Fragmented Hours:
The Biography of a Printed Devotional Book by Thielman Kerver

Stephanie Haas

Abstract: As the most richly illustrated and widely-owned texts of the late medieval and early modern eras, books of hours are essential to the study of art, religion, and the history of the book. Fragmented and altered books, while perhaps less coveted, are of particular value for what they may reveal of book owners and the changing meanings and uses of devotional texts and images over more than five centuries. This paper explores the compelling biography of a book of hours in the University of Florida Library that has undergone such extensive alteration prior to its acquisition in 1989 that cataloguers could not identify the printer and edition, leaving the book’s many dislocations, redactions, and annotations unexplored. Engaging with scholarship on the social history of books of hours, I identify the fragmented book as possibly the sole surviving copy of an edition produced by Thielman Kerver in Paris around 1510 and reconstruct its missing contents through comparison with relevant editions. Next, I examine the book’s complex web of redactions, erasures, and annotations in the context of sixteenth-century religious reform before turning to the book’s dislocations and the spoliation of images in the context of nineteenth and twentieth-century collecting trends.

Key words: medieval texts, Smathers Hours, provenance, Thelman Kerver

The subject of this article is a heavily damaged early sixteenth-century printed devotional book acquired by the University of Florida George A. Smathers Library in 1989.1 The prayerbook, which I refer to hereafter as the Smathers Hours, is an elegant example of the highly sought-after books of hours printed in Paris at the turn of the sixteenth century. Contemporary readers appreciated these books for their intricate wood- and metal-cut illustrations, as well as for their collection of devotional offices honoring the Virgin Mary and intercessory prayers appealing to saints. The Smathers Hours has sustained a dizzying array of damage over the past five centuries, including the loss or intentional removal of approximately half of its pages, mutilations where readers have carved hand-painted initials from the vellum leaves, the addition of handwritten annotations, and erasure and redaction of the book’s body text and border frames [Figures 1–2]. Also lost from the book are the standard details that would help to identify the edition of a book of hours, the title page, the printer’s colophon, and illustrations opening the prayerbook’s core texts. This loss of pages, combined with age and poor care and handling, has made an investigation of the book so challenging that cataloguers have thus far been unable to identify the publisher, printing date, and edition. While this damaged prayerbook is perhaps more challenging to study and less valuable to collectors than a more intact volume, the physical changes enacted upon the book by its users are invaluable to

1 This article is based on research of the Smathers Hours featured in my Master of Arts in Art History Thesis from the University of South Florida, published April 2023. Stephanie Haas, ‘Fragmented Hours: The Biography of a Devotional Book Printed by Thielman Kerver.’ (Thesis, Tampa, University of South Florida, 2023). Gainesville, University of Florida, George A. Smathers Libraries, Special Collections, BX 2080 .A2 1500z, 1500. Accession No. 89-233.
understanding its biography as an object and its readers' social, religious, and cultural attitudes. By closely examining the origins, materials, and physical changes made to the Smathers Hours by its readers, I identify the University of Florida's book of hours as an edition produced in Paris by early printer Thielman Kerver, most likely on April 5, 1511. With the book's origin established, I argue that prior to its fragmentation as an art object, the Smathers Hours readers conformed the prayerbook to changing Protestant attitudes.

The book's fragile structure, dislocations in pages and text, and the lack of information on provenance prior to its acquisition by the University of Florida have complicated the investigation of the Smathers Hours. In its current condition, the prayerbook contains sixty-four vellum leaves loosely attached to a once intricately embossed, though now cracked, and likely not original, leather cover. The loss of nearly half of the book's pages has rendered the binding compromised and in danger of coming undone. Of the remaining leaves, more than half contain deletions to the body text of the offices, prayers, and areas of the framed commentary in the illustrative border cycles, resulting in interruptions in the book's structure [Figure 1]. The deletions made to the pages of the Smathers Hours appear in two forms: first, erasure by the physical scraping away of text from the vellum page, and second, redaction by crossing through text with lines of ink. In certain areas of the book, entire prayers are deleted; in others, the deletions are fragmented and inconsistent. Further adding to this complexity are lacunae from the removal of painted details and handwritten annotations in the page margins and body text [Figure 2]. The only evidence of the prayerbook's prior life is an apparent early 20th-century sales catalogue entry, printed in German and adhered to the book's back inner cover. This lack of prior knowledge of the book's origin and provenance, combined with the complications caused by layers of extensive damage, has made studying this prayerbook challenging, requiring an approach that considers these complexities.

