as you know, said to our Lord who was asking for the stone to be raised ‘Lord, it is now four days – by now there is a stench.’ And he answered, ‘Have I not told you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?’ Consider, please, that in the preceding sequence, I blamed the artist for having painted a sepulcher instead of a hole in the ground with a stone over it, as described in the Gospels: ‘Moreover there was the cave.’ Then, in the course of my studies, I found out that the Venerable Bede had said that one could see in that place a hollow stone, or a monument. Therefore, the illustrator’s error is forgivable.”
Folio 39r: The cover of Lazarus’s sarcophagus is lifted

**Motto:** DOMINVS DEDVCIT AD INFEROS ET REDVCIT
THE LORD HAS LED YOU DOWN TO HELL AND HE HAS LED YOU BACK

**Illumination:** The scene depicts John 11:39-40 and is again set in Lazarus’s tomb. The figures are placed as in the previous roundel with the exception of Peter and John, who are at either end of the sarcophagus. They are lifting the lid and a portion of Lazarus’s body is visible inside. The Magdalene, identified with a banderole, clasps her hands and turns her head to look into the sarcophagus. Martha, who is also identified with an inscription, turns toward Christ and points to the sarcophagus as she puts her hand to his chest as if to stop him from advancing toward the coffin. On a banderole are the words “DOMINE IAM FOETET,” “Lord, he will stink.” To emphasize this fact, several members of the crowd cover their noses with their robes to ward off the odor. Christ gestures toward the sarcophagus and says “SI CRECID[E]RIS VIDEBIS GLORIA[M] DEI,” “If you believe you will see the glory of God.” Peter’s costume has an unusual yellow attachment that hangs on his back. The purpose of this object is unknown.

**Coloration:** blue, pink, and yellow on the Jews’ costumes; yellow on Peter’s costume; Christ’s nimbus and the halos of Peter and John are gold.

Folio 39v: Christ gives thanks to God in prayer

**Frame:** black with motifs including a cross at the top of the frame, serpents intertwined on stems of irises, a peacock on the right, a crane on the left, another long-necked bird at the bottom left, vines, and other floral elements; a winged human skull at the bottom of the frame is the terminal element.

**Translation:** “When the stone of the monument was lifted, Jesus raised his eyes toward heaven saying, ‘Oh Father, I give thanks to you since you have always heard me. I myself have always known that you always hear me. But for the sake of the people who are standing around, I say [these things] so that they may believe that you have sent me.’” Then he gave thanks to God the Father although Lazarus was not yet resurrected
and this illustrates the magnificence of God the Father, who when thanked for past gifts is easily inclined to give and to bestow new favors. This doctrine has been learned well by a prince whose name starts with an “F” and the one of his mother by an “L,” but I don’t need to name them for everyone knows what a generous and magnificent King he is.”

**Folio 40r: Christ thanks God in prayer**

*Motto:* LEX AMORIS VVULT NOS ORARE PRO AMICIS

THE LAWS OF LOVE WANT US TO PRAY FOR [OUR] FRIENDS

*Illumination:*
The scene depicts John 11: 41 and is set in Lazarus’s tomb as in the previous scenes. The figures are placed as in the preceding scene, with the exception of John, who is on the far side of the sarcophagus behind the lid. Peter gestures toward Christ. The body of Lazarus is wrapped in the shroud and winding cloth, and the folded prayer shall is on his head. The Magdalene, indicated with a banderole, stands at the head of the sarcophagus and looks at her brother’s body, her hands in a gesture of amazement and her mouth open in surprise. Martha, also indicated with a banderole, stands with clasped hands and her mouth slightly agape, while beside her, Christ looks toward heaven with outstretched hands and an imploring gesture. Inscribed on a banderole is “PATER GRAS AGO QVIA AVID TI ME,” “Father, I thank you because you have heard me.” The mourners and disciples stand behind the central figures; none of them cover their noses.

An important addition to the scene is the dog, which sits very erect at the foot of the sarcophagus and watches Christ. The dog was not in the previous scenes set within the tomb.

*Coloration:* the Jews in the background wear headdresses of yellow and brown; Peter has on a yellow mantle; the halos of the apostles and Christ’s nimbus are gold.

**Folio 40v: Christ speaks to Lazarus alone**

*Frame:* black with C scrolls and columns; the scrolls end in flames.

*Translation:* “When our Lord had finished his prayer “he cried out in a loud voice ‘Lazarus, come forth.’” He spoke to Lazarus as he would have to a living soul.
because he knew he was no longer dead. ‘He spoke in a loud voice’ in order for everybody to hear that he was not a magician and that his words were catholic and devoted. He called him by his name, saying ‘Lazarus,’ because if he had simply said ‘Come forth,’ all the souls of the dead who were decaying there would have become alive if such was his intention, so great was his power.”

**Folio 41r: Christ reaches into the sarcophagus**

**Motto:** OMNI TEMPORE DILIGIT QVI AMICVS EST

HE IS A FRIEND [WHO] LOVES AT ALL TIMES

**Illumination:** This scene is not specifically described in John 11. There are several inconsistencies in the scene when compared with the previous roundels, including the placement of the scene in a landscape with a town visible in the background. Additional figures are seen walking in the wooded landscape behind the scene. The lid of the sarcophagus is now in the foreground, and the medallion has a different design than in the previous folio. The dog is absent.

Christ leans into the sarcophagus and gently lifts Lazarus’s body as he says “LAZARE VENI FORAS,” “Lazarus, come forth.” The Magdalene, indicated with a banderole, watches the scene with a sorrowful expression while Martha, also indicated with a banderole, leans in to watch with arms folded across her chest. The apostles and mourners gather around to witness the miracle. In the right foreground, the elaborately dressed Jewish man who comforted the Magdalene watches the miracle and converses with another man with a red hat, who gestures toward Christ and Lazarus.

**Coloration:** the costume of the elaborately dressed Jew is golden yellow and light pink, with yellow shoes and hat; the costumes and headdresses of other figures are red, pink, blue, yellow, and golden brown; Peter has a yellow mantle; there are touches of blue on the sarcophagus and in the sky; Christ’s nimbus and the apostles’ halos are gold.

**Folio 41v: Jesus has his apostles unwrap Lazarus**

**Frame:** dark pink with motifs including a bucranium and scrolls at the top of the frame, long stems with leaves and lilies, two intertwined A and V motifs that create two Ms, one inverted on the other; two silhouetted forms of elongated female nudes standing
on amphorae; below these are classical floral patterns, scrolls, amphorae, intertwined ribbons, and a winged genius at the bottom of the frame.

**Translation:** “When Jesus Christ had said loudly “Lazarus come forth,” immediately he that had been dead came forth. His hands and feet were tied with bandages. His face was bound by cloth and so Jesus said, “Release him and let him go free.” Why did he order his disciples to unbind him, since he could have done it on his own through a miracle? I promise you, Jesus Christ never did anything without a reason, and by ordering his disciples to do so, he wanted them to witness the miracle.”

**Folio 42v: Lazarus stands in his sarcophagus**

**Motto:** PER TE CHRISTE MORS MORTVA NVNC EST

THROUGH YOU, CHRIST, DEATH IS NOW DEAD

**Illumination:** This scene depicts John 11: 44-45. It is set at Lazarus’s tomb, but as in the preceding roundel, it is placed outside in a landscape with a town in the background. Lazarus stands up in his sarcophagus, still bound in the winding cloth and with the prayer shawl folded on his head. The Magdalene, indicated with a banderole, stands as before at the head of the sarcophagus with Peter at the foot. Both hold their hands out in a gesture of wonder. Martha, who is indicated with a banderole, smiles as she looks at her brother; her hands are in an attitude of prayer. Christ stands next to her and points toward Lazarus. The mourners and followers stand in the background as in the preceding illumination. Some of them discuss the miracle, including the man in the elaborate costume and his plumed companion, who now wears a blue hat. The sarcophagus lid is in the foreground of the image, as is a banderole that reads “SOLVITE ET SINITE EVABRIE,” “Untie him and allow him to climb out.”

**Coloration:** yellow and blue in the costumes of the Jews; the costume of the impressive elderly Jew is yellow and golden yellow; Peter’s mantle is blue and yellow; there is blue in the sky and on the sarcophagus; Christ’s nimbus is gold.
Folio 42\textsuperscript{v}: Lazarus is unwrapped from his shroud

\textbf{Frame:} black with gold motifs including a fleur-de-lis between scrolls at the top of the frame, wheat stalks, four silhouetted figures with arms raised over their heads, leaf scrolls and linear floral elements, intertwined cords that create infinity symbols, and floral motifs resembling lilies or irises on which the lower figures stand; a bucranium with volute scrolls is the terminal element.

\textbf{Translation:} “The disciples unwrapped Lazarus, took off the bandages which were called \textit{instita}, and immediately his face appeared as it had been in its original state.”\textsuperscript{69} Therefore many of the Jews, who had come to Mary and Martha and had seen the things Jesus had done, believed in him. A certain number of them however, went off to the Pharisees, and told them of the things Jesus had done,’ and the rest.\textsuperscript{70} You will find this in Chapter 11 of the Gospel according to Saint John, a gentle man from among Jesus’s followers.”

Folio 43\textsuperscript{r}: Martha, Magdalene, and Christ observe the unbinding of Lazarus

\textbf{Motto:} BEATVS QVI VERVM INVENIT AMICVM

\textbf{HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO TRULY FIND A FRIEND}

\textbf{Illumination:} This scene depicts John 11:44-46 and is set at Lazarus’s tomb in the countryside. Lazarus sits on the far edge of the sarcophagus with his feet and legs inside. He is nude to the waist and his hands are clasped in front of him in a gesture of reverence. His body is full and muscular alluding to the passage from the narrative that Lazarus’s body was not decrepit but returned to its original state. Christ points to Lazarus as he instructs John and Peter, who are unbinding his legs. Another apostle gently supports Lazarus from behind. Part of the winding cloth is draped across the edge of the sarcophagus and the prayer shawl lies on the ground in front.

Martha and the Magdalene, both identified with banderoles, stand as in previous roundels and point to Lazarus with expressions of wonder. However, there are fewer people watching the scene, but a large number of figures in the background are walking toward the town. These are the Jews who were not convinced by the miracle and report to the Pharisees what they have witnessed.
An interesting item is the garment with gold embroidery that is laying across the edge of the sarcophagus in front of Lazarus. This is intended to clothe Lazarus after he is unbound, and is indicative of Demoulins’s realism in the recreation of the story. An inconsistent element is the depiction of Lazarus, who is shown here with long hair as he had been in folio 6v. In other folios, such as folio 7v, he is depicted bald.

**Coloration:** blue and yellow on the headdresses of the Jews; blue on the sarcophagus and in the sky; Christ’s nimbus is gold; gold embroidery on Lazarus’s garment.

**Folio 43v: Jesus goes to Effrem**

**Frame:** lavender gray with an undulating ribbon and dot motif in gold; the ribbon appears to wrap around a circle of gold.

**Translation:** “Therefore, the Jews started talking against Jesus Christ after they heard that he had resurrected Lazarus, saying ‘the Romans will come and take away our place and our people.’ And Caiaphas said ‘It is better for one man to die, than that the whole nation should perish.’ Jesus did not walk freely in the country of the Jews, but he went into ‘the nearby desert, to a city that is called Ephrem,’ and there he stayed with his disciples. However, according to Saint John, Martha was serving them, without, it seems, any help from her sister the Magdalene. She was taking care of everything without mentioning her.”

**Folio 44r: Christ preaches to a multitude in Ephrem while Martha cooks and the Magdalene assists her**

**Motto:** ETIAM CHRISTVS IPSE MORTEM DEVITABAT VERVS HOMO EVEN CHRIST HIMSELF, A REAL MAN, SHUNNED DEATH

**Illumination:** The scene depicts John 11:54, and John 12:23-36. It is set in a spacious hilly landscape with the towns of Jerusalem and Ephrem, both indicated with inscriptions, depicted in the background. The Jordan River runs between them. Christ stands to the right beneath a large tree whose overhanging branches can be seen above his head. He is preaching to a large crowd of people who sit or stand in front of him. He
holds a staff in his left hand and gestures to the crowd with his right hand. They watch him attentively, some with their hands in an attitude of prayer. There is great variety in their costumes and headdresses.

In the foreground Martha is cooking over an open fire, holding a frying pan with a long handle over the flames. Beside her is a grill on which there are two fish, and behind her is a large round object that resembles a loaf of bread. Martha no longer wears the white robes of the preceding scenes, but now wears the dress and a turban-like headdress that indicate her domestic role. The Magdalene, however, is still dressed in robes and a veil. She kneels opposite the fire and holds out a fish as she speaks to Martha with an imploring gesture. Beside her is a man with yellow sleeves who watches Christ as he preaches. This may be Judas, who wears yellow sleeves on his tunic in the next scene.

To the left of the composition are three men who also watch Christ as he speaks to those assembled before him. Two of the men are dressed in contemporary clothing—a man with a red hat and short tunic, and one with yellow boots, a yellow hat on his back, and a sword visible beneath his tunic. These details indicate the second man is the impressive Jewish friend from previous roundels. A banderole identifies Lazarus as the man in the center with the red hat, although he wears a costume that he has not worn previously. He stands with his back to the viewer as he watches Christ. Another older bearded man with a blue hat on his shoulders stands on the other side of Lazarus.

This scene is unusual because it is a composite of two scenes that are separated by both time and distance in the Gospels. As indicated by the inscription and the narrative, Christ and his disciples have gone into the countryside outside of Ephrem, an episode related in John 11:54. However, there is no mention in this account of Christ preaching to multitudes there, merely that, “he abode there with his disciples.” However, in the following chapter, John 12, Christ enters Jerusalem in triumph on Palm Sunday. It is in John 12:23-36, which is set in Jerusalem, that he speaks to “multitudes” about the coming of His hour and urges them to be “children of light.” It is also in this sermon that Christ shows a moment of fear when, in John 11:27, he says, “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour. But for this cause I came into this
world.” This is the moment referred to in the motto above, when Christ, a man of flesh and blood, wavered before the torturous death awaiting him.

The presence of Lazarus is an important element that further identifies the source of this illumination as the Gospel of John 12:9, which states that many of the throng “came not for Jesus’s sake only, but that they might see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.” Therefore, Lazarus’s presence correlates with this particular sermon, as does the motto.

However, the inclusion of Martha and the Magdalene in the illumination and their activities at the cook fire do not have a source in John 12. The narrative in folio 43r states that Martha is preparing a meal for Christ, thus fulfilling her role as hostess and housekeeper for Christ and his followers. However, in the Gospel of John 12:2, this meal takes place in a home in Bethany, a home identified in other Gospel accounts as that of Simon the Leper. The Magdalene is clearly assisting Martha in the process, which is not in accordance with the narrative text. Furthermore, the Magdalene’s imploring gesture to her sister and the inclusion of a single loaf of bread and a few fish could be an allusion to the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes found in the Gospel of John 6:1-13. This episode did, in fact, take place on a hillside near Galilee, thus correlating with the landscape locale of this image.

The importance of this episode is its emphasis on charity, and the allusion to it may have been intended by Demoulins as a reminder of the responsibilities of wealth. However, the activities of the sisters and other anachronistic details cannot be fully explained at this time. Note also that Ephrem is spelled with a “ph” in this folio rather than “Effrem” as in earlier roundels.

**Coloration:** red on Martha’s sleeves; pink, red, and yellow on the hats of the crowd; the man beside the Magdalene has yellow sleeves; Lazarus has a red hat and gold belt; his companion with the sword has a yellow hat and boots; the other man has a blue hat; the sky is blue, as is the river; the fire is red and orange; Christ’s nimbus is gold.
Folio 44v: Jesus at the house of Simon the Leper

Frame: black with motifs including a mask, dragons, kneeling and falling figures, a ribbon, a mouse or rat, and a bucranium terminus in gold.

Translation: “Jesus, six days before the pasch, visited in Bethany in the house of Simon the Leper, and had a meal there. Lazarus was keeping him company, Martha was serving and Mary Magdalene had taken a pound of very precious ointment, ‘and anointed the feet and head of Jesus, and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.’”  
Therefore, Judas said ‘Why should that not be sold for 300 denari and that given to the poor?’ Jesus Christ said to him ‘Let her be, as this will serve on the day of my burial. The poor you will always have with you—me, however, you shall not always have.’

Folio 45r: The meal at the House of Simon the Leper; Martha serves and the Magdalene anoints Christ’s head

Motto: QVID FOEDIVS AVARITIA
HOW REPULSIVE IS GREED

Illumination: This scene is a composite of the same episode described in Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, and John 12:1-8, although each has subtle differences. The scene is set in the town of Bethany, as indicated in the background. On the right of the composition there is a town square with a fountain and buildings around the perimeter. Several people are walking in the square and two white dogs are in front of the fountain in the middle ground. On the left of the composition is the house of Simon the Leper, which is indicated by the inscription DOMUS SIMONIS LEPROSI on the plinth of the house below opening to the room.

A large group of figures are seated around a cloth-covered table on which cups and small loaves of bread have been placed. On the floor in front of the table is a wine vessel. Martha, indicated with an inscription, wears the costume with red sleeves that she wore in the previous roundel. This costume separates her from the other women and identifies her as a housekeeper and hostess. She is carrying a platter of food to the table. Christ is seated at the center on the far side of the table with the other male figures around the left and right edges of the table in an arrangement resembling a “Last Supper”
composition. Lazarus, identified with a banderole, is seated on Christ’s left wearing a collared cloak, yellow hat, and long hair. He looks to Christ and gestures with his hand in an imploring manner. Judas is seated across the table to the far left of Christ. The other figures include a woman standing beside Christ, the Virgin Mary who is identified by her blue mantle, an elderly man with a beard, and a man wearing a skullcap with a wide brimmed hat hanging on his back. This figure may be Simon the Leper, although he is not identified as such.

