

# **Dptych of Illuminations from the Book of Hours of Daniel Rym**

## **Illumination (Group IV) - Beginner**

**Goal:** To use pergamenta and gouache for the first time, to recreate an illumination in similar size, colours, and technique as the original, and to do whitework design. (Challenges that were suggested to me at QPT.)

### **Contents:**

- 1. Examination of Extant**
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## **1. Examination of Extant**

**Source** - the Book of Hours of Daniel Rym, made for Elizabeth van Munte and Daniel Rym of Ghent

**Date** - between 1420 and 1430

**Location** - Flemish, possibly Ghent

**Illuminator** - Master of Guillebert de Mets

**Location of Manuscript** - Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland, catalogue number W. 166

**Materials** - Parchment with ink, opaque watercolour, and gold (real gilding)

**Condition** - The colouring and detail in this manuscript is very good - it has been well-cared-for.

**Size** - 167 x 133 mm

### **Pages -**

- #50 (fol. 19v) - Hours of the Virgin portion of the Book of Hours part of the manuscript
- #74 (fol. 31v) - Hours of the Virgin portion of the Book of Hours part of the manuscript
- #33 (fol. 11r) - Book of Hours part of the manuscript
- #191 (fol. 89v) - Devotional Sequence portion of the manuscript

**Subject matter** - leaves, vines, people, dragon monsters, whitework faces

### **Colours -**

I did online research and spoke to more experienced scribes to learn more about what materials and colours might have been used to create the manuscript, which has aged to the current colours. I had no prior knowledge of period pigments (or pigments at all,

really), so this was quite the learning experience, and I still don't feel 100% confident in all of my choices. I suppose every time I try to do something like this I will learn more about period pigments, as I am exposed to more new colours and levels of degradation each new piece.

- Reds: Likely Alazarin crimson (which faded to dusty rose pink), a bright orange-red, and a darker crimson (which darkened to dark red/brown)
- Blue: Most likely ultramarine
- Green: Malachite
- Light brown robe: yellow ochre with darker ochre lowlights was suggested to me. From my research, I learned that yellows often faded to forms of brown or disappeared completely, but that the original image was almost invariably bright, not subdued. Further research into pigments and their properties led me to believe that the best colour to use for the robe was orpiment, or King's Yellow.
- Flesh tones: similar to how they look on extant now, because the mineral pigments in the white would have helped to preserve the colour
- White: not sure which white was used, but I only had one option available to me, so it didn't matter that much.



Alazarin Crimson

## 2. Choices and Materials

**Entering the beginner category** - (Because people tend to question, I thought I should address it.) This is my 6th illumination ever, my first time using both/either gouache and/or pergamenta, my first time working in original size (miniature), my first time trying to understand and match the tones of period pigments, and my first time doing significant whitework. I felt given my limited level of experience with any illumination and my nonexistent experience with the materials and some of the techniques, a beginner designation was warranted. Just because I do the research to learn to information doesn't mean I had that experience or knowledge before starting the project.

**Why I chose what I did** - I was drawn to this particular manuscript because of the faces in whitework on #50. They intrigued me and I saw them as a good challenge. I also saw these pages as an excellent choice for miniature work, as I could work them close to if not at actual size. I chose to replace the center of the D in 74 with the D from 33 because I have always wanted to try the precise geometric background, and I replaced and moved some of the figures in 74 because I wanted more variation in the design. As everything is from the same Master and manuscript, I felt the images still related to one another very well.

**Materials** - The illuminations are completed on pergamenta. A 4H pencil was used to mark the lines, and an archival quality Prismacolor Premier Fine Line Marker in black used to outline portions of the manuscript, as in the extant. The painting was done in Reeves gouache, with Daniel Smite Luminescent watercolour gold. I used a combination of Grumbacher 000 round brush and a Windsor and Newton 0000 round brush to complete the work.

**Design** - The right-hand image is a direct copy of #50. The left-hand image is based in #74, with changes made using images from elsewhere in the manuscript. The center of the large D (versal) has been replaced with the center of the D from #33, and the whitework corners around the D were also taken from #33. On #74, the two lower people were removed. The top right-

hand man was moved to the bottom right. The top right and bottom left were filled with images from #191.