As a damaged devotional object that has spent much of its existence in the hands of readers, the Smathers Hours is a specific “thing” with unique religious, social, and cultural contexts and purposes requiring methodologies tailored to books of hours. "Biographies of things can make salient what might otherwise remain obscure." The layers of disfigurement contained within the prayerbook make it an ideal case study for the biography of the book as an object which considers the creation, life, and afterlife of an object, recognizing that much like living beings, objects have inherent biographical possibilities. In this study, I draw upon Virginia Reinburg's research on the social history of French books of hours—that of "the book of hours as an artifact—a material object which, if carefully interpreted, can shed light on its makers and users." As the most widely-owned and richly illustrated devotional texts of the late medieval and early modern eras, books of hours provide a unique opportunity to study book owners' changing attitudes towards religion and art over the ensuing centuries. For over two hundred years, no singular entity controlled its content and production, while numerous hands contributed to crafting the devotional book—commercially, spiritually, and personally. The contents of books of hours are as varied as their owners, with the central feature of each prayerbook being the Hours of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a

---

3 The truncated design on the binding suggests that it was constructed from covers that were cut down and repurposed.
4 See note 45 for a translation of the description.
collection of psalms, hymns, and prayers honoring Mary as the Virgin Mother of God. Accompanying the Hours are essential secondary and accessory elements that were often unique to the reader, including elaborate illustrations and embellishments to mark the openings of the book’s essential text and invite visual contemplation of the book’s message. Through an investigation of the origins and materials of books of hours and carefully considering the traces of evidence that readers left of their use on the printed page, a portrait of the book’s owners begins to emerge. In the case of the Smathers Hours, these traces of use are apparent in the addition of handwritten prayers, the deletion of text, and the intentional removal of the opening illustrations from the book. As a book appreciated for its devotional text and images, the attitudes of its readers toward religion and art are intrinsic to uncovering the life history of the Smathers Hours.

In this analysis, I approach the Smathers Hours at three pivotal moments in its biography. First, I examine its origins as an edition of a book of hours created by Thielman Kerver in Paris and propose a printing date of April 5, 1511. By utilizing the tools of analytical bibliography, a method ideally suited to understanding early print shop practices and identifying damaged editions, I reconstruct the essence of what is missing through comparisons of the damaged copy with similar French printed books of hours described and analyzed by rare book scholars Ina Nettekoven and Thierry Claerr. I next examine the nature and location of the erasures and annotations made to the book through Eamon Duffy’s scholarship on the additions, removals, and erasures English laity made to Catholic prayerbooks, such as the Smathers Hours, in response to the political upheaval and changing sixteenth-century Protestant devotional norms. Finally, after isolating and contextualizing these deletions, I discuss the fragmentation of the book as an object of art in the later phases of the book’s life by the removal of the book’s illustrations and initials vis-à-vis nineteenth- and twentieth-century art attitudes and collecting trends discussed in research by Sandra Hindman and Christopher de Hamel.

**Identification of the Smathers Hours as an edition printed by Thielman Kerver**

The Smathers Hours was created during a time of tremendous growth in the ownership of books of hours. The printing press made ownership of books of hours accessible to broader swaths of the population and Paris was at the center of this trade, with shops catering to demand in France and abroad. In the first two decades of the sixteenth century, more editions of books of hours were printed in Paris than in all remaining

---

Thielman Kerver, an emigree from the area of Koblenz, leveraged typesetting skills honed in German printshops and a later partnership in Paris with fellow German George Wolff to become a sworn bookseller of the University of Paris in 1501. By his death in 1522, he was fully enveloped in the Parisian print trade with an oeuvre that included over three hundred editions of liturgical books, legal tracts, classical authors, and prayerbooks. Though with over one hundred and twenty-four known individual editions and variants printed, books of hours were clearly where Kerver concentrated his efforts as a printer and publisher. In this competitive environment, Kerver distinguished his books of hours by leveraging unique materials, typography, and border illustrations to bring a semi-custom product to a growing middle-class audience.