The Magdalene, who is identified, is wearing a robe and a turban-like headdress with a veil that flutters behind her. She stands behind Christ and is anointing his head with the balm from an upturned vessel. In response to this action, Judas says “QVARE NON DATVM EST EGENIS,” “Why was this not given to the poor?” Christ replies “PAUPERES HABEBI TIS ME AVTEM NO SEMPER,” “The poor you shall always have—me, however, not always.” He has his right hand raised in a gesture of benediction and his left hand on the table edge.

The architecture of the house alludes to the style and ornamentation of the Italian Renaissance, including a column with garland and palmette decorations, an arch decorated with lozenges, and spirals on the frieze and spandrel. There are standing and crouching nude figures atop the column. The other buildings in the town display a variety of styles and rise up the hill on which the town is built. A large building is set back from Simon’s house and appears to be a church with an arched portal, arched windows, a carved medallion, a balustrade, and a lantern or campanile on top. The fountain has a large, wide basin on a pedestal and a carved figure on top. It resembles the fountain on at the top of the frame in folio 38v.

**Coloration:** Martha’s sleeves are red; Lazarus’s hat is yellow; Simon’s hat is pale brown; Judas has yellow sleeves; the Virgin wears a blue mantle; the ointment is bright yellow; the sky is light blue; the wine vessel is golden yellow; Christ’s nimbus is gold.
Folio 45v: Jesus knows his time has come and goes to Jerusalem

Frame: dark pink with a pattern of motifs resembling spotted butterflies and cocoons in gold; in the diamond-shaped space formed by the edges of the wings of two butterflies, the oval shape of a chrysalis is visible.

Translation: “Jesus, knowing that his time had come, went to Jerusalem and left his mother in Bethany at Martha's house. To keep her company, he left Lazarus, Martha, and Magdalene. Six days later, Saint John, who had witnessed Jesus's arrest in Jerusalem, came back. In tears, he told our lady what he had seen and heard. Oh, poor mother who could describe the pain you felt when told about the capture of your son? And you, Magdalene, weren’t you the saddest woman in the world? Alas, Magdalene, it was too much to hear that your friend was going to die, and to see at the same time your poor mistress suffering such grief.”

Folio 46r: John enters Martha’s house to announce the capture of Christ to the Virgin and the Holy Women.

Motto: SI FLEAT NON EST MIRVM MATER EST.

IF THE MOTHER DOES NOT LAMENT, IT IS ASTONISHING

Illumination: The scene is not based on a scriptural passage. It is set in the house of Martha, a location indicated on the plinth of the house with the inscription DOMVS MARTHAE. The town of Bethany is identified in the background. John rushes into the house from the street, the movement of his drapery alluding to the rapidity of his movements. He is weeping and has a cloth to his face as he wipes his eyes. Seated inside the house are the Magdalene, Mary Salome, and Mary Cleophas. The Virgin is seated in the center of the group, and Martha stands behind her with arms crossed over her chest. All the figures are identified with banderoles. The Virgin looks up at Lazarus, who leans down and touches her on the shoulder either to comfort her or to inform her of John’s arrival. Her hands are clasped in a gesture of anguish and her mouth is slightly agape as if she is crying or speaking to Lazarus. Mary Salome and Mary Cleophas are weeping and wiping their eyes with their veils. The Magdalene is the most reserved of the figures. She is seated calmly on the Virgin’s right and is not weeping. She is
gesturing to the Virgin with her right hand and all of her attention is focused on the Holy Mother.

The Magdalene, Lazarus, and Martha are dressed in the costumes of the previous roundel, Mary Salome wears a gown with puffed sleeves and a large headdress, and the Virgin, John, and Mary Cleophas have on traditional robes, although the Virgin does not wear her blue mantle. The location of the scene in a town is indicated by figures walking on the open street behind John and a large multilevel building with many windows in the background. The architecture of Martha’s house is classical with an arched portal and a carved lintel on the interior door. At the corner of the portal is a pilaster decorated with sculpted motifs, including two nude figures standing with backs to a center column at the top and what appears to be a robed figure seated on a throne in the center of the pilaster. At the bottom are two more figures placed one in front of the other. The outermost figure has a right arm raised. These figures may be allusions to the Flagellation, Judgment, and Scourging of Christ. There is also bucrania in panels at the top and bottom of the pilaster. There are other motifs between the figures but they are not discernable.

**Coloration:** Martha has red sleeves; Mary Cleophas has golden yellow sleeves; the sky is blue; Lazarus has a gold banderole, and there is a golden nimbus around the heads of John and the Virgin.

**Folio 46v: The Virgin and followers of Jesus go to Jerusalem to learn of Christ’s whereabouts**

**Frame:** green with a floral vine and scroll pattern in gold.

**Translation:** “Who would be hard and cruel enough to refrain from crying at the sight of Jesus Christ's mother, so beautiful, so sweet, so pure, so neat, running through the city of Jerusalem, hurrying to the houses of Annas, Pilate, and Herod, searching for the King, her son, and asking for news. As soon as John had informed her of the state in which he had left Jesus, the poor lady had left Bethany to go to Jerusalem. Alas, nobody was paying attention to her or to the beautiful Magdalene, and the guards of the great lords pushed her away and closed the door in her face without answering her humble questions.”
Folio 47r: The Virgin and followers of Jesus are denied entrance to Herod’s house

Motto: QVIS AMOR MATERNO MAIOR

WHAT LOVE IS GREATER THAN MATERNAL LOVE?

Illumination: This scene is not based in scripture, but refers to an incident in the life of Louise of Savoy and her son Francis I, which I discuss in Chapter 3. In the story of the Magdalene, however, it depicts the Magdalene, the Virgin, the holy women, John, and Lazarus going to Herod’s house to ask where Christ is being held.

The scene is set in Jerusalem, which is identified in an inscription. In the foreground is Herod’s house, identified with the inscription DOMVS HERODIS. In the doorway of the house is the porter who is identified as “LE BASTART DE ROUAN.” He holds a large staff in his right hand and is dressed in a contemporary costume of a short tunic, a red cloak and hat, and yellow boots. The Virgin kneels before him with hands outstretched in an imploring manner. John is beside her and with her asks entrance into the house of Herod. Behind them are the Magdalene, Mary Cleophas, Martha, and Mary Salome, who are all weeping. Lazarus stands to the left of the portal. All of the figures are identified with inscriptions. The porter holds his right hand out in the face of the Virgin, emphatically barring the entrance of the figures. His mouth is open as if speaking and he scowls at the Virgin in a threatening manner. Lazarus stands on the left of the doorway. He is dressed in the collared cloak, yellow hat, and boots of the previous roundels. There is a large moneybag hanging from his belt. The women and John are dressed in white robes and cloaks.

Herod’s house has an arched doorway with pilasters. The ornament is a scroll pattern, oval medallions in the spandrels, and carved ovals inside the arch. In the background are several buildings with steep, angular roofs typical of Northern countries.

Coloration: the sky is pale blue; the porter’s costume is blue and red, with yellow boots; Lazarus has on a yellow hat and boots with gold moneybag; the Virgin has a gold radiance, and John has a gold halo.
Folio 47v: The Crucifixion

Frame: ultramarine blue with motifs including fleurs-de-lis, XIs, snakes with intertwined tails, staffs wrapped with banners, and interlaced knots.

Translation: “‘There stood near the cross his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.’ Now, Magdalene, you show how much you love him. You cannot put balm on the feet or head of your friend but you kiss the precious cross. The constancy, the faith, and the loyal strength of true love are firmer than all the diamonds in India. Merciless death cannot touch it. The ones who said ‘Let us go and die with him’ are all gone, and you alone stayed with your loyal friend, who will save you Magdalene, and will forgive many sins at your request.”

Folio 48r: The Crucifixion

Motto: A M O R

L O V E

Illumination: This scene depicts the crucifixion of Christ related in Matthew 27:33-56, Mark 15:22-41, Luke 23:33-49, and John 19:17-37. The location of Golgotha is indicated by the skull and bone at the base of the cross. An unidentified city is seen in the background, and rocks, vegetation, and trees are in the foreground. The figures are placed in the narrow space between two hills.

Christ hangs on a Tau cross in the center of the composition, the titulus reading “I N R I” over his head. He is nailed through the hands and feet, and hangs from the cross without the support of the suppedaneum. His head and body are turned toward his mother and followers on the dexter side of the composition. His loincloth flutters in the breeze and his head is surrounded by radiance. His mouth is open as if speaking to his mother, who stands in the foreground with John. She looks up at Christ with hands clasped in anguish as John supports her from behind with his arm at her waist. It is at this moment that Christ gives his mother over to the care of John.

With the exception of the Magdalene, who is identified by a banderole, the followers of Christ are identified by their dress or halos. John and the Virgin are nimbed, and Lazarus wears a black hat, although the four women are all dressed similarly.
However, it is understood that they are Martha, Mary Salome, and Mary Cleophas, who were identified in the two previous illuminations. The figures wear robes and mantles and are in various states of grief. One of the woman stands beside the Virgin and looks up at the cross, while the other two look at the Holy Mother, reinforcing the reader’s attention on the important interaction between the Virgin and her Son. At the center of the composition is Mary Magdalene, who kneels at the base of the cross and looks up adoringly at the figure of Christ above her. She embraces the crucifix with her lips directly beside Christ’s feet, alluding to her act of repentance at the House of Simon the Pharisee in which she kissed Christ’s feet as she washed them with her tears. She wears the apostolic robes like the other figures, but her mantle has fallen off her head, leaving her cap headdress and long hair visible. An open ointment jar is on the ground beside her.

To the sinister side of the composition are the Roman soldiers. Several are mounted on horses and hold lances. The bearded soldier in the front is dressed in armor and has an elaborated decorated tear-shaped shield on his back. His white horse is seen from behind and the soldier turns in the saddle to look at Christ as he gestures with his hand. A lance is visible in his hand on the far right of the composition. This could be an indication that this figure represents Longinus, who will shortly execute the coup de grace.\textsuperscript{86}

**Coloration:** the sky is dark blue; the soldiers have dark pink, blue and yellow on their costumes; Christ’s skin is tinged with pink; soft green is used on the vegetation in the foreground; gold is used for the radiance around Christ and for the halos of the Virgin and John.

**Folio 48v: Joseph of Arimathea receives the body of Christ**

**Frame:** black with paired leaf spirals divided by various motifs that are difficult to identify clearly; however, the motifs appear to include bucrania, chalice and wafer motifs, cross and orb, and nails.

**Translation:** “‘After these things, Joseph of Arimathea besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus. And Pilate gave leave.’ He came and Nicodemus, he
who at the ‘first came [to Jesus] by night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pound weight.’ Therefore, Joseph and Nicodemus took the body of Jesus and wrapped him with bands of fabric according to the custom of the Jews. ‘Now there was in the place where he was crucified, a garden: and in the garden a new sepulcher wherein no one had yet been laid. There, therefore, because of the pasch of the Jews, they laid Jesus, because the sepulcher was nigh at hand.’ And the Magdalene was always present.”

**Folio 49r: The body of Christ is taken to the tomb.**

**Motto:** NON EST DOLOR SIMILIS SICVT DOLOR MATRIS  
THERE IS NO GRIEF LIKE THE GRIEF OF A MOTHER

**Illumination:** The scene depicts the entombment of Christ as it is related in Matthew 27:57-61, Mark 15:42-47, Luke 23: 50-55, and John 19:38-42. In the far background are an unidentified town and a hill on which the three crosses are visible. Figures are depicted removing a body from the center cross, indicating that the scene also depicts the Deposition. The bodies of the two thieves remain on the other crosses. In the middle ground to the left is a gateway with two figures walking toward the cemetery. There are rocks and vegetation in the foreground.

In foreground, two men dressed in contemporary clothing carry the body of Christ, identified by a nimbus, into the open doorway of a masonry tomb, which is dark on the interior. Scripture identifies these men as Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, although none of the figures in the illumination are identified by name. Presumably the older, bearded figure is Joseph, while the younger, beardless figure is Nicodemus. The body of Christ is tightly bound and has a folded prayer shawl on the head, which is surrounded by a golden radiance.

The Virgin walks behind the body of her son, weeping with her eyes heavenward, her hands clasped in anguish, and her mouth agape. Her head is also surrounded by a golden radiance. Behind her is the Magdalene who is also weeping as she presses her veil to her eyes. Her identify is indicated only by her ointment jar.
**Coloration:** Nicodemus wears a red mantle and dark blue hat; Joseph has red tights, yellow shoes, a dark purple collar, and a blue hat; the sky is light blue; a delicate green is used for the grass of the hillside and the vegetation in the foreground; a gold radiance surrounds the heads of the Virgin and Christ.

**Folio 49v: The Magdalene returns to the tomb to find the body of Christ gone**

**Frame:** black with paired leaf scrolls divided by bucrania and winged genii in gold; there is a cross with four orbs in gold at the bottom of the frame.

**Translation:** “In order to be brief, I will pass over some details of the story. The Magdalene went to the sepulcher without being afraid of those who guarded it, and she found that the stone had been raised, and because she did not find her Lord, ‘believed he had been taken away’ [and] she went to Saint Peter and Saint John the Evangelist and said to them ‘They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher and we do not know where they have laid him.’ Then, as said in the Gospel ‘Mary stood outside the sepulcher weeping.’ Later, she returned to the monument and saw two angels who asked her ‘Why do you weep? He is risen. He is not here.’ But by then, all the ladies had come together ‘to anoint Jesus’ saying, ‘Who will roll back the stone from the entrance of the sepulcher for us?’”

**Folio 50r: The Magdalene and another woman arrive at the tomb and finds it empty**

**Motto:** LAMOVR DES FEMMEZ EST PLVS GRAND QVE DES HOMEZ VOVS LE VOYEZ PAR LEVR PERSEVERANCE
THE LOVE OF WOMEN IS GREATER THAN THAT OF MEN--YOU SEE IT IN THEIR PERSEVERANCE

**Illumination:** The scene depicts the holy women at the tomb of Christ, which is told in Matthew 28:1-8, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-11, and John 20:1-13. This image is another simultaneous narrative, depicting both the discovery of the empty tomb and the Magdalene’s encounter with the angels.

In the background, a fence borders the cemetery and a glowing radiance in the sky suggests the rising sun. To the left two women carrying ointment jars are outside the...
Although they are not identified, the woman in the foreground is Mary Magdalene based on the similarity of her depiction in previous roundels and the narrative text. The second woman is “the other Mary” identified by Matthew. Both of the women wear robes, the Magdalene has on a turban headdress, and the other Mary’s head is covered with a mantle or veil. Both are weeping and press their veils to their faces. The “other Mary” has turned to the Magdalene and says “QVIS REVOLVET LAPIDEM AB HOSTIO MONVMETI,” “Who shall roll back the stone from the entrance of the sepulcher?”

The second phase of the story is found to the right of the composition. Inside the darkened tomb, the Magdalene approaches the sarcophagus carrying the ointment vessel. The sarcophagus is empty and its lid sits sideways on the base. Two haloed angels are inside the tomb. One sits on the sarcophagus and the other stands and gestures toward the Magdalene. Behind the seated angel is an inscription that reads “SVRREXIT NON EST HIC,” “He is risen, he is not here.”

In the foreground of the illumination is a soldier, whose placement at the edge of the open side of the architecture indicates that he is outside the tomb and unseen by the women. He is on the ground, in keeping with Matthew 28:4, which states that the soldiers sent by Pilate to guard the tomb were overcome with fear at the sight of the angel of the Lord, who had descended to roll back the stone. The soldier wears the elaborate armor worn by the Roman soldiers in the Crucifixion scene, including the shield and the lance, which moves off the composition at the right edge. Another lance moves into the composition from the right of the scene, indicating that a second soldier is out of the viewer’s line of sight.

There are two inconsistencies when this roundel is compared with the previous roundel. In this image, the doorway is arched, unlike the rectangular door in folio 49r. There is also a fence in the background, which was not in the previous roundel.

Coloration: the sky is dark blue and there is blue on the coffin; yellow and gold on the angels; gold on the armor of the soldier, the vessels, and the sunbeams.
Folio 50v: Mary Magdalene speaks to the angels and meets the risen Christ in the garden

**Frame:** black with gold motifs of silhouetted figures in mounted combat and swordplay; other motifs resemble an orb and cross motif is at the top, a cross and robe on the right, and a chalice and wafer at the bottom and left side; beneath each motif are curling lines, like flames or scrolls.

**Translation:** “The angels who were at the sepulcher asked the Magdalene ‘Woman, why do you weep?’ and she answered ‘Because they have taken away my Lord and I do not know where they have laid him.’ As she was saying this, she looked behind her and ‘she saw Jesus standing; and she did not know that it was Jesus.’ She thought he was a gardener and she said to him ‘Sir, if thou hast taken him hence, tell me where thou has laid him and I will take him away.’ Jesus said to her ‘Mary,’ and as soon as she heard her name, she recognized her Lord and answered ‘Rabboni’, which means, ‘my master,’ and immediately she threw herself on her knees and wanted to kiss his feet, but he said to her ‘Do not touch me.’