**Sizing** - I wanted to make the images actual size.

Unfortunately, the information I originally had available to me contained a typo - the height is 167 mm, not 176 mm (as confirmed on the museum catalogue). By the time I learned this, I had already traced out the images onto the pergamenta. I tried to make the two images equal in outer size, but may not have been 100% accurate. In addition, the tops of the images were cut off in the scans available online. I originally assumed that the scans were just done poorly, but later learned from the museum catalogue entry that the book was not in its original binding. Another possibility is that the original image was trimmed slightly in rebinding. Either way, I reconstructed the missing pieces by hand.

**Page placement** - I chose to place the images on the page as I did because I wanted the illumination to be useful as a scroll for awards in the SCA. I knew that the seal and signatures would not fit within the illuminations' frames, but might fit along the bottom and in the space between the two images. I also chose to leave the spearman's shield blank for this reason, though it was originally painted in blue with a white fleur-de-lis.

**Colours** - Comparing what I had learned to my box of gouache, I did have a brilliant red (the orange red), a crimson (the darker red), a yellow ochre, and ultramarine. I did not have anything close to malachite or alazarin crimson, so these were the two colours I would have to make before fine-tuning the colours for my purpose.

- **Alazarin Crimson (1)**: I mixed up a colour similar to alazarin crimson using my tube of crimson as a base. To it, I added small amounts of ultramarine blue and yellow ochre. This did not produce a colour with a red enough tint, so I added more crimson. I then found that the base was not bright enough, so I added some brilliant red. This produced a colour close enough to the alazarin crimson samples I found online to be suitable for use. Adding white to this colour produced a shade very similar to the face on the side of the D on the creature page, so I knew I was on the right track.
- **Tiny Red Dots (2)**: I also had to create the colour used to make the tiny dots of the crimson squares in the left-hand versal. I had originally thought that this would best be matched by my brilliant red colour, but this colour was too transparent and dark when applied in small quantities against the crimson. I created a more vibrant colour that stood out by mixing brilliant red with a small amount of white and a larger quantity of lemon yellow, testing as I went along until I created something that worked.
- **Lowlights in Red (3)**: To create the lowlights in the red tones, I added small amounts of emerald green.
- **Lowlights in Blue (4)**: Used a small amount of black.
- **Green (5)**: Used a base of emerald green, added moderate amounts of ultramarine blue and small amounts of lemon yellow, brilliant red, black, and dark green.
- **Lowlights in Green (6)**: Added a small amount of brilliant red.
- **Highlights in Green (7)**: Added a fair amount of white and lemon yellow.
- **Yellow (8)**: Large amount of lemon yellow, with added orange-red until the right colour was reached.
- **Lowlights in yellow (9)**: I reached this colour by adding burnt ochre to my yellow mixture. After painting, I found something showing me that I should have tried to darken with violet. I tried adding violet to my yellow mixture and reached a shade almost identical to my original lowlight colour.

- **Highlights in yellow (10):** To my yellow mixture, I added a lot of lemon yellow, a little bit of white, and some water.
- **Spearman's tunic (11):** Burnt sienna with a fair amount of crimson, and a tiny amount of burnt umber.
- **Spearman's tunic highlights (most of it) (12):** The above mixture, with a LOT of white added to it, used as a wash over the original colour in most places (other than shadows).
- **Flesh tone (13):** Flesh tone paint (tube), plus mixture from spearman's tunic and a little tiny bit of burnt sienna.
- **Warm flesh tone shadow (14):** Same as spearman's tunic.
- **Flesh tone greying (15):** Flesh tone plus tiny amount of black.
- **Flesh Highlight (16):** Tiny amount of flesh tone, lemon yellow, and small amount of white.
- **Hair brown (17):** Burnt sienna and burnt umber.
- **Rest of hair and spear:** Black, white, shading tone, and combinations thereof.

**Gold (18)** - I originally wanted to try gilding, but was not able to obtain an appropriate size in time, as I knew I had to gild before painting. I decided to use my watercolour gold paint instead.