The Smathers Hours is an example of a printed book of hours created for a growing audience of affluent middle-class laity eager to own devotional books with elegant materials. Kerver’s prayerbooks appealed to lawyers, merchants, doctors, government officials, and others who coveted the rich hand-illuminated manuscripts made famous by the nobility, but perhaps with more “modest means.” These books of hours featured a wide variety of printed devotional texts and images for the reader to contemplate and enjoy, along with the opportunity to appreciate custom details and decorations. A comparison of folio G3 verso of the Smathers Hours and Wing MS ZW 5351, a known Kerver edition printed in 1510 and held in the Newberry Library, Chicago, shows that while the Smathers Hours has yellowed with age and exhibits evidence of wear and water damage, elements of the book’s previous refinement remain visible in the smooth vellum folio pages, the liquid gold illuminated initials painted on backgrounds of red and blue, and the variety of intricate wood and metal cut illustrations featuring the Apocalypse Cycle framing the printed text of the Advent Office of the Virgin [Figures 3–4]. Adding to this luxurious effect are light red ink lines, scoring the page, and imitating the ruling of manuscript books. The reader would have pored over the book’s Antiqua and Gothic typesets printed in dual ink colors, an effect achieved by running the vellum pages through the hand-press twice, first with red ink and then again with black ink. The Smathers Hours and the Newberry Library edition display the array of bespoke details that a reader could request to adorn the pages of their printed books of hours.

The typography, illustrations, page layout of the Smathers Hours, and its contents, closely align with editions printed by Thielman Kerver between 1506 and 1512, but especially those of April 5, 1511. In addition to luxury copies such as the Smathers Hours, Kerver offered copies at lower price points printed on less expensive paper without the delicate bespoke details, although no less visually appealing. An example of such a book is a copy of an edition printed on paper by Thielman Kerver on April 5, 1511, the only known exemplar is owned by

---

13 Reinburg, French Books of Hours, 37–41. Reinburg’s figures are based on inventory completed by Brigitte Moreau and team at the Bibliothèque nationale de France; Brigitte Moreau et al, Inventaire Chronologique Des Éditions Parisiennes, 5 vols (Service des Travaux Historiques de la Ville de Paris, 1972).
15 Claerr, Kerver Tome II, 102–04.
16 Claerr, Kerver Tome I, 33.
17 Claerr, Kerver Tome I, Annexes XIV.
the Antiquariat Bibermühle AG in Switzerland [Figure 5]. Typography was a distinguishing feature of Kerver’s design, where the text and framed commentary served as opportunities to showcase his shop’s Antiqua and Gothic typesets. Folio G3 verso of Kerver’s 1511 edition Bibermühl 60.2 and the Smathers Hours display Kerver’s easier-to-read Antiqua typeset size 15:79 in the body text of the Office of the Virgin and a Gothic Bastarda typeset in the Apocalypse border cycle frames. During his incunabula period, Kerver began experimenting with the distinctive Antiqua typeset, created with his associate Georges Wolff. The use of the typeset in books on his behalf can be traced to 1503. Folio G3 verso also illustrates how Kerver deploys varying typesets and ink as counterpoints to one another, with the Gothic typeset in red ink contrasting with the main body text of the Advent Office of the Virgin in Antiqua typeset in black ink serving as both ornamentation and narration of the many border cycles featured within the book. Here, Kerver’s Gothic text serves a didactic function by narrating the Apocalypse scenes and its biblical source [Figures 3–5]. Kerver confined his Antiqua typeset to those books of hours printed for the liturgical use of Rome, classical, and jurisprudence texts. This typeset appealed to humanists and academics, demonstrating the printer’s awareness of his audience and the dual purpose of his typesets—function and decoration.