Folio 51r: The Magdalene meets the risen Christ in the garden

**Motto:** KRAFT DER LIEFFDE IND RECHSCHVLDIGE FIGVR

THE LAMENTATION OF THE BELOVED AND JUSTIFIED PERSON

**Above roundel:** Alemant (German)

**Inscription in margin:** Vis amoris & vera figura

The true appearance and power of love

**Illumination:** The scene, which is set outside Christ’s tomb, depicts the Gospel of John 20: 14-17. The interior of the tomb is visible to the right through the open architecture, through which two angels are seated on either side of the empty sarcophagus with their hands in an attitude of prayer. The sashes of their costumes flutter about them.

Christ and the Magdalene are outside of the tomb. Christ is dressed in a short tunic with rolled sleeves that allows a clear view of the stigmata on his feet and hands. He holds a spade and a broad-brimmed hat hangs from his shoulders. This costume alludes to the Magdalene’s initial identification of Christ as a gardener, as mentioned in
scriptural passage cited above. He points to the Magdalene, who weeps and holds a veiled hand to her face as she says, “DNE [DOMINE], SI TV SVSTVLISTI EV [EUM] DICITO MIHI,” “Sir, if you have taken him away, tell me.” Christ, whose head is surrounded with golden radiance, replies “NOLI ME TANGER,” “Do not touch me.”

An important difference between this roundel and the preceding illuminations that depict the tomb of Christ is the description of the garden itself, which is more filled with exuberant vegetation, including the lush foliage over the head of the Magdalene. The city is no longer visible in the background, but in the distance beyond the gate is the silhouetted form of a bare tree. Also significant is the position of the cemetery gate, which is changed from folio 49r and now placed between Christ and the Magdalene. A fence moves out from the gate on both sides and the radiance of the rising sun is visible beyond the gate to the right. The gate between the Magdalene and Christ may symbolize Christ’s transition from the physical to the spiritual plane, which he states in John 20:17: “Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father.” The gate, therefore, represents the passage between the physical world of Mary Magdalene and the celestial plane to which Christ will ascend.

**Coloration:** the sky is touched with blue, as are the sashes on the costumes of the angels; gold is used for the radiance around the head of Christ and the rays of the rising sun.

**Folio 51v: The Magdalene announces to the apostles that she has seen Christ**

**Frame:** lavender gray with motifs including serpents with entwined tails arranged in opposing pairs at the top and the bottom, an X, floral and vegetative motifs, and two figures on pedestals at the right and left sides in gold.

**Translation:** “After Jesus had said to the Magdalene ‘Do not touch me, for I have not yet ascended to my father. But go to my brethren, and say to them, et cetera.’ As happy as she had been sad, Magdalene went to the apostles and said to them ‘I have seen the Lord.’ The apostles were given this name, 'apostles' because they were sent into the world to proclaim the law of God. That explains well why the Magdalene, who was to be the messenger of Jesus Christ, was named 'Apostola.' Eve, our mother, disgracing
the female sex, had brought news of sad death. And Magdalene, saving and restoring the honor of ladies, carried the news of the resurrection and of a happier life.”

**Folio 52r: The Magdalene brings the news of the Resurrection to the Apostles**

**Motto:** TIS AGAPIS I LIPI EDHA STREPHERE IS CHARAN ¹⁰⁵

I SAW THE SADNESS OF LOVE TRANSFORMED INTO JOY

**Above roundel:** Grec comun (common Greek)

**Inscription in margin:** Amoris tristiva nu/n/c vertitur in gaudium

Love now transforms sadness into joy.¹⁰⁶

**Illumination:** The scene depicts the Gospel of John 20:18. The architecture of a town is visible in the background and two people are walking in a large piazza in front of the building in which the apostles have gathered. The building is quasi-classical, with an arched doorway and arched windows. The pilaster on the portal is decorated with the Renaissance motifs used as architectural ornamentation in preceding roundels, and an iron railing indicates that the room in which the apostles have gathered is elevated.

The Magdalene rushes up the steps and into the room, wearing the robes, turban headdress, and sandals of the previous roundels at the tomb, although her hair is completely covered. Her drapery flutters behind her to indicate the rapidity of her movements. She has one hand pressed to her breast and she gestures to the apostles with the other as she says “VIDI DOMINVM,” “I have seen the Master.” Nine of the apostles are assembled in the room, although the two figures in the piazza may represent the remaining apostles coming to the group. The youthful figure of John is seated in the foreground with two older apostles as another group stands the left. All the figures look at the Magdalene as she enters the scene and John gestures to her with his hand. The white dog fills the space between them. It is interesting to note that nothing is identified in this scene, including the name of the town and figures, although their identity may be assumed by their actions, appearances, and mention in the accompanying narrative. The sun is also markedly higher in the sky, indicating the passage of time between the Magdalene’s meeting with Christ in the garden at dawn and her fulfillment of his command to tell the apostles of his Resurrection.
**Coloration:** the sky is dark blue; the sun is gold, and many of the apostles have pale golden halos.

**Folio 52v: The followers of Christ witness the Ascension**

**Frame:** dark pink with motifs including twining floral vines and scrolling leaf patterns in gold.

**Translation:** “In the preceding stories we have described how Jesus Christ appeared to the Magdalene and to the other apostles, for there can be no doubt about this ‘he showed himself alive by many proofs, for forty days appearing to them and speaking of the kingdom of God.’ And I believe that Magdalene, on one occasion, touched his feet ‘while they looked on, he was raised into heaven, and etcetera.’ Finally, seeing the apostles with the holy women and Lazarus, he performed his ascension, in a divine and glorious way.”

**Folio 53r: The Ascension of Christ**

**Motto:** LES DOVLEVRS DE LA MERE SONT APPAISEEZ QVAT ELLE VOYT MONTER SON FILZ

THE SORROWS OF THE MOTHER ARE APPEASED WHEN SHE SEES HER SON ASCEND

**Illumination:** This scene depicts the Ascension of Christ, which is described in the Acts of the Apostles 1:9-12. The setting is a rocky landscape outside Jerusalem, although the town is not identified. The architecture of the town is seen in the background, including buildings with crenulated roofs, towers, and the sharply sloping roofline commonly seen in Flemish paintings. The city gate is recognizable by its arched portal and crenulated tower. In the background figures are visible in the town, and to the right two figures have fallen to their knees and are pointing to the sky.

In the foreground is a small hill from which Christ is ascending into heaven. His feet and the lower part of his robe are visible beneath a golden cloud of radiant light. The impressions of his feet are visible on the top of the hill. Around the base of the hill, the followers of Christ have fallen to their knees as they stare in wonder at the vision. Most
of the figures have their hands outstretched in expressions of reverential awe. With the exception of the Virgin and the Magdalene, none of these figures are identified by name, although the viewer can determine the identity of some of the figures by their appearance. The eleven apostles are on the left, and John is identifiable by his long hair and bare face, just as Peter is identified by his curly hair and beard. They all wear apostolic robes.

On the right side are the Virgin and the Magdalene with the holy women and two other men who witness the event. The Magdalene wears the robes and turban headdress she wore in preceding roundels and her hair is again hidden beneath her headdress. The Virgin is in front of her and is identified with a banderole that reads “MATER DEI.” She gazes up at her son with hands outstretched and her mouth open and smiling in an expression of joy and wonder. There is a seated figure in the foreground between the two groups. This is Lazarus, who is distinguished by the yellow hat and blue tunic he has worn in previous illuminations. He forms the transition between the male and female followers of Christ, indicating that as the brother of Martha and the Magdalene, he is a part of both groups.

**Coloration:** the sky is blue; Lazarus’s costume has blue sleeves and a yellow hat; the Virgin’s head is surrounded by a golden radiance, and a similar radiance is emitted from the aureole that surrounds Christ’s feet.

**Folio 53v: The followers of Christ gather for Pentecost**

**Frame:** dark pink with motifs including a pattern of alternating pairs of wings and single feathers in gold; at the top of the frame is a motif of a winged bucranium and at the bottom is a winged genius.

**Translation:** “When came the day of Pentecost, all the apostles and the holy women ‘at Jerusalem, they were all together in the same place praying.’ And suddenly, a noise was heard in the sky ‘as of a mighty wind coming upon them’ and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared ‘parted tongues on them like fire.’ And then each one received the Holy Spirit.”
Folio 54r: Pentecost

Motto: DAIR DERGEIST VVIL DAYR BLESTE.
THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL BLESS THEM

Above roundel: Alemant (German)

Inscription in margin: Spiritus ubi vult spirat
The Spirit breathes where He wills

Illumination: The scene depicts the Descent of the Holy Spirit, which is described in Acts 2:1-13. The setting is a grand and spacious classical interior. The Dove of the Holy Spirit is placed in the arch of the foyer, which forms a kind of halo above him. The disciples and holy women sit or kneel in two groups on either side of the Virgin, who is also seated.\textsuperscript{112} John kneels beside the Magdalene, who is the only one identified by name. She is in the foreground wearing the robe and headdress of the previous roundels. The Virgin, in the center, has an open book on her lap, her hands are in a gesture of reverential awe, and her head is surrounded by a golden radiance. Over her head, the Dove of the Holy Spirit hovers with wings outstretched, emitting golden rays of light which descend to the disciples below. They look up to witness this vision, their faces and hands expressing their feelings of wonder and awe. Many of the figures have golden flames hovering over their heads. In the foreground beside the foot of the foremost apostle is a small folded object, possibly a book.

The architecture is arranged in a nearly symmetrical fashion. There is an arched doorway on the left, decorated pilasters on either side of the foyer area at the center, the central portal, and another arched opening on the right. The main portal consists of two tall, narrow doors with a slender trumeau between them. The buildings of the city are visible through the open portal. Tall arched openings are on either side of the foyer, and a ribbed, hemispherical arch spans the foyer area. In front of the right arch is a balcony decorated with scrolling designs on which two figures observe the group of disciples in the foreground.

Coloration: the only color used in this image is the gold radiating from the Virgin, the Dove, and the Pentecostal flames above the heads of the disciples.
Folio 54v: Literary references to the Magdalene in sources other than Holy Scripture

Frame: black with volutes with alternating fleurs-de-lis and scrolls in gold.

Translation: “Here ends the references to the Holy Scriptures and begins the account of what I found about the Magdalene in other books and authentic sources. After the reception of the Holy Spirit, Magdalene began to preach in public ‘that Christ was the true Messiah promised in the law of the Jews.’ She sold all her possessions and threw the money at the feet of the apostles. The Jews, bothered by her predictions, put her to sea in a boat disarmed and empty of everything. With her was Lazarus, Martha, Marcella her chambermaid, the disciple Saint Maximus, and Cedonius, who had been blind until Jesus Christ cured him. And all together in very little time and without problems they arrived at Marseilles.”

Note: “Cedonius” refers to Sidonius.

Folio 55r: The Magdalene renounces worldly goods, preaches to the multitudes, and leaves Jerusalem for Marseilles

Motto: DE RECHSCHVLDIGE HAVEN FILL BVYSZ
THE JUST PERSON SAYS GOODBYE AND LEAVES THE PORT

Above roundel: Alemant (German)

Inscription in margin: Multa tribulationes iustorum
Many are the trials of the just

Illumination: As noted in the narrative above, the following scenes are not found in scripture but are described in the various Magdalene legends, most notably the Golden Legend. This illumination is tripartite with the scenes arranged successively and divided by simple black lines. In the upper left, the Magdalene, identified with a banderole, is preaching to a large group of people in a wooded landscape. The figures are in various types of costumes from elaborate to somber. She holds a staff and points to the crowd in an emphatic gesture that strongly mimics the representation of Christ in folio 44r.
On the top right, a town is visible on a hill in the background. In the foreground, the Magdalene, identified with an inscription on a placard, pours jewels and gold coins into a small casket at her feet. She is dressed as before in the robe and headdress. The apostles stand opposite the Magdalene watching her actions and John points to the casket as he addresses her.

The bottom half of the circle depicts the departure of the Magdalene and her group of disciples from Jerusalem for Marseilles. Jerusalem is identified in the background on the left, and Marseilles is indicated on the right. A radiant sun glows above the horizon line. The Magdalene and five companions fill a small boat that lacks mast, sail, and rudder. Undulating waves surround the hull of the boat on which the Magdalene’s name is written. The remaining figures are not identified in the illumination, but are listed in the narrative. The Magdalene, who stands at the stern of the boat, has turned her face heavenward. Lazarus, who is identified by his large hat, points to the shore ahead while the robed woman seated beside him, probably Martha, clasps her hands in prayer. The three other figures, representing Maximinus, Martha’s maid Marcella, and Sidonius, complete the company.

**Coloration:** red, pink, blue, and yellow on costumes of the multitude; red and golden brown in costumes of the male figures in the boat; pale blue is used for the sky and darker blue for the water; gold used for the radiance of the sun and the precious items.

**Folio 55v: The Magdalene converts the king and queen of Provence**

**Frame:** pale orange with motifs in gold including mask on the left of the frame, a bucranium on the right, and other elements that are not discernable; there are motifs resembling strawberries on a vine throughout the design.

**Translation:** “In the fourteenth year after the passion of Jesus Christ, the Magdalene was in Marseilles and dwelt near the entrance of the temple to which the king and queen of Provence used to come to sacrifice to idols. Magdalene preached to them to make them reject their false idols and they returned to their house. Then she appeared to
them for several nights, and by means of fear and pity, she forced them to give her a house, and to receive her and her company graciously.

One day as she was preaching, the king asked her if she could prove the strength of her faith. "Yes" she said, "the faith as defined by Saint Peter, who is in Rome." Then the king said to her, ‘We [will] believe if you obtain a son for us.’ ‘We will believe if at your request your God gives us a son.’"  

Folio 56r: The Magdalene converts the King and Queen of Marseilles

Motto: THAVMASTOS O THEOS IS TA AGIATV
   GOD IS WONDERFUL IN HIS SAINTS

Above roundel: Grec comun (common Greek)

Inscription in margin: Mirabilis deus in sanctis suis
   God is wonderful in his saints

Illumination: This is a quadripartite illumination divided by crossed lines that appear to have shadows along one side, giving them the architectural presence of mullion bars. In the upper quadrant, the Magdalene is depicted preaching to the king and queen of Provence. They are not identified by name in the image, but are identified in the narrative. The king is dressed in an elaborate costume with a fur or gold collar and scalloped edged boots. He holds a scepter and wears both a hat and crown. The queen is dressed more simply and wears a small crown. They are seated on stools in a wooded area; behind them are three columns topped by nude figures representing pagan idols. Two men stand in the background to the right of the couple. The Magdalene, identified with a banderole, stands between two trees as she preaches to the royal couple. She gestures emphatically with her right hand as her left hand rests on a staff supported by notches in the tree, resembling the preaching posture seen in folio 55r.

The scene in the upper right quadrant is placed in the bedchamber of the king and queen. They are sleeping in a large bed raised on a platform and are identified both by the inscription “REX~REGINA” and the crowns they wear on their heads. A small table or chair is opposite the bed, a chamber pot is on the floor beside the king, and a small dog sleeps on the floor in the foreground. Over the bed hover four angels who support the
elevated Magdalene, identified by an inscription, as she prays over the couple. She is surrounded by a radiant golden aureole, indicating her visionary nature.

In the lower left quadrant the scene is set in the street outside the temple, according to the narrative. A large building is depicted in the background. The king and queen, dressed in regal costumes and wearing crowns, advance toward the Magdalene, who is identified with an inscription. She stands on the curved steps of the temple and kneels as they approach. The other members of her party accompany her, although they are not identified by name. To the Magdalene’s left, Martha and Marcella also kneel to greet the royal couple while on the other side of the Magdalene, Lazarus doffs his hat in an exaggerated gesture. Maximinus and Sidonius stand in the background behind Lazarus.

In the lower right quadrant, the scene is set again in the wooded area. The town is visible in the background, but the columns and pagan idols are not present. The Magdalene, identified with a banderole, stands on a raised platform behind a simple wooden lectern made of a crossed bar resting on two upright members. She grips the bar with both hands as she preaches to the king and queen who are seated in front of her. They gesture toward the Magdalene as they converse with her and the inscription above the king says “CREDEMVSI SI NOBIS FILIV I PETRAVERIS,” “We will believe if you obtain a son for us.” Four other male figures stand in the background.

**Coloration:** red, blue, pink, and yellow on the costumes of the peasants; gold on the regalia of the king and queen, the bases of the pagan idols, and the king’s chair; the king has yellow boots; the sky is blue.

**Folio 56v: The king and queen of Provence go on pilgrimage to Rome**

**Frame:** black with motifs in gold including four silhouetted dragons with interlaced tails at the corners, and figures seated atop oval urns at the sides; the dragons at the bottom appear to be breathing fire.

**Translation:** “The queen of Provence became pregnant and thanked the Magdalene for it. Then, she and the king left the holy lady. They sailed to Rome to see Saint Peter and to be instructed in the faith. The queen had a son while on the boat and
she died; the king showed great grief. He was forced to land near a small mountain on
the top of which he put the dead body. He placed the infant near the maternal breast, as
there was nothing else he could do.”

Folio 57r: The queen of Provence conceives; the royal couple begin their pilgrimage
to Rome

Motto: PROSPERA ES LA NAVEGATION DE AQVELL QVE TIENE(NT)

POR PATRONA LA MAGDALENA

PROSPEROUS IS THE JOURNEY OF THOSE WHO HAVE THE

MAGDALENE AS THEIR PATRONESS

Above roundel: Espaignol (Spanish)

Inscription in margin: Prospera est eorum navigatio qui magalenam patronam

habent

Prosperous is the journey of those who have the Magdalene as their
patroness.