### 3. Process

- Modifications** - used computer software to make changes to images and print out appropriately-sized images for tracing. Also used computer software to clean aging and artifacts from an image for easier tracing. 1 day.
- Sanding** - lightly sanded the pergamenta with 320 grit sandpaper.
- Tracing** - taped to a window and traced with hard pencil during daylight. 2 days.
- Outlining** - used black pen to outline only in places where the extant appeared to obviously have outlining. This left the whitework designs and faces, and a good portion of the people, outline-free. 1/2 day.
- Painting** - started by painting colours, then lowlights, then whitework/highlights. I chose to work with one set of colours at a time, starting with the reds, then blues, then green. At this point, I painted all of the gold, and then went back with all of the first colours to touch everything up. Finally, I did the yellow, flesh tones, whites, and hair colours. 7 days to complete.
- Erasing** - erased any still-visible pencil marks from the illuminations. I have seen many extant examples of aligning lines left from placing the text, but have not seen extra marking lines around the illustrations, so I copied accordingly.
- Squiggly lines** - added black squiggly lines that had been unintentionally edited out of the original before tracing.

### 4. Considerations

- Colour mixing** - I have a book that can help with making decisions in colour mixing, but I often do not have the colours it says to mix together to achieve my desired result. In these cases, I do my best to mix the requisite colour without guidance, and then use this colour to mix and achieve the final colour I desire.
- White highlights on blue leaves** - Looking at some of the ?maple? leaves, the four lower points often show as white. In discussion with a more experienced scribe, she suggested that the white areas (including more obvious internal patterned lines) are likely \*not\* fading, and are actually white highlights.

- c) **Malachite green** - I meant to copy the malachite pigment colour, but when it came time to mix my colour, I accidentally opened up the "Mayan Green" pigment website and not the malachite green. This resulted in a fairly close colour match on the Mayan green, but not even close to a match on the malachite. Since I had already painted my piece before I realized this, I had to go with it. Also, in looking at the extant while painting, I tried adding white to the green to get some of the lighter tones, so some of the lighter colours are a little off the true mayan green. Mayan green seems to be close to viridian green.
- d) **Lowlighting blue vines** - Although I didn't lowlight the edge of the crimson vines (because the black lines were still readily visible in most cases), I did choose to lowlight the outer edges of the blue vines. This is because the blue was so opaque that it completely covered the lines, and reduced the dimensionality of the vines.
- e) **Variation in folded leaves** - It appeared from the extant that all of the red folded leaves were of different colours: One was bright red, one was crimson, and one was alazarin crimson. There were two blue folded leaves, but I only had one base blue to use to keep within the colour range of the extant. I varied their look (as is indeed the case on the extant) by using a lot more lowlights and white on one, and a lot more mid-light-blue and white on the other, covering up most of the true ultramarine blue.
- f) **Man with reading material's tunic** - In the extant, the man with the reading material has a very light-coloured tunic with a few pinkish lowlights. From what I could see, I surmised that this tunic was originally painted in alazarin crimson, but, being a vegetable-based dye, it faded significantly over time. Thus the resulting man has a rather more strongly-coloured tunic, with white highlights in areas where little to no colour showed on the extant.
- g) **Black outlining in ink** - In some areas, I have left the black outline showing and in other places I have not. This was intentional. Not only did I leave some areas not outlined in black from the start, because there wasn't evidence of outlining there, but the scribe who created the extant painted over the black outlines on a regular basis (in fact, a lot more than I did), and did not go back to touch them up. Whereas some areas I had to go back and touch up for my own artistic sensibilities, other areas I left slightly overlapping to better recreate the original.
- h) **Corners of the versals** - It was almost impossible to make out the exact original design on the corners of the versals. I had to make up something that looked approximately accurate.
- i) **Lining up the two pages on the single page** - As the tops of the illuminations were missing on the copy I had, it was tricky to line the pages up perfectly at the top of the page before having reconstructed the top bits. Thus the pages aren't quite the same distance from the top as one another. This problem also made it difficult to size the two pages the same as one another, which in turn added to the difficulty in lining the pages up on the sheet.
- j) **Lemon yellow** - My lemon yellow is very gritty. Therefore all colours that I made using this colour in some quantity were gritty, too. This resulted in layering of some colours, especially the reaching man in the yellow robe, looking a bit rough.
- k) **Spearman's tunic** - In looking at the extant, there was very little colour to speak of on the garment. There was a slight brownish tinge, but that was about it. So the pigment had either faded, wasn't there, or was slightly brownish and pinkish. To try to find the starting colour, I considered the fact that this tunic looked slightly more brown than the other light items on the illuminations. That meant that either brown pigment was used in combination with white, or a crimson that would darken to brown was used with white. I started looking into ochre and other medieval brown colours, and decided to try a reddish brown, containing both a red and a brown pigment, combined with a lot of white.