The border illustrations of the Smathers Hours are a place of innovation and a program of parallel reading within the devotional hours. In a competitive commercial environment like Paris, printers set themselves apart and appealed to a market of individuals with varying literacy levels in Latin and the vernacular by leveraging the border frames to illustrate a story within the larger text of the book’s office. Kerver featured a variety of border illustrations in his book of hours, including the Apocalypse, Dance of Death, and biblical typology accompanied by guided commentary in Latin and sometimes the vernacular, explaining the illustration. In the Smathers Hours, Kerver framed the Antiqua typeset with border cycle illustrations based on commissioned designs attributed to the workshops of two famous manuscript painters, the Master of the Apocalypse Rose and Jean Pichore. Kerver had used designs by the Master of the Apocalypse Rose, such as the Apocalypse Cycle featured in two registers with Latin commentary printed in red ink on folio G3 verso, since 1497

---

18 Although I have been unable to physically examine Bibermühl 60.2, Ina Nettkevøen has catalogued the book and provides extensive analytical and descriptive bibliographic information, which confirms identical contents, typography, illustrations, and page layout as those contained in the Smathers Hours. Further confirmation that collations match comparisons between the damaged book and editions printed by Kerver between 1506 and 1512. Nettkevøen, Horae B.M.V. 2385–90. The edition also appears in bibliographies from Thierry Claerr, Hanns Bohatta, and Bridgitte Moreau. Claerr, Kerver Tome II, 175–76. Claerr’s entry is incorrect and notes the edition as printed in Gothic Bastarda. Moreau, Inventaire Chronologique Des Editions Parisiennes, 1511: 116, 119; Hanns Bohatta, Bibliographie Der Livres d’heures: (Horae B. M. V.) Officia, Hortuli Aniame, Coronae B. M. V., Rosaria Und Cursus B. M. V. Des XV. Und XVI. Jahrhunderts (Austria: Gilhofer & Ransschub, 1924), 37, 927.

19 Claerr, "Le rôle de Thielman Kerver dans l’évolution de la typographie à Paris à la fin du xve siècle et au début du xviie siècle."


22 Claerr, Kerver Tome I, 8.; Claerr, Kerver Tome II, 102; Claerr, "Le rôle de Thielman Kerver dans l’évolution de la typographie à Paris à la fin du xve siècle et au début du xviie siècle," 330; Claerr has uncovered a single instance of Kerver’s Antiqua typeset used for an edition printed for the use of Rome in Flanders.


24 Ina Nettkevøen, Der Meister Der Apokalypsenrose Der Sainte Chapelle Und Die Pariser Buchkunst Um 1500, Ars Nova 9 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004); Caroline Zöhl, Jean Pichore: Buchmaler, Graphiker Und Verleger in Paris Um 1500, Ars Nova 8 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004).
By the time of the Smathers Hours printing, the manuscript painter’s designs were decreasing in favor of a new round of designs from the workshop of Jean Pichore. In Pichore’s *Dance of Death*, the cycle featured on folio L2 verso, Death personified as a skeleton, visits the witch and the fool in the outer border frame [Figure 7]. In contrast to the outer border frames are the upper, lower, and inner frames, where Kerver has rearranged a variety of ornamental and vanitas motifs to frame the text, complement the scenes, and suit design needs. For Kerver, this area existed outside of the text of the divine offices and constituted a unique place for extra-liturgical viewing experiences.

The Smathers Hours and Kerver’s *Bibermühle 60.2* are both octavos organized into thirteen sections of eight vellum leaves, creating gatherings of sixteen printed pages as well as an additional single gathering of four vellum leaves collated as A–I, L–N, O4. Both contain the essential and secondary texts of traditional books of hours and additional accessory appeals that Kerver included in his books of hours at an increasing rate. *Bibermühle 60.2* is composed of the Almanac and Calendar (A1v–A8v), the Gospel Sequence and Passion of John (B1–B8v), Office of the Virgin (C1–F3v), Penitential Psalms (G4–G8), Litanies (G8v–H4), Office of the Dead (H4v–K4), Hours of the Cross and Holy Spirit (K4v–K6v; K6v–L3), Marian Mass (L3–L4), Hours of Barbara (L4v–L6), Suffrages (L6v–N1), and additional Prayers, Suffrages, and Indulgences (N1v–O4). Based on comparison with *Bibermühle 60.2*, sixty-four vellum leaves remain of 108 leaves initially printed with the Smathers Hours: six leaves remain of gatherings A and B, the Calendar and Gospel sequences; sixteen pages remain of gatherings C through H, featuring the Office of the Virgin, the Penitential Psalms, and Litanies; thirteen pages of gatherings H–K, housing the Office of the Dead; five pages of gathering L featuring the Hours of the Holy Spirit, Hours of Barbara, and Marian Mass; and sixteen leaves of gatherings L–N housing the Suffrages and prayers. Gathering O is also lost from the book, which featured additional accessory prayers and indulgences. In addition to missing pages in the Smathers Hours, some leaves were likely misplaced when the book was rebound.