Illumination: This is a quadripartite illumination with the sections divided by
simple black lines without the indication of shadows. The setting of the scene in the
upper left quadrant the scene is the square of an urban street, where the Magdalene meets
the queen of Provence. Buildings are in the background and a structure with an arched
doorway is behind the Magdalene. The queen, now pregnant, approaches the Magdalene,
identified with a banderole, to thank her for her intervention. Her hands are clasped in a
reverential gesture and she is identified with a banderole that reads “REGINA
MASCVLO PRAEGNANT,” “The queen is pregnant with a son [a male].” The
Magdalene stands opposite her in a conversational posture. A white dog sits between
them watching their interaction.

The scene in the upper right quadrant is set in a wooded landscape. The king and
queen are dressed in traveling clothes, hats, crowns, and both carry pilgrim’s staffs. The
king clasps hands with the Magdalene, who is identified with a banderole, in a gesture of
farewell as they prepare to leave. The king stands with his foot resting on a rock,
possibly indicating his intention, as stated in the narrative, of visiting Rome specifically
to see Peter, i.e. Petrus, the “rock” on which Christ built his church, as noted in the motto on folio 58r. The Magdalene, dressed in her usual costume of robes and turban headdress, is in a posture of partial genuflection with her knees bent.

The miniature on the lower left quadrant depicts a storm at sea. The king, queen, and other figures are in a small boat whose mast has been broken in the violent storm. Waves curl up the sides of the boat and the sail and riggings are flaying loose. A hooded figure is at the tiller in the stern of the boat. The queen is laying down in the bow of the boat. She has given birth to a son with the aid of another figure who holds the child. The king, seated in the stern, reaches for the baby. Their gold crowns are all that indicate the king and queen.

The lower right quadrant is set on a wooded, rocky island. The king has placed the body of his wife on an elevated part of the island as the other figures wait in the damaged boat below a rocky cliff. The queen is stretched out on the ground with her staff beside her and the king is placing the tiny child on her breast. The wildness of the island is indicated by the patch of woods in the background and a broken tree stump and vegetation in the foreground. A rocky outcrop separates the king and his family from the sea.

**Coloration:** the king and queen have gold crowns and gold detailing on their costumes; the king wears yellow boots; the sea and sky are blue, the vegetation on the island is green and pale brown.

**Folio 57v: The king goes to Rome to meet St. Peter then returns to find his wife and child alive**

**Frame:** pale orange with volute scrolls composed of C and ω in gold.

**Translation:** “After the king had put mother and child on the top of the mountain, he recommended them to the Magdalene and took to sea again to complete his voyage. Soon he arrived at Ostia and by the Tiber he went to Rome where the pope St. Peter received him graciously and taught him the truth of the Catholic faith. Some say that Saint Peter guided him to Jerusalem, but I do not believe any of it. Sometime later the poor king went back to sea and sailed such a long way that he finally arrived at the rock
where he had left his wife. He found the little child on the shore. In fear, he ran back to his mother. The King found them both alive, and together they returned to Marseilles.”

**Folio 58r: The king continues to Rome, meets Peter, retrieves his family, and returns to Marseilles**

**Motto:** EPAM IS TIM PETRAN ETVTI THELO CTISI TIN ECCLESIAMV

UPON THIS ROCK I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH

**Above roundel:** Grec comun (common Greek)

**Inscription in margin:** Super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam

Upon this rock, I will build my church

**Illumination:** As in the previous roundel, this quadripartite miniature is divided with simple black lines. The upper left quadrant depicts the king and the hooded man in a repaired boat approaching the city of Rome, which as indicated in the background with an inscription. The king, holding his staff and wearing a hat but no crown, is seated in the bow of the boat. The hooded man is at the tiller and boat is in full sail, taking them toward Rome.

In the upper right quadrant, the king meets Peter in the streets of Rome, which is again indicated with an inscription. A large domed building with a loggia is in the background. Peter is identified by his papal tiara and vestment. The king, still holding his pilgrim’s staff, doffs his hat as he rushes toward Peter, who smiles in greeting. The king wears a gold crucifix on his chest.

The lower left scene depicts the king returning to the island to find his wife and child alive. The boat is in the foreground, and a man, presumably the sailor, is seated in the bow. The king has disembarked and is running toward his family. The queen is in the clearing at the edge of the rocks where the king left her, but now she is seated in the trees with her staff across her lap. The child runs up the path toward her with arms outspread in alarm.

The lower right quadrant depicts the group sailing toward Marseilles. The town is identified in the background with an inscription. The king, queen, and sailor are visible
in the boat, which is in full sail and rapidly approaching the shore as indicated by the waves splashing against the bow.

**Coloration:** the king wears yellow boots; the vegetation on the island is green and brown; the sky and sea are blue; the crowns of the king and queen are gold, as are the vestments and tiara of Peter.

**Folio 58v:** The Magdalene receives the royal family at Marseilles; she retreats to the wilderness to do penance and is elevated by angels

**Frame:** dark green with motifs including XIs, crossed feathers, vases, and flowers, possibly lilies, in gold.

**Translation:** “Magdalene received the king and queen humbly when they came back from their trip and had them baptized with the little child. Then she left to go to do her penance in the desert. And each day, by a special grace from God, she was ‘raised two cubits above the ground by the hands of angels.’”

She was, at the seven canonical hours of each day, elevated by holy angelic spirits, to a height of one meter.”

**Folio 59r:** The Magdalene receives the king and queen and witnesses their baptism; she retreats to the wilderness where she is transported into heaven daily by angels

**Motto:** QVI PROPTER VNVM OMNIA SPERNIT SATIS AMAT

HE WHO LOVES ENOUGH SCORNS ALL THINGS ON ACCOUNT OF ONE MAN

**Illumination:** A quadripartite miniature divided by simple black lines. The upper left scene depicts the return of the king and queen to Marseilles, although the town is not identified. The Magdalene, identified with an inscription, meets the family at the dock. The boat is visible at the left of the composition and buildings are in the background. The royal family has disembarked and rushes toward the Magdalene, who greets them with a gesture of benediction. The nude child holds his father’s hand as he looks up at the Magdalene who stands in front of him. The king and queen carry their staffs and the queen wears a hat and crown. The king’s hat, with the crown attached, has fallen onto his shoulders and his drapery flutters to indicate the rapidity of his movements. The
Magdalene wears the robes and turban headdress of the previous roundels with her hair completely hidden.

The scene in the upper right illustrates the baptism of the royal family. It is set in or outside a temple judging by the two large columns in the background. The Magdalene, identified with an inscription, stands between the two columns with her hands in an attitude of prayer. She wears the robe and turban headdress. In front of her is a large round baptismal font decorated with a carved scroll design. The king and queen are nude and kneel in the font with the child between them. An unidentified priest, dressed in heavy robes, stands to the right of the font and baptizes the family. A white dog sits at the right edge and watches the proceedings.

In the lower left, the Magdalene, identified with an inscription, is depicted in the wilderness with trees and dense vegetation all around her. Dressed in the robes and turban headdress, she is running rapidly toward a cliff face with her hands outstretched and drapery fluttering behind her.

In the lower right quadrant, the Magdalene is surrounded by a brilliant gold aureole as she is lifted heavenward by six angels. Her nude body is in an exaggerated contrapposto, her clasped hands are placed over her breasts, and her long hair flows down to cover her body below the waist. The angels wear robes that curl and flutter around them. Beneath the saint is a rocky cliff with a small structure is visible at the top. This is the Chapel of Saint Pilon.

**Coloration:** the crowns, edge of the baptismal font, and priestly vestments are gold, as is the radiance surrounding the Magdalene; the sea and sky are blue.

**Folio 59v: The Magdalene’s grotto in the wilderness**

**Frame:** black with abstracted linear elements in gold; between some of the elements are motifs that look like winged genii or doves.

**Translation:** “Magdalene went to the desert in the place that we call “La Baume”. A place that was then most strange and arid compared to what it is now, because nobody lived there. However, it is still very wild for those who want to go there to meditate devoutly. You have seen it, Madame, and, according to the Roman custom,
in the year 1516, on the second day of January, after the King your very humble son had been victorious against the Swiss, you took the pain to climb there with the best and sweetest little queen that was ever in France. You did very wisely, Madame, for this showed your worth, and a thousand years after your death, you will still be praised for it.”

**Folio 60r: The shrine complex at La Sainte-Baume**

**Motto:** LA DAME NE PEVT ESTRE SEVLE QVI A TOVSIOVRS LA PRESENCE DE SON AMY.
THE LADY IS NOT ALONE WHO ALWAYS HAS THE PRESENCE OF HER FRIEND.

**Illumination:** This roundel depicts the vast shrine complex of La Sainte-Baume, identified with an inscription, where Mary Magdalene spent her last years in solitary contemplation. In the foreground of this panoramic scene is a wooded area through which stretch several paths. On the right the path leads to a long structure while the paths leading to the left intersect at the site of a small shrine. One path continues off to the woods at the left and climbs to the top of the cliff where a small cross is visible. As I discuss in Chapter 3, the long building is the hostelry commissioned by Francis I, and the small shrine is one of the seven oratories built on the paths leading to the grotto.

The central path runs to the base of the shrine complex at the foot of a sheer white cliff that rises abruptly from the woods below. The left and right sides of the cliff are craggy and vertical in formation, but the center is smooth with horizontal striations visible in the rock formations. A dark opening of a cavern is located in the center portion of the cliff and a group of small buildings are visible at the mouth of the cavern. An angular stairway leads up from the base of the cliff at the left to the grotto. At the very top of the highest cliff is a small structure, which is the Chapel of Saint Pilon.

**Note:** This is a very accurate depiction of the shrine complex and is remarkable for the geological description of the rock strata. The accuracy of this scene and other depictions of the grotto shrine suggest that Godefroy le Batave visited La Sainte-Baume to make sketches for the *Vie de la Magdalene*, either as a part of the royal entourage in 1516 or later to make preparatory studies for the creation of the manuscript.
**Coloration:** the sky is blue and the grass and vegetation are green.

**Folio 60v: The Chapel of Saint Pilon at the top of La Sainte-Baume**

**Frame:** black with motifs including cherubic heads and swags of cornucopia in gold.

**Translation:** “Representation of the chapel, seen from the front, and from the back where there is a small wall.”

**Folio 61r: The Chapel of Saint Pilon**

**Motto:** CATHARO A APENTHAMEGNI THEOZVSIN

THE PURE ONES DO NOT DIE WHO LIVE IN GOD

**Above roundel:** Grec comun (common Greek)

**Inscription in margin:** Mundo mortui deo viuunt

Dead to the world, they (now) live for God

**Illumination:** This bipartite scene depicts two views of the tiny Chapel of Saint Pilon, which is located at the top of the cliff above the holy grotto. The miniature is unusual for the *Vie* in that it is partially divided by a black line that bisects the illumination to the midpoint, which is the top of the cliff in both scenes. Above this, the unbroken sky acts as a unifying element to the composition.

Saint Pilon marks the site where the Magdalene was elevated heavenward by angels each day at the seven canonical hours, and is the same structure that was depicted in the lower right quadrant of folio 59r. On the left of this miniature is the front view of Saint Pilon. A sharply angled path leads up the cliff face to the chapel, which is a small, simple brick structure. The arched door is open, a small arched window is seen on the right side of the chapel, and a brick wall is visible at the rear of the structure.

The right half of the roundel depicts the back of the chapel, which has a tall gable with a cross placed in the peak. Below the cross is a stepped pylon from which the chapel gets its name. It supports a sculptured figure, presumably of the Magdalene, in an arch-covered niche. This site marks the actual spot of the Magdalene’s ascension. The low wall delineates the edge of the cliff.
**Coloration:** the sky is blue; the cliff and church are done in shades of grayish brown.

**Folio 61v: The courtyard of the shrine**

**Frame:** green with motifs including a winged bucranium at top, cherubic heads at the corners with ribbon scrolls beneath them, and three round winged objects on pedestals that resemble mirrors or monstrances.

**Translation:** “The site of "La Baume" as seen when one has climbed to the court in front of the church.”

**Folio 62r: Entry to the grotto at La Sainte-Baume**

**Motto:** PHRENIMI GINECHA POTE MOGNI DEN PORI NANE

THE VIRTUOUS WOMAN CAN NEVER BE ALONE

**Above roundel:** Grec commun (common Greek)

**Inscription in margin:** Sapiens mulier nunquam sola esse potest

The wise woman can never be alone

**Illumination:** This scene depicts the interior of the grotto from an elevated vantage point. It is the first of a series of images that take the reader deep into the shrine complex. In the foreground, a rock-cut stairway winds through the grotto and leads to a group of small structures built into the sides of the cave. At the curve of the path on the left is a small shrine tucked into the cliff. A second stairway leads to the entrance of the main grotto, beside which is an outcropping of rocks. The open central area is bordered by a building with a chimney. Two cloaked figures walk in the open plaza and other figures are visible in the background. These figures give the image a sense of scale and indicate the ongoing presence of pilgrims at the site.

To the back of the cave are several more structures with windows and arched doorways that lead into the depths of the grotto. On an elevated area to the left are several small structures including a shrine with a crucifix. Above the buildings are the rock formations of the cave. The depiction of the rock formations is again remarkable for both the subtlety of the rendering and the geologic accuracy.
**Coloration:** the figures wear red cloaks and there are washes of pink, blue-gray and pale brown on the architecture and cliff formations.

**Folio 62v: Inside the grotto church**

**Frame:** black with festoons of leaves, fruits, and berries tied with slender ribbons; the overall effect is of a wreath.

**Translation:** “Interior of the church under the rock of ‘La Baume.’”

**Folio 63r: Interior of the grotto with a view of the chapel of Louis XII**

**Motto:** THEL CHARI I MONXIA CHE THELI ATHISI OS EDODHIMO

SOLITUDE WANTS DIVINE GRACE AND ALSO WANTS TO GROW

RIGHT HERE

**Above roundel:** Grec comun (common Greek)

**Inscription in margin:** Exvltabit solitvdo & florebit quasi lilivm

She will be rejoicing in solitude and she will bloom like a lily

**Illumination:** This scene depicts the interior of the grotto shrine. In the foreground is the edge of a crenulated wall and behind this, several structures are built beneath the overhanging rock formations. To the left is a small gabled shrine with an altar within the niche. To the back of the cave on the far right is another niche with steps leading to an altar on which there is a small crucifix. To the right of this niche, a darkened opening has been cut into the side of the cave.

In the center are two larger structures. The main chapel is tall and narrow with three open sides. The architecture is Gothic in style, with pointed arches, carvings, compound colossnettes, and tracery. Inside the chapel a quadripartite ribbed groined vault is visible, and on the back wall, a large altar is raised on a plinth and decorated with a religious painting or relief.

To the right of the large chapel is a smaller one composed of grid work that is reached by a short flight of stairs. Within this smaller chapel is an altar supporting a sculpture, over which is a baldacchino. Two small doorways on either side of the altar lead deeper into the shrine complex. In addition, a staircase and banister leading is
visible through the opening on the left side of the larger chapel, and a small shrine is placed on the extreme right of the composition beneath an overhang of rock.

**Note:** the use of linear perspective is excellent and one has a real sense of the structures existing in and receding into space.

**Coloration:** the entire scene is done in grisaille.

**Folio 63v: Inside the chapel**

**Frame:** pale orange with motifs including winged bucrania, orb and cross forms, and monstrances between the spirals in gold; the tonal similarity of the orange and gold make exact identification of the motifs difficult.

**Translation:** “Representation of what can be seen from the chapel when the door is open.”

**Folio 64r: Interior of the grotto chapel with the reclining figure of Mary Magdalene visible through open door**

**Motto:** VDHEMIA PATHAGNI AGANACTISIN I PSICHI POLEMVSA
METOSOMA CHE CATHARIO ANTITHE MEGNI
THE SOUL SUFFERS NO DESPAIR WHEN IT FIGHTS AGAINST
THE BODY IF IT IS [NOT] OPPOSED TO PURITY

**Above roundel:** Grec comun (common Greek)

**Inscription in margin:** Nulla patitur fastidia anima pugnans eum corpore &
mundo opposite

No soul endures disgust, when opposed to the world, it struggles with the body

**Illumination:** This scene is placed within the smaller chapel of the previous roundel. The grid work on the front of the chapel is to the left of the composition and to the right is the altar, which is raised on a plinth. On the altar are two candlesticks and two small sculptures that rest against the wall at the back of the altar. Overhead is a rectangular baldacchino and a rocky overhang.
In the center is the opening to the grotto itself, which is reached by two steps. Above the opening is a wooden construction that forms a partial roof from which hangs a lamp. The door to the grotto is open and one can glimpse the reclining form of the Magdalene sculpture within. Her head, which is surrounded by a golden radiance, rests on her hand and over her head is a small angel. In front of the figure is a salver and a small plaque is placed beside her arm.

**Coloration:** the sculptures above the altar are red and the Magdalene’s radiant nimbus is gold.

**Folio 64v: Inside the grotto with the sculpture of the Magdalene**

**Frame:** lavender with a gold cordelière that has both small round knots and large interlaced knots; an X forms the terminal at the base of the frame.

**Translation:** “Picture of the rock and the place where the Magdalene was doing her penance. In the picture, [the Magdalene] is holding a tablet with an inscription ‘Do not despair you who are accustomed to sin; following my example, ready yourselves again for God.’”

**Folio 65r: The sculpture of the Magdalene reclining in the grotto with four angels**

**Motto:** DIGNE EST DESTRE AYME QVI TANT TRAVEILLE POVR ESTRE EN GRACE.

**WORTHY IS THE RIGHTEOUS FRIEND WHO WORKS SO MUCH TO BE IN GRACE.**

**Illumination:** This miniature is set deep within the grotto. A short wall separates the viewer from the sculpted reclining figure of the Magdalene. Behind her head on the left is a small rock formation, and above her is a curved ceiling. To the left is the wall of the shrine and a small plaque or window is visible at the top. In front of the Magdalene is an empty salver and a small inscribed plaque on which a large capital “A” is visible.