- l) **Spearman's fingers** - The original master illuminator did not finish the ends of the spearman's fingers, so I left them the same as he had.
- m) **Tablet guy's beard** - The extant had some pinkish tones in his beard, so I added a bit of warm shadow tone from the flesh tones to his beard.
- n) **Black lines** - Although my black pen was suitable for creating lines before painting, it was far too wide to touch up lines after painting. Thus any touch-ups that I deemed necessary were done with a paintbrush.

## 5. Resources

The location of the four illumination pictures upon which my work is based (British Library, accessed March 2015):

- [http://www.thedigitalwalters.org/Data/WaltersManuscripts/W166/data/W.166/sap/W166\\_000050\\_sap.jpg](http://www.thedigitalwalters.org/Data/WaltersManuscripts/W166/data/W.166/sap/W166_000050_sap.jpg)
- [http://www.thedigitalwalters.org/Data/WaltersManuscripts/W166/data/W.166/sap/W166\\_000074\\_sap.jpg](http://www.thedigitalwalters.org/Data/WaltersManuscripts/W166/data/W.166/sap/W166_000074_sap.jpg)
- [http://www.thedigitalwalters.org/Data/WaltersManuscripts/W166/data/W.166/sap/W166\\_000033\\_sap.jpg](http://www.thedigitalwalters.org/Data/WaltersManuscripts/W166/data/W.166/sap/W166_000033_sap.jpg)
- [http://www.thedigitalwalters.org/Data/WaltersManuscripts/W166/data/W.166/sap/W166\\_000190\\_sap.jpg](http://www.thedigitalwalters.org/Data/WaltersManuscripts/W166/data/W.166/sap/W166_000190_sap.jpg)

Clarke, Mark, *Colours Versus Colorants in Art History: Evaluating Lost Manuscript Yellows*, 2011. University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Accessed March 2015, from <https://revistadehistoriadaarte.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/art10.pdf>

*Common Medieval Pigments*, unknown date. Accessed March 2015, from <https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~cochineal/pdfs/a-baker-04-pigments.pdf>

*The Illuminated Page - Gilding*, accessed March 2015, from <http://www.illuminatedpage.com/gilding.html>

*Mayan Green Pigment*, Synopia, 2015. Accessed March 2015, from [http://www.sinopia.com/799G1001A-Mayan-Green-Pigment\\_p\\_138.html](http://www.sinopia.com/799G1001A-Mayan-Green-Pigment_p_138.html)

McIntyre, Carol, *Could You Toss Your Alizarin Crimson? A Colour Theory Tip*, 2014. Accessed March 2015, from <http://www.celebratingcolor.com/could-you-toss-your-alizarin-crimson-a-color-mixing-tip/>

*Pigments: Historical, Chemical, and Artistic Importance of Coloring Agents*, accessed April 2015, from <http://www.jcsparks.com/painted/pigment-chem.html>

*Pigments Through the Ages - Malachite*, unknown date. Accessed March 2015, from <http://www.webexhibits.org/pigments/indiv/overview/malachite.html>

Powell, William F., *1500 Color Mixing Recipes for Oil, Acrylic, and Watercolour*, 2012. Walter Foster Publishing, Inc., Irvine, California, USA.

Silvana, Mistress Stella, *Making Your Own Inks and Pigments*, unknown date. Accessed March 2015, from <http://scribe.ansteorra.org/resources/makingpigments.pdf>