Based on the size of the book’s leather cover and truncated design, the Smathers Hours was likely rebound at an unknown point in the book’s early life. In Thielman Kerver’s books of hours, prayers to Saints Stephen, Lawrence, and Christopher are traditionally featured in the Suffrages to the Saints on folio M5. However, in the Smathers Hours this folio is situated on the book’s last page next to the back flyleaves. On the verso side is an image of St. Christopher as the Christ-bearer next to an appeal to the saint that has been rubbed away from the vellum. This would place the prayer in the O gathering, an unusual location for the prayer that I have been unable to confirm against my examinations of comparable Kerver editions. Though erased, the last two lines of this prayer appear at the top of folio M6 recto, confirming that the pages were intended to be next to one another, with the Prayer to Sebastian following the prayer to St. Christopher.

Kerver carefully matched border typologies and text, using the ornamental frame as a space where decorative elements were rearranged. Kerver included additional prayers, meditations, and indulgences in his tracts and consistently altered the placement of metal and woodcuts, producing a wide range of editions with slight variations; folios G3 verso from the Smathers Hours, *Bibermühle’s 60.2*, and *Wing MS ZW 5351.1* demonstrate that Kerver’s interplay of type and image in the text and borders is consistent and allows for...
comparison with intact exemplars to reconstruct the damaged sections of the Smathers Hours [Figure 3–5].31 In this example, Apocalypse scenes occupy the outer borders. At the same time, the upper, lower, and inner frames, Kerver has rearranged a variety of ornamental and vanitas motifs to frame the text of the Office of the Virgin, therefore distinguishing the 1511 editions from the 1510 edition by their distinctive borders. While this produced a range of copies with slight variations in border design, Kerver was conscious of consistency in textual content, which is essential when investigating areas that have been erased and removed from the book.

**Conformity to Protestant Attitudes in the Early Life of the Smathers Hours**

The next stage in the biography of the Smathers Hours—created less than a decade before the first waves of Protestant religious reform spread throughout sixteenth-century Europe—is inherently marked by the changing confessional attitudes of devotional book owners.32 Thielman Kerver printed his books of hours for domestic and international audiences and as an edition printed for the liturgical use of Rome, the readers could have used the Smathers Hours anywhere in Europe the Roman rite was celebrated. The question of where precisely readers used the Smathers Hours is beyond this project’s scope. Instead, I turn to the question of how readers used it at this moment in time. To answer this question, I draw upon Eamon Duffy’s research on the "vandalism" enacted upon Catholic prayerbooks by their Tudor Protestant readers during the sixteenth century.33 English reform shared with other reform movements the disdain for indulgences, the authority of the pope, and the role of Mary and saints as intercessors. Duffy’s observations provide a material point of reference for my examination of readers’ deletions to the Smathers Hours. Readers altered their Catholic devotional books differently during this tumultuous political and doctrinal transformation period. Texts and images were crossed out, erased, and sliced away from books to conform to changing confessional identities and state edicts. Other times the editing was unsystematic, indiscriminate, and heavy-handed.34 The Smathers Hours seems to have been subjected to both forms of editing.