The Magdalene is dressed in a long-sleeved gown and wrapped in a cloak that is fastened at her neck with a large button. Her head is entirely covered by the hood of the cloak. It rests on her right hand and her other arm is across her body at the waist. Her
face is turned upward and her mouth is open slightly in contemplation and prayer. Around her are four small angels that appear to be ministering to her. They carry small slender objects whose exact identity and function is not discernable, although they may be inscribed banderoles.

**Coloration:** the plate and the Magdalene’s nimbus are gold.

**Folio 65v: The spring behind the chapel**

**Frame:** lavender gray with paired spirals divided by motifs including a chalice and monstrance at the top, wafer and chalice designs, and vertical elements resembling nails in gold.

**Translation:** “Picture of the fountain located behind the church near the place where Magdalene was doing penance.”

**Folio 66r: View into the spring behind the chapel**

**Motto:** FVENTE DE AMOR Y DE CARIDAD

SPRING OF LOVE AND CHARITY

**Inscription in margin:** Fons amoris & charitatis

Spring of love and charity

**Illumination:** This is a view of the natural spring that flows from the rocks of the shrine. In the foreground is a brick wall with a large rectangular opening through which is visible rock formations of large and small boulders and a small stream at the base of the rocks. Narrow stone steps descend into a dark space beneath the overhanging rocks.

**Coloration:** there is pale pink-orange on the bricks and the stream at the base of the rocks is blue.

**Folio 66v: The hermit witnesses Magdalene’s ascension and tells Saint Maximinus**

**Frame:** ultramarine blue with motifs including a gold cordelière with small knots and larger interlaced knots that form triple loops and interlaced knots before ending with L forms at the bottom; winged cherubim in gold are the terminal elements at the top and bottom.
Translation: “After having described the site of "La Baume," we must return to the story. It tells how a religious hermit had a vision of the holy lady being lifted and supported by angels, and how he spoke to her without being able to see her, and then how by her command he visited Saint Maximus who immediately went to the desert to bring the holy sacrament to the holy lady.”

Folio 67r: The hermit sees the ascension of the Magdalene and tells Maximinus, who returns to the shrine to witness this event

Motto: VN BEL MORIR TVTA LA VITA HONORA
A GOOD DEATH HONORS ONE’S WHOLE LIFE

Illumination: This is a quadripartite illumination divided by black lines. All four of the scenes are set in the landscape around La Sainte-Baume. In the upper left quadrant, the Magdalene is supported by six angels as she hovers above the top of the cliff. She is nude except for her hair, surrounded by a radiant aureole, and stands with hands clasped as she did in folio 59r. In the foreground a hermit standing on a hilltop watches as the Magdalene rises into the sky. He is bearded, dressed in robes, and has a hat and walking stick. He shields his eyes as he watches her, as if blinded by her radiance.

In the upper right quadrant, the hermit is running toward the left of the scene. This is the direction of the town of Saint-Maximin, which is located to the southwest of La Sainte-Baume. The cliff is in the background, but the Magdalene is not visible. In the lower left, the hermit meets Maximinus in the countryside, which is described with rocks in the foreground and trees and shrubs in the background. Maximinus, who is identified with an inscription, is dressed in a robe covered with a pleated cassock and wears a small round cap. The hermit is walking rapidly and gestures toward Maximinus, who responds to him. In the lower right quadrant, Maximinus, again identified with an inscription, watches from behind a large rock as seven angels carry the radiant Magdalene aloft. The Magdalene appears as she does in the upper left quadrant.

Coloration: the sky is blue, the trees and vegetation are pale green and brown; the radiance around the Magdalene is gold.
Folio 67v: The Last Communion and death of the Magdalene

**Frame:** dark green with motifs including bucrania, chalices, patens, and abstracted Xs in gold.

**Translation:** “Some say that when Saint Maximus presented the sacrament to the Magdalene, the host flew to her mouth, but I believe this is a fable. However, it is possible. Besides, I do not know what mad one wrote that, once, she looked at her hands and was annoyed to see them black and wrinkled. I believe none of it. I do not believe either that she went to Aix to receive the Body of God. [I think instead] that Maximus went to La Baume, and that after the Magdalene died, he had her body carried to Aix, and he ordered a beautiful tomb for her.”

Folio 68r: The Last Communion, funeral, and burial of the Magdalene

**Motto:** LOS CVERPOS DLOS SANCTOS EN PAX XON SEPLIDOS

THE BODIES OF THE SAINTS ARE BURIED IN PEACE

**Above roundel:** Espaignol (Spanish)

**Inscription in margin:** Corpora sanctorum in pace sepulta sunt. Et viuient nomina eorum in eternum.

The bodies of the saints are buried in peace. And their names will live in eternity.

**Illumination:** This is a tripartite miniature divided by black lines. In the upper left, the Magdalene kneels before Maximinus outside the grotto. Her hands are clasped in front of her and her thick hair falls like a cloak to her knees, hiding her nakedness. Maximinus is dressed in priestly garb and leans towards her as he inserts the Host into her mouth. The Magdalene is not identified with an inscription, but is recognized by her long hair and radiant nimbus; a banderole identifies Maximinus.

In the upper right portion, the coffin of the Magdalene, identified with an inscription, is carried through a rocky, wooded landscape. The coffin is draped in a dark purple cloth embroidered with gold. Four robed figures carry the coffin as Maximinus, identified with a banderole, walks in front with a procession of mourners led by a figure
carrying a tall cross. The procession is walking toward a town that is barely visible on the hills in the distance.

In the bottom half of the roundel, two men place the wrapped body of the Magdalene into a carved sarcophagus inscribed with her name. Maximinus, identified with an inscription, stands behind the sarcophagus pointing to the body of the saint. He appears to be directing the proceedings. Standing in front of the sarcophagus is a figure in priestly vestments, while on either side, other members of the procession witness the Magdalene’s burial. In the background is the architecture of a fortified town, and to the left of the scene are two twisted forms. These could be the trunks of trees or the columns of a temple or church.

**Coloration:** the landscapes are pale green and brown and the sky is blue; the drapery covering the coffin is dark purple as is the banderole with Maximinus’s name; the priest wears golden yellow vestments, and other figures have blue or dark purple hoods; the radiance around the head of the Magdalene is gold.

**Folio 68v: The arm reliquaries of the Magdalene and Saint Maximinus**

**Frame:** white with motifs including volutes and doves in gold.

**Translation:** “The arm of the Magdalene, two and a half feet in length. The arm of Saint Maximus.”

**Folio 69r: The arm reliquaries of the Magdalene and St. Maximinus**

**Motto:** ΑΕΙΨΑΝΑ ΜΕΡΙΜΝΑΣ ΠΑΝΗΓΥΡΙΣΟΥΣΙΟΙ

CELEBRATING THE RELICS [RELIEVES] YOUR CARES

**Above roundel:** Grec artificiel (artificial [classical] Greek)

**Inscription in margin:** Reliquiae, cogitationis diem festum agent tibi

Meditations on the relics prompted a feast day for you

**Illumination:** This roundel depicts two arm reliquaries of gold, silver, and ivory. Each is decorated, placed on a raised base, and topped with lifelike hands. The central portions are open to show the bones of each saint through the glass of the reliquary. The
reliquary of the Magdalene on the left has a small open door or cover that can be closed to protect the relic.

**Coloration:** the bases of the reliquaries are gold.

**Folio 69v: Reliquary of the hair of the Magdalene**

**Frame:** Ultramarine blue with motifs including human skulls at the compass points and interlaced ribbons in gold; the curling gold ribbons may represent strands of the Magdalene’s flowing blonde hair mentioned in the narrative.

**Translation:** “In the book my lady gave me, it is written that this vessel, which once belonged to Saint Maximus, contains the hair with which the Magdalene had touched the feet of Jesus Christ. I believe that this could be her hair, but I would not promote a belief in the rest of the story, for the Jacobin brothers are very skillful in dealing with relics and miracles.”

**Note:** For a discussion of the symbolic significance of the Magdalene’s hair and the hair and head reliquaries, see Chapters 3 and 6.

**Folio 70r: Reliquary containing the Magdalene’s hair**

**Motto:** ΟΙ ΑΓΙΟΙ ΤΙΜΗΣ ΑΙΩΝΙΑΣ ΜΙΣΘΟΝ ΑΝΑΛΗΕΟΥΣΙ
THE SAINTS WILL RECEIVE ETERNAL HONOR AS A REWARD

**Above roundel:** Grec artificiel (artificial [classical] Greek)

**Inscription in margin:** Sancti honoris perpetui mercedem recipiunt
The saints will receive eternal honor as a reward

**Illumination:** This roundel depicts the footed crystal and gold reliquary that holds the Magdalene’s hair. It is set within a miniature flamboyant Gothic structure with flaying buttresses, pointed arches, tracery, and a dome with arched lancet windows and a gold cross. The base has four small lions and a heraldic shield with alternating diagonal bands of gold and blue. The reliquary, which is placed in a small niche, is filled with a liquid in which the hair is immersed. The roundness of the crystal vase is defined with light reflections from top to bottom. See Chapters 3 and 6 for an iconographic analysis.
Coloration: the shield is blue and gold and there are touches of gold on the lid and base of the reliquary.

Folio 70v: The reliquary head of the Magdalene covered
Frame: yellow with interlaced tasseled cords and two snakes with interlaced knots at the top in gold.
Translation: “The head of the Magdalene covered.”

Folio 71r: The reliquary of the Magdalene’s head with the crystal face intact
Motto: ΨΥΣΙΟΣ ΚΑΛΛΟΣ
PHYSICAL BEAUTY
Above roundel: Grec artificiel (artificial [classical] Greek)
Inscription in margin: Natura pulchritude
Natural beauty

Illumination: This illumination depicts the gold head reliquary containing the skull of the Magdalene. It is supported on the side by miniature figures of four kneeling angels and a king who supports the reliquary from the front. The king, who represents Francis I, is dressed in robes and a crown, and has a sword beneath his robe at his side. See Chapter 3 for further discussion of this motif.

The reliquary head, which faces to the right of the composition, is realistically described and is the color and texture of flesh rather than gold. The face is beautiful, rounded, and youthful, the expression soft and smiling, and long, curling, golden hair falls over the shoulders. Around the neck is a black cord from which is suspended a large pearl pendant in a gold bezel. A gold crown designed with fleurs-de-lis and adorned with pearls rests on the brow of the reliquary head. There appear to be pearls around the hairline and across the forehead where the crown is seated. The gold base of the reliquary, from which the pale neck and head rise, resembles the neckline of a dress. It is decorated with small pearls that mimic embroidery and another large pearl that resembles the pearl of the pendant.

Coloration: the hair is gold, as is the base and the crown.
Folio 71v: The reliquary head of the Magdalene uncovered

**Frame:** lavender with motifs including clusters of three fleurs-de-lis, and scrolls of flowers in gold; at the bottom right is a daisy.

**Translation:** “The head of the Magdalene, uncovered. Madame, you have seen it with great devotion and it is because of you that so many people, following your example of humility, have honored and invoked the Magdalene. I remember well that, on one occasion, you devoutly talked about this precious fragment of flesh which is on her forehead, and has been called "Noli me tangere, Do not touch me," by the Jacobin brothers. But as far as I am concerned, I call it “Noli me credere,” "Do not believe me," for although the evangelists wrote that the Magdalene had touched the feet of Jesus Christ, they never said that Jesus Christ had touched her forehead.”

Folio 72r: The reliquary head of the Magdalene with the skull uncovered

**Motto:** ΘΑΝΑΤΟΣ ΕΧΘΡΟΣ ΔΝΣΕΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΚΑΛΛΟΝΣ

DEATH IS THE ENEMY OF NATURE AND BEAUTY

**Above roundel:** Grec artificiel (artificial, i.e. classical, Greek)

**Inscription in margin:** Mors inimica naturae et pulchritudinis

Death is the enemy of nature and beauty

**Illumination:** The illumination depicts the Magdalene’s skull preserved beneath the crystal face of the reliquary. The crown and sculpted hair are similar to the depiction in the previous roundel, but the reliquary is now angled to the left of the composition, as is the miniature figure of the king. On the forehead above the left eye is the small patch of skin mentioned in the narrative. The pearls on the forehead delineate where the artificial face was attached.

The four angels support the rectangular base of the reliquary as in the previous roundel. However, the neck of the bust is gold, unlike the preceding image, and the decoration of the neckline of the gold bodice is a row of metallic studs rather than pearls resembling embroidery. The pearl pendant at the neck is not in a gold bezel and the second pendant beneath it is entirely gold.

**Coloration:** the hair, base, and crown are gold.
Folio 72v: Conclusion of the Magdalene’s *vita*

*Frame:* black with running wave spiral in gold.

*Translation:* “Death finishes labor.”

**Note:** For the remaining portion of the translations, the ellipses indicate continuations in the narrative text from one folio to the next. The ellipses do not indicate missing passages, as the text has been translated in its entirety.

Folio 73r: The Vézelay legend of the translation of the Magdalene’s relics from Provence

*Frame:* black with linked circles in gold.

*Translation:* “Hear, please, how I found in two books, that the entire body and head of the Magdalene was in Vézelay in Burgundy. One of these books had been lent to me by a very wise man who lived in Paris. In the other, which came from the library of Saint Victor, I found more evidence about the story that follows. In the year 769, in the time of Charlemagne, Gyrard…”

Folio 73v: The translation of the Magdalene’s body to Vézelay, continued

*Frame:* black with flowering vine motif in gold.

*Translation:* “…Duke of Burgundy, desired to have a son. For this reason, he designed and built the monastery of Vézelay, and sent a monk, in honest company, to the city of Azes, or Aix-en-Provence, in order to bring back to Burgundy the relics of the Magdalene. When the holy man reached the said place, he discovered that the infidels had destroyed the whole city. However, he still looked around [hoping to find the relics…].

Folio 74r: The translation of the Magdalene’s body to Vézelay, continued

*Frame:* black with linked $C$ and $\omega$ scrolls.

*Translation:* “… he found a sepulcher bearing an epitaph which indicated that it contained the body of the Magdalene, and therefore, that night he broke into the
sepulcher and brought the entire body to his dwelling. There, he broke it into pieces so it could be carried more easily, but then, on his return, when he arrived near the monastery of Vézelay, it was impossible for him to move the relics or to make them move ahead until the abbot and the religious brothers …”

**Folio 74v: The translation of the body of the Magdalene**

**Frame:** black with overlapping teardrop shapes in gold.

**Translation:** “…arrived in beautiful and devout procession to honor the worthy Magdalene. Then, the relics were easily moved to the abbey in which, as the story goes, one can still see them. Since that time, many beautiful miracles have taken place there. However, to obey your command, Madame, I have found another little book, belonging to the same abbey…”

**Folio 75r: The falsity of the Vézelay legend and the hypocrisy of the clergy**

**Frame:** black with running wave pattern in gold.

**Translation:** “…of Saint Victor. It says, explicitly, that this is mere fiction and the invention of some hypocrites who, under the cover of reformation and holy devotion, indulge in so many wrong and foolish things, that I feel horror and confusion in my conscience. The ones you see wearing the best religious caps and colorful clothes are most often the ones against whom you should guard yourself, Madame.”

**Folio 75v: The hypocrisy of the clergy, continued**

**Frame:** black with scallop patterns that create a diamond shape within a C in gold.

**Translation:** “Beware of false prophets ‘that come to us dressed in sheep’s clothing, and within they are as ravening wolves.’ If I were to say in front of the King, my sovereign lord and merciful master, what I have seen, and how the holy theologians of Paris are delicately nourished, how the sacramental wine is used to entertain them, I believe that he would take pleasure in it, but …”
Folio 76r: The hypocrisy of the clergy, continued

Frame: black with skulls and crossed bones, and serpents with intertwined tails in gold.

Translation: “…he would become sick from laughing too much. I have, indeed, seen women at one theological banquet, but I will be careful not to say too much, for a man of justice was there who attended the whole feast. I have, indeed, seen cups of silver in the house of the Franciscan friars, but, in truth, I am acting badly by reporting it, for they gave me a drink in a beautiful garden where I was very comfortable. Of the Jacobins I will not say a word, but I will…”

Folio 76v: Demoulins’s comments on the religious orders

Frame: black with flower blossoms in gold.

Translation: “…recommend the minor brothers and all the bishops. The Augustinians are my friends, I forgive them for this time, for their provincial gave me great pleasure when he lent me his mules to go see the birds and the fishes by the sea of Guyenne. The Carmelites are in the place Maubert; the Celestines in the city; and the Carthusians in the village. Oh, how the red herring helped raise a beautiful building.”

Note: I have not yet determined the meaning of this cryptic last sentence.

Folio 77r: Demoulins’s comment on bishops

Frame: black with motifs including dots, single fleur-de-lis, groupings of three fleurs-de-lis at the compass points, and cordelières with three knots and tassels in gold.

Translation: “In brief, when all is said, I do not want any more to create a new religion, for all the colors have been taken, and I wouldn’t know what habit to take unless it were of bright green or pleasant brown. Ah, and what will we do with the bishops, since the religious men who took a vow of poverty and other theologians do not care about it? Madame, since holy persons hold bishoprics in such scorn, tell the king…”
**Folio 77v: Demoulins’s request for a bishopric**

**Frame:** black with a running chevron pattern and floral motifs in gold.

**Translation:** “… that he should give one to his old schoolmaster. He would do well, for in Paradise there is only one poor Saint Francis, the simple confessor, and if by chance the poor Rochefort were canonized, you would be quite surprised to find that in paradise a Bishop St. Francis. This poor man is not asking for such a favor, but he would not refuse it if the king were to make him such a gift. However, if he knew that…”

**Folio 78r: The question of the number of Magdalenes and if she was a sinner**

**Frame:** black with linked floral scrolls in gold.

**Translation:** “…he only needs to ask, by my soul, he would take the risk. Now it remains to know if the Magdalene of which we spoke is the one who has been described as a sinner in the Scriptures, and if there were two Magdalenes, one, the sinner and the other, Martha’s sister, from whom Jesus Christ chased seven devils, and whom he miraculously cured. The question is at the…”

**Folio 78v: The conflicting opinions of the Church Fathers on the Magdalene’s sinfulness**

**Frame:** black with overlapping chevrons that created diamond and triangle patterns; within the diamonds are floral or styled Greek cross patterns, and in the triangles are floral motifs; all designs are in gold.

**Translation:** “…end of this book. Saint Jerome, Saint John Chrysostom, and Origen say that our Magdalene, Martha's sister, was not a sinner. However, I would rather follow the opinion of Saint Augustine and Saint Gregory, not because they are the wisest, but because the Church adopted their view, and I want to conform to its commands. However, I am surprised…”
Folio 79r: The Magdalene controversy

Frame: black with linked floral spirals in gold.

Translation: “…to see how the Church and the School of Paris came to believe that Martha’s sister was a sinner, for the evangelists do not mention that at all. On the contrary, Saint John denies the fact that the Magdalene kissed the feet of Jesus Christ, and that he told her ‘Don’t touch me.’ Saint Matthew says in the 28th chapter of his Gospel ‘that Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came up and took hold of the feet of Christ.’

Folio 79v: The Magdalene controversy, continued

Frame: black with a running spiral with floral motifs in gold.

Translation: “Consequently, the Magdalene touched the feet of Jesus Christ. There seems to be a contradiction between the evangelists. There are those who support the idea that there were two Magdalenes, and say that the sinner did not touch Jesus Christ after his resurrection. But, in the Gospel according to Saint Matthew, Magdalene, Martha's sister, touched and held his feet.”

Folio 80r: The Magdalene controversy, continued

Frame: black with an undulating line with sunbursts in gold.

Translation: “Those who argue that there was only one Magdalene say that Jesus appeared to her on two occasions. On the Sunday following the passion, in the morning, before day break, because she could not yet believe in the resurrection, she was not considered worthy of touching his feet, but after sunrise, when she returned to the tomb with the other Mary, she fully believed …”

Folio 80v: The Magdalene controversy continued; the revelation to Amadeus in Latin

Frame: black with running spirals and floral motif in gold.

Translation: “…and she touched the feet of the omnipotent creator. I cannot allow myself to ignore this, for I do not want to go against the decisions of the church.
However, I believe that I would be doing a good and contemplative thing by adding to
my writing an account of the revelation an angel made to Amadeus, a pious hermit from
the dukedom of Milan. \[122\] ‘From the revelation made to Amadeus.’”

**Folio 81r: The revelation to Amadeus in Latin, continued**

***Frame:* black with arched shapes resembling windows or portals in gold.***

***Note:* See Chapter 1 for a discussion of this revelation.***

***Translation:* “Some angels are more blessed than some men, and some men [are
more blessed] than all the angels, as the Word [made] Man and His blessed Mother.
After these is Michael, then myself with others extraordinarily standing about. After the
seven of us, is John the Baptist, Peter with John the Evangelist, Paul, Andrew, and the
other apostles, and that Magdalene, the beloved disciple of Christ, who does not lack the
merit of the apostles, but rather whose feast is [celebrated], as one of the apostles.”

**Folio 81v: The revelation to Amadeus in Latin, continued**

***Frame:* black with overlapping diagonal ovals in gold.***

***Translation:* “Throughout, [this Feast] is solemnly celebrated and in her Feast
special mention is made of the other Magdalene who was a sinful woman in the town,
who merits to be reported as anointing the Lord’s feet in the home of the Pharisee. Your
sins are remitted, who is acquitted of less: one loves less, and because that woman loved
much: many [sins] were remitted. Both anointed the feet of the Lord: but the sister of
Lazarus anointed [His] head and feet six days before the Pasch of the Jews…”

**Folio 82r: The revelation to Amadeus in Latin, continued**

***Frame:* black with an undulating line and floral motif in gold.***

***Translation:* “…at Bethany, in the home of Martha which was customarily called
the house of Simon the leper, but who [was] made clean by the Lord. Let there be,
therefore, one Office concerning each, mixed together, so as to let the Oration be said,
which is now recited, as well as the responsorials [which] are taken from the Feast of the
Lord’s Resurrection, in which mention is made of the Magdalene or [other] women, as
well as the Antiphons for Lauds and the [little] Hours, as well as [the Antiphons] for the Magnificat, the Benedictus and the Gospels.”

**Folio 82v: The revelation to Amadeus in Latin, continued**

**Frame:** black with floral spirals in gold.

**Translation:** “This is done from the first day of the Feast, ‘Mary was standing at the sepulcher, outside it, weeping.’ Throughout the Octave, let there be a “joint” Office, as for the apostles Peter and Paul and their octave the [same] Octave is read, ‘A certain Pharisee asked Jesus.’ Both were most holy women, the one was a public sinner, the other [had been] vexed horribly by malevolent spirits, but because both were cured by the Lord, one from sins, the other from…”

**Folio 83r: The revelation to Amadeus in Latin, continued**

**Frame:** black with a pattern of chevron, triangles, dots, and brackets in gold.

**Translation:** “…the disturbance of demons, and because both anointed the Lord at different times, for that reason it is right both should be venerated, just as God is venerated in the conversion of each one. Both indeed were from the castle that is called Magdalum. Therefore, the two Marys are confused by their names. So, John recounts that Mary the sister of Lazarus had anointed the Lord, which the other evangelists also…”

**Folio 83v: The revelation to Amadeus in Latin, continued**

**Frame:** black with vine and bifurcated leaf motif in gold.

**Translation:** “…write, because that anointing took place in the home not of Simon the Pharisee, about which Luke alone speaks, rather in the home of Simon the Leper is this known according to that one. They say that “wherever this Gospel is preached throughout the whole world, the things which she did will be remembered,” from which celebration the disciples call this Mary “the anointer” of the Lord, as Thomas [is called] Didymus, and Judas the Betrayer.”

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Folio 84r: The revelation to Amadeus in Latin concludes; the revelation in French

**Frame:** black with motifs including trefoil shapes, bucranium, and shapes resembling amphora and doves in gold.

**Translation:** “‘Indeed after the Octave, let the Office of Martha her sister be done—the Hostess of Christ, with a Commemoration of Lazarus their brother.’

The revelation in French: The good angel, addressing Amadeus, said this: “Some angels have more holiness than men, and some men more than all the angels, as the Word made Man and his Mother. Then comes Michael, and…”

Folio 84v: The revelation to Amadeus in French, continued

**Frame:** black with a pattern of motifs resembling lancet windows in gold.

**Translation:** “…before I arrive with the other principal assistants. After our group of seven come John the Baptist, Peter, with John the Evangelist, Paul, Andrew and the other apostles, and the Magdalene, that beloved disciple of Jesus Christ, who is no less worthy than the others. One must celebrate her feast as an apostle with solemnity, and mention the other Magdalene who was a sinner in the city-- the one who anointed the feet of the Lord…”

Folio 85r: The revelation to Amadeus in French, continued

**Frame:** black with thistles at the compass points, thorny scrolls, and an unusual element resembling a round surrounded by four upturned arms in gold.

**Translation:** “…and was saved, in the house of the Pharisee. ‘Many sins are forgiven you.’ To the one who loves a lot, a lot is forgiven, and because she loved so much, much was forgiven to her. Both Marys anointed the feet of the Lord, but the sister of Lazarus put balm on his head and his feet six days before Passover, in Bethany, in the house of Martha, a house which was called …”

Folio 85v: The revelation to Amadeus in French, continued

**Frame:** black with motifs including dragons with long curling tails, silhouetted standing figures with their right arms raised, palms, scrolls, motifs resembling cages,
beads, tassels, urns, and other vessels; the figures are standing on a fleur-de-lis on the left, and an \textit{XI} on the right; a winged disk at the bottom as a terminal element; all of the motifs in gold.

\textbf{Note:} A comparison of these elements with similar devices in previous frames indicates that a different artist probably created this folio. See Chapter 1 and the introduction to the catalogue for further information.

\textbf{Translation:} “… the house of Simon who was leprous, and was cured by our Lord. So let us celebrate both of them together, without changing the current prayer, or the responses about the resurrection of our Lord which mention the Magdalene and the other women in the same way whether they are found in the hymns sang for the hours and the lauds, at the Benedictus, the Magnificat, or the Gospels.”

\textbf{Folio 86r: The revelation to Amadeus in French, continued}

\textbf{Frame:} black with motifs including a winged cherubic face at the top with beads and tassels on either side, heart scrolls, calices, \textit{XIs}, crossed feathers, open diamond shapes, a cage-like motif, a shield with crossed arrows on the right, and a dove at the bottom as a terminal element; all motifs in gold.

\textbf{Note:} This frame also appears to have been done by another hand.

\textbf{Translation:} “On the first day of the feast, ‘Mary was standing outside the sepulcher weeping.’ In these octaves will be the office of both women, celebrated in the same way as the apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul. And on this day, let the Gospel be heard ‘A certain Pharisee asked Jesus’. For both have been very holy women--although one had been a public sinner, and the other had been cruelly tormented by bad spirits.”

\textbf{Folio 86v: The revelation to Amadeus in French, continued}

\textbf{Frame:} black with motifs including foliated scrolls, beads and tassels, heart scrolls, palms, and a shaded disk terminus in gold.

\textbf{Translation:} “Since both have been freed by the Lord, one of her sins and the other of the assaults of the devils, and since both have anointed the Lord on various occasions, it is fair to honor them together, commemorating the conversion of the one and
the other, for both are from the castle known as Magdalum and both were called Mary, which explains why …”

**Folio 87r: The revelation to Amadeus in French, continued**

**Frame:** black with a knotted *cordelière*, thorny scrolls, and a winged cherubic face at the bottom in gold.

**Note:** This frame also appears to have been done by another hand.

**Translation:** “…there has been confusion around their names. Saint John writes that Mary, the sister of Lazarus, anointed the Lord. The other evangelists do the same. For the unction, it appears that it took place, not in the house of Simon the Pharisee, mentioned by Luke alone, but in the house of Simon the Leper. This is what was written ‘Wherever this Gospel is preached in all the world, these things will be remembered.’”\(^{124}\)

**Folio 87v: The revelation to Amadeus in French, continued**

**Frame:** black with motifs including a crown or thistle between two thorny scrolls at the top, two knotted *cordelières* on either side, and a crowned head between scrolls on the bottom in gold.

**Translation:** “The disciples of the Lord called this Mary the ‘unctrice,’ because of this event. In the same way that Judas had been called the ‘traitor,’ and Thomas, ‘Didymus’ which means ‘the twin,’ because through his words he seemed to be incredulous although, in reality, he was a faithful believer, and an example of firm belief. In the same way, at the end of the octaves, Martha's sister, the hostess of Jesus, should have an office …”

**Folio 88r: The revelation to Amadeus in French concludes; Demoulins refutes the legend about the Magdalene being the wife of Saint John the Evangelist**

**Frame:** black with motifs including a diamond at the top, twisted columns, shaded round and oval beads and tassels in gold.

**Translation:** “…at the same time as the commemoration of Lazarus their brother.’
Some dreamers, among theologians who are so only by name, have written that the Magdalene was the one Saint John the Evangelist was marrying when our Lord changed water into wine, but it is only gossip, and I am wondering how someone can be stupid enough to claim such foolishness. Madame asks…”

**Folio 88v: Madame asks about the cost of the ointment in contemporary currency**

**Frame:** black with an undulating vine with bifurcated leaves, some of which have a dot or petal over them, in gold.

**Translation:** “…‘Judas says that the ointment the Magdalene put on the head and on the feet of Jesus Christ could have been sold for three hundred deniers. What would this sum represent if it could be converted into our current money?’ Obedience answers: ‘Madame, that question has not been scrutinized enough by our theologians. Furthermore, one must remember that these were Roman deniers…”

**Folio 89r: The cost of the ointment, continued**

**Frame:** black with various motifs in gold, including an object resembling a nail at the top, foliated scrolls, a pair of figures on either side of a slender column, a single standing figure, amphorae with stoppers, wings, a curled XI, an XI made of two crossed lances and a slender column, and two crossed shields.

**Note:** These motifs are in keeping with similar motifs found in previous roundels by Godefroy le Batave.

**Translation:** “…‘which could have been worth about four Carolus, and two of our deniers. If we value silver 11 francs the mark, the precious ointment could be worth around 30 crowns, taking the crown as the equivalent of 35 sols, as master Guillaume Budé says clearly in his book ‘De Asse’. If one said that the three hundred deniers mentioned by Judas were from Judea, then it would be…”
Folio 89v: The cost of the ointment, continued

Frame: black with interlaced foliated vines in gold.

Translation: “…hard to believe, because the denier of Judea was gilded silver and was hardly worth one crown, as one can see through the ones kept in the treasure of Saint Denis. In this case, the ointment would have been worth three hundred crowns, which is not likely, for the ingredients used to make it did not have such a value, as Dioscorides states when he deals with the subject of the nard ointment mentioned in the Gospels.”

Folio 90r: The composition of the ointment

Frame: black with a pattern of interlocked forms in black and shaded gold that create a positive and negative effect.

Note: This frame is the beginning of a series of three that have a similar positive and negative effect.

Translation: “He talks about unguento nardi pistici, Laurens val says that it should have been nardi pistice, because nard is a feminine word, but it is wrong. Lavender is a type of nard, as well as aspic. It is a bush like the one you showed me once, Madame, in your park in Romorantin. It has on its leaf little golden spots. It is a sort of nard. But the one mentioned in the Gospels …”

Folio 90v: The composition of the ointment, continued

Frame: black with a zigzag line and gold shading.

Translation: “…doesn't grow in this country. However, one can find its spike in the shop of the apothecaries. It has a good smell and gives a pleasant breath to those who use it.” And Madame asks: "How should these words from the Gospels be understood, ‘Mary Magdalene received a pound of nardi pistici ointment’?"

Folio 91r: Demoulins praises Louise’s curiosity

Frame: black with trefoils and gold shading; within the trefoils are small vertical lines in gold.
Translation: “Obedience responds: ‘Madame, no wonder our adamant and invincible King, your son, is such a great scholar of subtle things, for he received that gift from you who want so much to know and understand what is good and praiseworthy. When you find someone spiritual enough to satisfy your careful curiosity in the light of a good doctrine, you want to elevate him.’”

Folio 91v: Demoulins professes humility and obedience; defines nardus pistica

Frame: black with motifs including bucranium and ribbons, paired spirals with a vertical element resembling a nail, and wings at the top and bottom of the frame in gold; many of the elements are difficult to discern.

Translation: “‘…to the sky and give him great fame and immortal renown. I am not so, Madame. However, since it pleases you to command, Obedience will obey you and respond with the humility I owe you, that nardus pistica-- as told by an old man you would love if you knew his virtues-- is pure nard.’”

Folio 92r: Demoulins further defines nardus pistica; Louise asks if it can be made

Frame: black with undulating gold lines radiating out from the inner gold ring.

Translation: “‘…natural, made without sophistication or lies, for pistos in Greek means faith and approval, and the nard pistica has been recognized as unadulterated.’ Then Madame asks: ‘Would it be possible to prepare more of this precious and softly perfumed ointment?’ Obedience responds: ‘It would be possible to do it.’”

Folio 92v: Louise asks how many companions accompanied the Magdalene when she went to sea

Frame: black with overlapping arches.

Translation: “‘…for a princess such as you, Madame. My Lord de Ruel, doctor of medicine, will tell you how whenever it pleases you. He is an expert in so many things that there is no other doctor or philosopher like him within France.’ Madame asks: ‘Who was with Magdalene when she was forced to go to sea in the harbor of Joppen or Japha, ten or nine leagues…”’
Folio 93r: The Magdalene’s companions

Frame: black with a chevron line and triangles with a dot and bracket motif in gold.

Translation: “‘…from Jerusalem?’ Obedience responds: ‘As I already told you, Madame, there were five persons with her--Martha, Marcella, Lazarus, Maximus, and Cedonius. When the Magdalene went to the desert, Martha stayed in the city of Nerach, the one we now call Tarascon, and she established a convent of virgins, promising to devote herself to perpetual virginity, something she observed perfectly.’”

Inscription below the narrative roundel: “There might have been a larger company with Magdalene when she went to sea, but nothing I found in books has satisfied me.”

Folio 93v: The virtue of Martha; the lack of virtue among the clergy

Frame: black with a vine with bifurcated leaves in gold.

Translation: “‘Her [Martha's] doings are not emulated by the gentle religious persons of our time--flattering brothers, liars, hypocrites, enemies of poverty, inconstant, and changeable ones--because she died a virgin, and as a virgin, she now enjoys perpetual peace in the company of her Host. Marcella, Martha's loyal servant, who makes me think of Marconnay, because the first four…’”

Folio 94r: The fate of Marcella, Lazarus, and Maximinus

Frame: black with ten shaded scrolls in gold.

Translation: “…both names are the same, stayed in Tarascon, and never abandoned her poor mistress. After Magdalene had converted the whole country to the faith of Jesus Christ, Lazarus was made bishop of Marseilles by the order of the king and the choice of all the people. Maximus, who was one of Jesus Christ's disciples, did so many great things, that as soon as the king …’”
Folio 94v: Maximinus made Bishop of Aix; the greed of the theologians of Paris for honors

Frame: black with seven fantastic animals with spiral tails and long curling tongues in gold.

Translation: “… of Provence came back from Rome, he made him the first bishop of Aix, although he had refused and didn't want to be. Notice that he was bishop and not archbishop, for at that time Aix was not an archbishopric. I believe that no theologian or religious of Paris would have refused such crosses and mitres, for I know well, Madame, that there is no one so greedy for honors.”

Folio 95r: The greed of the theologians of Paris, continued

Frame: black with undulating line and floral motifs in gold.

Translation: “They would rather take five or six. And if your reformation lasts, I am afraid that, unless God finds a remedy, many of them will become really rich. For under the mask of charity they will take the goods from the abbeys and finally will change robe, as those who were never good disciples, and through favors and a lot of money, made themselves the new apostles of this world.”

Folio 95v: Sidonius is made a bishop

Frame: black with a chevron line and an element made up of three dots and a vertical line on a horizontal line in gold.

Translation: “Cedonius was blind from birth and was miraculous cured, as described in the Scriptures. Then he followed Saint Maximus and became the bishop of Aix, although others say that he was the bishop of Arles. As far as I am concerned, I do not know the truth, except for one thing--he was a bishop.’ Madame asks: ‘The Magdalene made so many miracles, …’”
Folio 96r: The miracles of the Magdalene

Frame: black with eight shaded scrolls in gold.
Translation: “‘… wouldn't it be possible to assemble them in a book?’
‘Obedience responds: ‘I do not believe so, for it is hard to have complete faith in the accounts of miracles. There are so many lies that it is a pity. Most occurrences were not made public, and as we are concerned, we cannot know anything about them. However I'll tell you of two that I think will be of interest…’”

Folio 96v: The miracles of the Magdalene, continued

Frame: black with a vine with bifurcated leaves in gold.
Translation: “‘… as they can help increase the devotion one should always have for the Magdalene. One knight who was devoted to the Magdalene was killed without confession. By her intercession he was resurrected and given the opportunity to confess and to receive his creator before ending the last term of his life.’”

Folio 97r: The miracles of the Magdalene, continued

Frame: lavender gray with a floral scroll in gold.
Translation: “‘A cleric of Flanders named Stephen was a bad man. However, he had always been devoted to the Magdalene and was always joining the people in their vigil to her. For this, she appeared to him and corrected him of his bad habits by asking him to make penance. This he did and he renounced the world for the salvation of his soul.’ Then Madame asks: ‘Did you…’”

Folio 97v: The number of Magdalenes; a poem by Cælius Sedulius

Frame: lavender gray with a chevron line and motif in gold.
Translation: “‘…ever find, in some antique writings, any evidence that there were two Magdalenes?’ Obedience responds: ‘In the verses of Cælius Sedulius, who was an honest priest, I found two Magdalenes, as he talks about the conversion of the sinner and about the healing of the other Magdalene, who was freed from the seven devils. 127 ‘Mary Magdalene converted, by Sudulio [sic].’”
Folio 98r: Cælius Sedulius’s poem to the Magdalene

Frame: pale orange with a floral vine in gold.128

Translation: ‘‘After the Lord, attending the dinner party of the Pharisee, Took part in the banquet of this inviting friend [the Pharisee], Then a woman who suffered ill repute and whom many sins Of her life had eaten their way through her, as a mild supplicant Fell down, embracing His feet, and watered the reclining [Lord] with Plentiful tears and with her hair let down, never stopped touching or…’’

Folio 98v: The first poem by Sedulius, continued

Frame: pale orange with a chevron line and floral motifs in gold.129

Translation: ‘‘…washing those sacred soles [feet]. You caress [them] with fragrant ointment, until the Joyous sentence of God Who takes [our] hand never pulls back If he should bring us to repent the ancient ruin [we had] sought. ‘Go, woman, your faith saves you from detestation,’ He had said when you were seen to have done every kind of evil. So to confess is my peace, my grand remedy.’’

Folio 99r: The first poem by Sedulius concludes; the second poem dedicated to the Magdalene by Sedulius

Frame: green with an undulating foliated vine scroll in gold.

Translation: ‘‘What harms [one is] to be hidden.130 He who reaches out to her, Attends to her wounds, and she is anxious laying bear the wound to the Healer. Behold the befouled woman pulls back healed in an instant, With a sigh and a flood of her own tears, [she] cleanses herself She comes back clean by her own tears and wiped away with her hair.’’131

‘‘The liberation of Mary Magdalene from the seven demons, by Sedulio [sic].’’132

Folio 99v: The second poem by Sedulius, continued

Frame: green with an undulating foliated vine scroll in gold.

Translation: ‘‘No measly salvation, Mary, [has] the Lord healed [you with]. He cured the sense wounded by the multifaceted disaster,133 [You] whom the wild rage had invaded with sevenfold arms,134 [You] squeezed in by a demonic throng, the scaly serpent135 Fleeing the marvelous commands of the Sacred Word.’’
Folio 100r: The second poem by Sedulius, cont.

**Frame:** black with an undulating vine and spiky bifurcated leaves in gold.

**Translation:** “‘He leaves evicted from your heart, falls through the Soaring heights into the chaos of infernal Gehenna.\(^{136}\)
And mighty he drags along seven rings of seven-fold coils.’\(^{137}\)

Madame asked: ‘Is there nothing you could use to support the idea that there were two Magdalenes?’ Obedience responds: ‘To obey you, Madame, Obedience has worked hard in order to clarify this matter, …’”

Folio 100v: Demoulins’s reference to Lefevre and the Quarrel of the Magdalenes

**Frame:** black with volute spirals and dots in gold.

**Translation:** “‘… and I do believe that, given more leisure, he could demonstrate quite clearly, with the help of an honest and good man, that there were three Marys, whom we call 'Magdalene,' and three Saint Jacques.’\(^{138}\) Madame asked: ‘Didn’t Francesco Petrarca write something about the Magdalene?’” Obedience responds: ‘I believe so…”’

Folio 101r: The poem dedicated to the Magdalene by Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch)

**Frame:** black with ten shaded scrolls in gold.

**Translation:** “‘…because of what can be found in verses that were attributed to him, and which he left in ‘La Baume’ once, as he was going on a journey. Whenever it pleases you, I will read them to you devoutly.’

‘Sweet friend of God, be swayed by our tears,
And attend to my prayers, consider
Our salvation: for in fact you are able and indeed
It is granted that [nothing] come to you in vain.”’\(^{139}\)

Folio 101v: Petrarch’s poem, continued

**Frame:** black with a chevron line and abstracted motifs in gold.

**Translation:** “‘With impunity, Christ, the king of celestial Olympus [Heaven] allows you
To drench the sacred feet which you kiss with a sigh
And to dry them with your shining hair,
And on the Lord’s head you dapple precious scents.
Not only did [He] rising from the dead greet you first
But also [allowed you] to hear His voice[s] and to see His limbs,
Limbs about to have immortal glory and brilliance…””

Folio 102r: Petrarch’s poem, continued

Frame: black with an abstracted motif and dots in gold.
Translations: “…for ever.
He had seen [you] by the Cross, not terrified by the cruel
Torments at the hands of the Jewry and the maddened crowd,
The reproaches and insults, tongues like scourges.
But [He had seen you] at once sad and calm,
And touching the gory nails with your fingers,
Filled the wounds with tears.’”

Folio 102v: Petrarch’s poem, continued

Frame: black with an undulating floral scroll in gold.
Translation: ‘‘[He had seen you] pouring forth white-robed hearts
In turbulent battles,
Pulling your flaxen hair with your hands in a frenzy.
He had seen these things, I tell you, while the faithful hearts of his [disciples]
Had fled with a driving fear, He looks again to see you mindful that
He would to you before the other, [show Himself] to you alone first!!
[He would see] you, when He would be taken out of the world and had gone
Back to the stars,
For thirty years lacking any food of mortals…”’’

Folio 103r: Petrarch’s poem, continued

Frame: black with a chevron line and bifurcated leaves in gold.
Translation: “…He fed you under this cliff for such a long time
Satisfied with divine banquets and salubrious waters.
This cavern home of yours, moist with dripping boulders
Darkened in [this] frightful spot, surpasses the golden ceilings of kings,
All the voluptuousness of riches.
Merrily enclosed here, bedecked with long…””

Folio 103v: Petrarch’s poem, continued

Frame: black with interlaced undulating vines in gold.
Translation: “…hair,
Lacking other vesture you are said to have passed thirty Decembers
Here neither enfeebled by the ice nor overcome with panic.
For in fact, love makes hunger, cold, and even the hard cold stony room
Sweet, and hope is firmly rooted in [your] deep heart.
Here not seen by the eyes of men [you are] thronged by crowds
Of angels, and for seven days [you were] transported to…’’’

**Folio 104r: Petrarch’s poem concludes; Louise asks Demoulins how to pray to the Magdalene**

**Frame:** black with an undulating thorny vine; bifurcated spiky leaves, and dots in gold.

**Translation:** “…hear
Choirs singing alternately canticles through the heavenly hours
[Thusly,] you were worthy [of release] from [your] bodily prison.”’’

Madame asks: ‘‘The prayer of Francis Petrarch is in Latin and quite difficult to understand. Therefore tell me, my Obedience, if I wanted to pray devoutly to the good Magdalene, wouldn’t it be better for my prayer to be in French, so that…”’’

**Folio 104v: Demoulins instructs Louise in her prayers to the Magdalene**

**Frame:** black with an undulating line and floral motifs in gold.

**Translation:** “…I could understand it and request her intercession to obtain better what I need, from all powerful God?’’ Obedience responds: ‘‘Madame, I cannot teach Minerva because she is wiser than I. However, it seems that intelligence helps excite emotion, and without devout affection, prayers are useless. Therefore, love the Magdalene…”’’

**Folio 105r: Louise’s prayer to the Magdalene**

**Frame:** black with an interlaced undulating vine in gold.

**Note:** see Chapters 3 and 4 for discussion of the personal, political, and iconographic significance of this prayer.

**Translation:** “…Madame, and she will love you back; pray to the Magdalene, and she will pray for you, if you speak to her with a sincere heart: ‘Magdalene, you are
the one who is worthy of the title Madame, and I am just Louise of Savoy, who begs you, please, to intercede for my son, my daughters, and me. Madame, the pain of this world is temporary, but in the one to come…”

**Folio 105v: Louise’s prayer to the Magdalene, continued**

**Frame:** black with a chevron line and bifurcated leaves in gold.

**Translation:** “…it will be eternal. Therefore, I beg you not to forget me, and to help my son gain a spirit strong enough to save himself and to help him know good from evil advice, in order not to create suffering around him. Madame, have pity on me, keep me, protect me, and allow me to keep my son and to defend him, ‘as a challenging eagle…”

**Folio 106r: Louise’s prayer to the Magdalene, continued**

**Frame:** black with oval medallions linked by a line in gold; some of the motifs within the medallions appear to be amphora, but others are indiscernible.

**Translation:** “…swoops down [to defend] its young.’ But I would not know how to fly without the help of Jesus Christ. He is your true loyal friend, Madame, and I am his very humble creature, desiring only peace and patience. May my daughter Claude soon be pregnant with a son and my daughter Marguerite, too. Please answer my prayer for the common good, and for my own, so I could …”

**Folio 106v: Louise’s prayer to the Magdalene concludes; Demoulins comments on the number of Magdalenes**

**Frame:** black with arches and short vertical lines in gold.

**Translation:** “… enjoy a stable love with my children and save myself by abstinence and penance, following your example, Madame, as you live with your true friend Jesus Christ, in perfect glory, and forever incorruptible.’ ‘Madame, do not be surprised if I have said in this book things that do not follow the common observance, for I hope to say more and to show that there were, indeed, three Marys…”
Folio 107r: Demoulins’s comments on the number of Magdalenes, continued

Frame: black with a laurel wreath in gold.

Translation: “‘…which were all called Magdalene. But for the present, I can only say that there was one, which was the demonic one whom Jesus Christ freed from seven devils. She was a rich woman, and followed and served Jesus Christ everywhere he went. The wife of Herod's procurator was with her. As far as the one who was called a sinner, I found that she was also named Mary, but not Magdalene.’”

Folio 107v: Demoulins’s comment on Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus

Frame: black with various motifs including crossed plumes, scrolls, foliage, and medallions at the top and bottom in gold; the motifs in the medallions are indiscernible.

Translation: “And for Martha's sister, the one who anointed our Lord in Bethany, in the house of Simon the Leper, she was also named Mary, but I did not read anywhere that she had been called Magdalene. She was a woman of noble background, and had led a holy and honorable life. If she was attributed the name of sinner, I think it was wrong. Madame, I composed this book in accordance with the observance of the Church, …”

Folio 108r: Demoulins concludes his comments on the number of Magdalenes.

Frame: black with an undulating floral vine in gold.

Translation: “…not wanting to ignore its commands. However, it seems to me that I am not harming anyone if, instead of one saint, I name three who have the power to intercede before God on your behalf, to keep you in his grace.”

Folio 108v: Dedication to Louise.

Frame: black with fantastic animals with scrolling tails in gold.

Translation: “For my lady.”

Note: At the top of the roundel above the text is the symbol for Jupiter and at the bottom is the symbol for Pisces, one of two astrological houses of Jupiter. Anne-Marie Le Coq states that the reason for the inclusion of the sign of Jupiter was that Demoulins
considered it the most correct for Louise due to her recent role as Regent of France. This planet, named for the ruler of the Roman gods, was believed to fortify the strength of the commander and ruler.¹⁴⁵
Notes

1. I am deeply indebted to my translators, Father Russell Smith who translated the Latin and Italian, Dr. Chantal Marechal who translated the French, Margarete Jeffers who translated the German, and Maria Zachariou who translated the Greek. These languages are written in antiquated forms and required much time and effort to translate, for which I am extremely grateful.

2. This information was related to me by Myra Orth.

3. Only two people are known to have been involved with the production of the manuscript, Demoulins and Godefroy le Batave, although as I note in Chapters 4 and 6, another anonymous and less talented hand created some of the frames in the manuscript.

4. This style of integrated CI appears in other works of the 1520’s workshop.

5. Folios 98r to 99r are the angelic revelation to Amadeus and folios 101v to 103v are the poem Petrarch wrote about the Magdalene.

6. See Chapter 1, n. 46 for information on Amadeus or Amadeo Menez da Silva.

7. The exception to this is found in folio 48r in which the Virgin has a circular halo rather than a radiant nimbus. It is possible that this was done to avoid obscuring the faces of the figures surrounding the Virgin, in particular Saint John who supports her from behind.

8. See Chapter 1 for a discussion of the issues surrounding the foreign mottoes.


11. This is a reference to the classical myth of the Three Fates, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, who spin out the thread of a mortal’s life at birth and snip it with shears at the moment of death. This is just one of many classical reference that are found throughout the manuscript which are a sign, intentional or otherwise, of Demoulins’s training as a humanist and the general interest in the European courts in all things classical. See Aghion, Barbillon, and Lissarrague, 125.

12. According to Father Smith, this is from Epode 8 of Horace.

14. This is a play on the Latin verb *venor*, which means “to hunt” or “to seek.” The association of hunting with sexual pursuit is evident in the word *venery*, which means both the act of hunting--of more to the point, chasing--and sexual intercourse. Venery was a word commonly used in the French court of Francis I in association with hunting, thus the word play would have been readily understood by Louise. See Knecht, 111-12. The two words come from the Indo-European root *wen* or *win*, meaning “to strive for or desire,” which became the Latin *venus*, “love.” See *Webster’s New World Dictionary of American English*, 3rd College Edition, ed. Victoria Neufeldt, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 1480. This play on words was brought to my attention by Father Smith, who translated the Latin of the manuscript and illuminated a number of subtle Latin references of which I was unaware.

15. The source of this motto is found in Chapter 3 of *The Life of Saint Mary Magdalene and of Her Sister Saint Martha*, by the pseudo-Rabanus Maurus: “Beauty is rarely allied to chastity.” See Mycoff, 30.

16. This depiction, with the “dimple” at the end of many of the berries, was more difficult to create than simply painting small berries with a single stroke of the brush. Therefore, the artist intended to depict a particular type of berry or object, in this case an olive.

17. The lectern motif was also used in folio 56r to indicate the Magdalene’s preaching to the people of Provence.

18. Although Lazarus wears a blue hat in folio 7r, which is the banquet scene, he wears the same yellow hat in folios 44r, 45r, 46r, 47r, 53r, and 55r. In 53r, which depicts the Ascension, only the yellow hat identifies Lazarus.

25. A wyvern is a type of flaying dragon or serpent with two legs like eagles and a barbed tail coiled in a knot. They symbolized either pestilence, because of the barbed tail, or Satan. See Metford, 268.
26. This could be a reference to the story of Philemon and Baucis from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*. In this story, a poor elderly couple unknowingly play host to Jove and Mercury when they take them in after the disguised gods had been turned away from the houses of the wealthy. For their kindness and generosity, Philemon and Baucis are spared from the gods’ wrath when the deities flood the region. Their modest home is spared, however, and Philemon and Baucis dedicate it as a temple and choose to live the remainder of their lives in the service of the gods. See Aghion, Barbillon, and Lissarrague, 234-235. This reference may have been intended to parallel the generosity of Martha and Mary of Bethany, as well as allowing Demoulins to display his humanist erudition with a classical reference.

27. This passage is taken from Luke 10:40-42; the repetition of Martha’s name is a form of loving correction.


29. John 12:1 reinforces this episode in the succeeding chapter by identifying Lazarus as the one “whom Jesus raised to life.”


31. This translation was provided by Dr. Jack Freiberg.

32. The iris is associated with the lily family but the petals differ, as does their symbolism. The petals of a lily are long and taper to a point, whereas the petals of an iris are short and rounded. Godefroy’s depiction of the uppermost iris on the lower right is a particularly good indication of this flower’s particular species.

33. Hastings, 635.

34. This could be a reference to the Dominican order, who wore black and white robes, or to the Friars Minor Conventuals or “Black Franciscans.” This was an order of the Franciscan brothers who were less stringent in their observation of poverty and property held in common, and who separated from the stricter Observants in 1517. Demoulins was an Observant. See Bientenholz, 411; and *Galla christiania*, 2, col. 968.

35. John 11:3.


38. John 11:5.
39. This is a cross made up of an elongated vertical bar and a shorter horizontal bar like a Latin cross, but which bisects at the center like a Greek cross. This type of cross appears on the crest of the House of Savoy, but is also referred to as the Cross of Jerusalem. See Chapter 3 for discussion on this subject.


42. John 11:14.

43. John 11:16.


47. John 11:25.


49. John 11:27.


54. John 11:34.

55. John 11:34.

56. Ibid.

57. John 11:36.


60. Ibid.


62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. John 11:40.


68. John 11:43-44.

69. Father Russell notes that *insula* also refers to a thin strip like a border or a flounce.

70. John 11:45.


73. John 11:54.

74. This is related in John 12:2, but is placed “at table” rather than in the open countryside as in the illumination. Martha’s service of Christ in this respect is associated with the Feast at the House of Simon the Leper, at which time the Magdalene/Mary of Bethany anoints Christ’s head with precious ointment and is criticized for the waste. This is found in John 12:1-8, and will be illustrated in the next image, folio 45r.

75. This spelling of the name of the town of Ephrem is found in the Dohay-Rheims version of the Holy Bible, but it is also spelled “Ephraim” and “Effrem” in other versions.

76. This incident is also related in Matthew 26:6-13, and Mark 14:3-9. Luke does not mention this episode.

77. This episode is found in all four of the Gospels, but is told in the greatest detail in the Gospel of John.
78. This was a theme that he emphasized in folio 11r, which I believe depicts Christ’s Sermon on Mount Olivet.

79. This particular passage about the fragrance of the ointment is mentioned only in John 12:3. However, in this Gospel it is only the feet of Jesus that are anointed. The subtle differences in the three Gospels account for the confusion that often surrounds this important episode.

80. John 12:5; Matthew 26:8-9; Mark 14:4-5. John is the only Evangelist who identifies Judas as the disciple who makes this remark; Matthew and Mark note simply that it was “the disciples.”

81. John 12:7-8; Matthew 26:11; Mark 14:7.

82. Matthew and Mark are the closest in accordance. They identify the site of the meal as the house of Simon the Leper, but the woman is anonymous and she anoints the head of Christ. John does not mention the specific location of the event, only that it was in Bethany, but notes that Mary (of Bethany) anoints Christ’s feet. No mention is made of anointing his head. John alone identifies Judas as the disciple who criticizes the waste of the money spent on the ointment. As mentioned above, Matthew and Mark note only that it was “the disciples.”


84. John 11:16.


86. John 19:34.


88. John 19:41-42. Parasceve is the eve of the Sabbath or the day of preparation. This passage says that they laid him in the sepulcher that was close at hand, because the eve of the Sabbath was beginning and it is against Jewish law to touch the dead during the Sabbath.

89. John 20:2.

90. John 20:11.


92. Mark 16:1; Mark 16:3.
93. The sun is depicted in a manner similar to Christ’s nimbus. This similarity could be a reference to Christ as “the Light of the World.”

94. The exact identity of these women is not clear, but they are usually referred to as “The Three Marys,” or as the *myrrhophores* or “the bearers of myrrh,” a reference to the ointment they carried to anoint the body of Christ for burial. The presence of two women rather than three indicates the Gospel of Matthew 28:1 as the origin of this part of the image.


96. Mark 16:3.

97. John 20:12 mentions that there are two figures described as angels, as depicted here. The other Gospels only mention one or two men.


103. Ibid. The entire text reads, “But go to my brethren, and say to them: I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.”

104. John 20:18. This is said twice, in Latin, *vidi dominu*, and in French, *jay veu mon seigneur*. The reason was to enable Louise to read this passage herself and demonstrates the importance of this passage.

105. Maria Zachariou notes that the use of Greek in the *Vie* was less than proficient and that it appears that Demoulins did not have a true grasp of it. She also notes that he applied Latin letters and other incorrect grammatical forms to the Greek mottoes. Margarete Jeffers likewise notes a similar lack of proficiency with the German mottoes. Because of the antiquated nature of the languages, the translations of some of the mottoes do not coordinate precisely with the Latin inscription.

106. Voragine, 359. This motto is similar to a passage from the *Golden Legend*: “He can change thy sorrow into joy.”

108. Acts 1:9, “And when he had said these things, while they looked on, he was raised up: and a cloud received him out of their sight.”


111. Acts 2:3.

112. Although Acts 2:1-13 does not mention the Virgin and holy women as present at the descent of the Holy Spirit, their inclusion is traditionally accepted based on the statement in Acts 1:14, in which the apostles were “persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.” See Duchet-Suchaux and Pastoureau, 272.

113. Voragine, 355-64.

114. This is stated in both Latin and French to ensure that Louise could read the passage without assistance.

115. Psalms 67:36.


117. Voragine, 361.

118. One meter, 39.37 inches, is the approximate equivalent of two cubits, which measures 36-44 inches.


122. According to the Franciscan mystic Amadeus Menez da Silva, this revelation was made to him by the Archangel Gabriel during a period of seclusion in the hills outside of Rome. Thus when the verse refers to “myself,” it is referring to Gabriel, not Amadeus. Likewise, the portions of the verse that refer to “the others,” and “the seven,” refer to the other archangels, Raphael, Uriel, etc., who are seven in number. See Chapter 1, n. 46 for further information on Amadeus Menez da Silva.


125. This is a cryptic passage. It is difficult to determine if the term “Laurens val” is two words or one, or if it refers to a person as the text implies.

126. The verb here is fyt, i.e. fit, “she made.”

127. See Chapter 1, n. 47, for information on Cælius Sedulius.

128. The motif that decorates this frame is difficult to see in the color images due to the paleness of the orange, but it is visible in the black and white image of the frame. The floral vine is the same motif as in folio 97r.

129. As in the previous roundel, the pale orange color makes the motif difficult to see in the color reproduction, but it is discernable in the black and white image.

130. Father Russell: “by being hidden.”

131. Father Russell: “is cleansed” in middle voice.

132. This is the second poem dedicated to the Magdalene by Sedulius.

133. Father Russell: “multifaceted disaster” refers to Original Sin.

134. Father Russell: “sevenfold arms” means seven weapons, i.e. seven demons.

135. The imagery of the “scaly serpent” fits with reference to Eve that Demoulins mentioned in the text in folio 51v.

136. Gehenna refers to a place of burning; i.e. Hell.

137. “The seven rings of seven-fold coils”: The numerological significance of seven could have an intentional reference to the Beast of the Apocalypse.

138. This “honest and good man” is undoubtedly Demoulins’s mentor and friend, Jacques Lefèvre d’Etaples. Lefèvre’s treatise, De Mariae Magdalenae, was written in response to Demoulins’s request for assistance in writing the Vie de la Magdalene, specifically in addressing the question of the number of women identified as Mary Magdalene. Lefèvre believed that the three women conflated by Gregory into the Church’s image of Mary Magdalene—the Anointing Sinner, Mary of Magdala, and Mary of Bethany—should be recognized and honored individually. The treatise so angered church officials in Paris that Lefèvre sought refuge with Louise of Savoy and her daughter, Marguerite of Angoulême. See Stephenson, 155-56. For discussion on Lefèvre d’Etaples, see Holban, “La querelle de la Madeleine,” Hufstader, passim, and Hughes,
passim.

139. The use of *tangere* here is probably a play on the words of Christ to the Magdalene, “Noli me tangere,” “Do not touch me,” found in John 20:14-18. Note that for my purposes the poem has been translated into proper English phrasing and that some of the lines found in one folio in the translation are actually in the next folio in the Latin. All bracketed phrases were included by Father Smith.

140. Father Smith: “white-robed hearts” is, figuratively, love.

141. Father Smith: *sine more* literally means “without reason” or “without rule.”

142. Father Smith: “bis tria lustra” equates to two threefold periods of five years (2 x 3 x 5=30) or thirty years. He notes that this kind of numerical word play was popular with Latin writers.

143. Literally, “dew.”

144. Father Smith: “Heavenly hours” refers to the Divine Offices.

145. Le Coq, 423. Le Coq notes that this reference is based on the writings of Ficino.
Folios 1v and 2r
Folios 4v and 5r
Folios 5v and 6r
Folios 8v and 9r
Folios 11v and 12r
Folios 14v and 15r
Folios 15v and 16r
Folios 16v and 17r
Folios 18v and 19r
Folios 22v and 23r
Folios 23v and 24r
Folios 30v and 31r
Folios 32v and 33r
Folios 33v and 34r
Folios 35v and 36r
Folios 36v and 37r
Folios 37v and 38r
Folios 46v and 47r
Folios 47v and 48r
Folios 56v and 57r
Folios 64v and 65r
Folios 65v and 66r
Folios 66v and 67r
Folios 67v and 68r
Folios 68v and 69r
Folios 69v and 70r
Folios 71v and 72r
Folios 72v and 73r
Folios 73v and 74r
Folios 76v and 77r
Folios 79v and 80r
Folios 80v and 81r
Folios 82v and 83r
Folios 94v and 95r
Folios 95v and 96r
Folios 99v and 100r
Folios 101v and 102r
Folios 102v and 103r
Folios 103v and 104r
Folios 104v and 105r
Folios 106v and 107r
Et la faute d'autre l'égard de la maison de son frère, ne pas enseigner ni ne pas enseigner à son frère, ni ne pas enseigner à son frère.

Mandame est commune de la maison de son frère.
Figure 1
François Demoulin de Rochefort and Godefroy le Batave
_Vie de la Magdalene_ (B.N., ms. fr. 24.955, folios 21v and 22r)
_Lazarus prepared for Burial by Martha and Mary Magdalene_
French, 1517, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
Figure 2
Cristoforo Caradosso Foppa
Portrait Medallion of Ludovico Sforza (obverse)
Entrance of Ludovico Sforza to Genoa (reverse)
Milan, 1488-94, bronze
British Museum, London, Department of Coins and Medals
Figure 3
Medal of François of Angoulême, Duke of Valois (obverse)
Salamander Impresa of François (reverse)
French, 1504, bronze
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cabinet des Médailles
Figure 4
Medallion Commemorating the Victory of Francis I at the Battle of Marignano
Profile of Francis I (obverse)
French, 1516-1518, bronze
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cabinet des Médailles
Figure 5
Medallion Commemorating the Victory of Francis I at the Battle of Marignano
Relief of Battle of Marignano (reverse)
French, 1516-1518, bronze
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Cabinet des Médailles
Figure 6
Bedford Master and Workshop
Book of Hours (MS M. 359. fol. 21r)
Annunciation (center)
Anna and Joachim giving money to a beggar, Joachim with a lamb, Joachim offering the lamb to a priest, Annunciation to Joachim (upper left to lower right)
Paris, c.1430-35, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Pierpont Morgan Library, New York
Figure 7
Francesco di Antonio de Chierico, Francesco Rosselli, Attavante degli Attavanti, Biagio d’Antonio, and Ugo de Comminellis da Mézières
*Bible of Federigo da Montefeltro* (B. A. V. Urb. lat 1)
Urbino, 1476-78, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Rome
Figure 8
Analogical Window beginning with Christ Between Ecclesia and Synagogia
West Portal
1140-44
Abbey Church of Saint Denis, Saint Denis, France
Figure 9
North Rose Window and Lancets
c. 1190-95
Laon Cathedral, Laon, France
Figure 10
Schematics of the Mary Magdalene Windows
c. 1205-1214
Cathedral of Notre Dame, Semur-en-Auxois, France
Figure 11
Saint Margaret Window, upper part
1226-1241
Saint Margaret Church, Ardagger, Austria
Figure 12
First Four Days of Creation
Biblè Moralisée (Codex 2554, folio 1r)
Paris, c. 1220-30, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna
Figure 13
Locket Containing Scenes of Passion of Christ (Walters 44.590)
Franco-Flemish, fifteenth century, enameled gold and rock crystal
Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore
Figure 14
Christ Being Led Away from Herod Antipas (32.24.67)
Northern Lowlands, c. 1515-1520, silver-stained glass roundel
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cloisters Collection
Figure 15
The Pseudo-Ortkens Group
*Susannah and the Elders* (1990.119.1)
Antwerp, c.1520-25, silver-stained glass roundel
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Cloisters Collection
Figure 16

*Sorgheloos and Lichte Fortune* (57.49)
Leiden (?), c. 1520, silver-stained glass roundel
Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo (Ohio)
Figure 17
Jan de Beer
*Christ at Emmaus* (RP-T-1939-7)
Antwerp, c. 1520, drawing for silver-stained glass roundel
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet
Figure 18
Jan de Beer
Saint Luke and the Vision of Zacharias
Antwerp, c. 1520-25, drawing for silver-stained glass roundel
Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille
Figure 19
Lucas van Leyden
*The Crowning with Thorns* (B 62)
Northern Netherlands, 1509, engraving
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet
Figure 20
Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostsanen
*The Flagellation*
Northern Netherlands, 1514, engraving
Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg, Coburg, Germany, Kupferstichkabinett
Figure 21
Jacob Cornelisz van Oostsanen
*The Betrayal of Christ*
Northern Netherlands, 1514, engraving
Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg, Coburg, Germany, Kupferstichkabinett
Figure 22

_God Creating the Universe_

*Bible Moralisée* (Codex 2554, folio 1 verso)

Paris, c. 1220-30, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna
Figure 23
The Creation of the Light and the Spheres
Book of Hours (Egerton ms. 2781, folio 1v)
English, c. 1340-50, illuminated manuscript on parchment
British Library, London
Figure 24

God Creating the Universe

*Chronologie Universelle* (Fr. F. v. IV. 12, folio 1r)

Bruges, c. 1480, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Collection of Piotr Dubrovsky, Saint Petersburg
Figure 25
François Demoullins de Rochefort
*Libellus Enigmatum* (B. N. ms. lat. 8775)
Folio 2 Dedicated to Louise of Savoy
French, 1516-17, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris
Figure 26
Samuel Gallico
The Sefiroth with Sefirah Arranged in Tree of Life formation
Illustration from *Asis Rimmonim*
Venice, published in 1601
Figure 27
Samuel Gallico
Correct Order of the Sefiroth Arranged in a Circle
Illustration from Asis Rimmonim
Venice, published in 1601
Figure 28

Priest Discovers Magdalene in Wilderness (top)
Magdalene Window IV, panel 3

Abbot of Vézelay sends envoy to retrieve relics of Mary Magdalene (bottom)
Magdalene Window I, panel 4
Early thirteenth century
Cathedral of Notre Dame, Semur-en-Auxois, France
Figure 29
Mary Magdalene with Suitor, Rebuked by Martha and Lazarus
Italian, c.1400, fresco
Church of Santa Maria Maddalena, Bolzano, Italy
Figure 30
Giovanni and Battista Baschenis de Averaria
*Mary Magdalene with Suitors*
Italian, 1470-97, fresco
Church of Santa Maria Maddelena, Cusiano, Italy
Figure 31
Giovanni and Battista Baschenis de Averaria
*Mary Magdalene, Martha, and Lazarus Distribute Food to the Poor*
Italian, 1470-97, fresco
Church of Santa Maria Maddelena, Cusiano, Italy
Figure 32
Giovanni da Milano
*Mary Magdalene Washing the Feet of Christ at the House of Simon and Freed of Seven Demons*
From cycle of *The Life of Mary Magdalene*
Italian, c.1360-65, fresco
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Barbara Jean Johnston was born in Gainesville, Florida in 1955 and raised in North Miami, Florida. She attended Bucks County Community College in Newtown, Pennsylvania, where she earned an Associate Degree in Fine Arts in 1976. She continued her education at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, receiving a BFA in Communication Arts and Design in 1981 and a BFA in Art History in 1982. She earned a MA in Art History/Museum Studies at VCU in 1989, where she was awarded a teaching assistant fellowship. She continued her education in the Art History doctoral program at Florida State University, where her major concentration was in Renaissance and Baroque art and architecture, with a minor concentration in the art of the Modern era. She was awarded an Appleton Teaching Fellowship, two Penelope Mason Dissertation Fellowships, and several university grants for travel and dissertation research. She also received a research grant from the Renaissance Society of America for her dissertation work on the *Vie de la Magdalene*.

Her professional career has been balanced between the museum and academic spheres. As a museum professional, she designed and installed exhibitions at Meadow Farm Museum in Glen Allen, Virginia, before joining the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond as a faculty member for the VMFA’s lecture class series. She is also a lecturer for the VMFA’s Statewide “Speakers on the Arts” program and the Paul Mellon Education in the Arts program. Her academic career includes faculty positions at John Tyler Community College, J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College, Virginia Commonwealth University, Florida State University’s London Study Campus, and the College of William and Mary. She lives in central Virginia.