The nature of the erasures and redactions of prayers in the Marian Mass in particular suggest changing attitudes toward the veneration of Mary. Catholicism’s elevation of Mary, in both the story of Jesus and in the relationship between the individual and God, was a major point of contention during the Protestant Reformation and as a devotional book honoring Mary as the Mother of God, the contents of books of hours fell under obvious scrutiny. In the Smathers Hours, this controversy is materialized in the deletion of prayers in the votive mass to Mary, where nearly every line of the special celebration was rubbed from the vellum or redacted with black ink [Figure 2]. On folio L3, the entirety of the prayer honoring Mary as the ‘holy mother who brought forth in childbirth a king,’ the Salve sancta parens, was roughly scraped from the vellum leaving a block of unreadable smudged ink on the page. This was one of the many prayers venerating the Virgin that was contested by Protestant reformers. In primers printed in the years shortly after England’s break with Rome in 1534, these appeals were increasingly excluded from devotionals or were rewritten to shift the invocation from Mary to Christ.35 In the Smathers Hours, the reader chose to erase the prayer instead of annotating the language to invoke Christ.

33 Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, ix–x.
When examining the extensive deletions of prayers venerating Mary in the Smathers Hours, it is notable that the reader left some appeals untouched. The reader chose to omit from modification a short salutation in the Marian Mass containing the printed instructional rubric, “Specialis salutatio ad beatā virginē mariā.” Also left untouched is one of the first, and likely earliest, handwritten additions to the book that likely predate Protestant conforming edits: an appeal to Mary as intercessor located in the outer margins of in the Office of the Virgin. The handwritten appeal “pia virgo [vir]ginum [inter]cedar pro nobis ad d[omi]num. Am[en],” petitions Mary and seeks her aid and advancement with God on behalf of the reader [Figure 6]. The reader of the Smathers Hours did not apply a wholesale deletion of appeals to Mary, instead, they chose to carefully fragment the text to remove the most Catholic elements to conform the book to Protestant devotion.

In contrast to the careful removal of prayers from the Smathers Hours are the deletions and loss of text associated with papal authority and controversial marginalia. The Reformation challenged the Catholic Church, the pope as leader of that Church, and the wide-ranging authority granted with the papal position. In England, Henry VIII handed down two proclamations, one in 1535 and one in 1538, abolishing papal authority and controversial marginalia in public services books. Underlying these edicts are Henry VIII’s challenges to papal authority as a sovereign leader and the rampant corruption that stemmed from the pope’s ability to grant indulgences. The text associated with indulgences is erased from the pages of the Smathers Hours, while their associated images are carefully left intact. The Salve sancta facies is scraped from the vellum, leaving the image of St. Veronica and the holy face of Jesus on the page [Figure 8]. The popular prayer to the holy face was traditionally accompanied by an indulgence when devotees recited the appeal while gazing upon the image of Veronica and her holy veil. A debate on indulgences was at the crux of the Reformation, so it is natural that the prayer is erased to adhere to Protestant thought. That the image was untouched, especially one with the connotations of idolatry that Veronica’s Veil has as an image of Christ, underscores how precious the images in the book were to users as opposed to its textual contents. With the prayer now erased, the indulgence is deactivated, and the image may be freely gazed upon. Around 1510, Kerver began to introduce an additional gathering, O, to his books of hours, including prayers to St. Augustine, the Ave cuius conceptionis, Deus qui nos concepEonis, and an indulgence from Pope Sixtus IV. This indulgence was a relatively new addition to Kerver’s books of hours but would soon be banned. Because the relevant pages are lost, it is not known if the text of this indulgence was redacted or erased from the Smathers Hours. However, carefully examining the book’s binding does not reveal the intentional removal of the gathering with scissors or knives; instead, the glue in the page gutters suggests that the gathering likely separated from the book over time.

The Dance of Death illustration border cycles may have been altered at varying points in the life of the Smathers Hours in relation to such Protestant bans on references to the pope and controversial marginal images. The Office of the Dead—controversial in Reform thought for its offering of intercessory prayer for the souls of the dead in purgatory—is left alone in the Smathers Hours while the text of the non-liturgical Dance of Death border cycle is deleted. This cycle of images designed by Jean Pichore features Death, personified as a skeleton, appearing to men and women of all ages and stations of society. The text in all fifty frames has been removed in one of two ways. The first method, seen in most frames, is a simple scraping away of red and black ink from the vellum [Figure 7]. In contrast, the text in ten frames of the Dance of Death appears to have been scraped away, followed by a liquid solution applied over the erasure that has stained the vellum. The pope, dressed in the accouterments of his station and carrying the scepter, is visited by Death. Just as in the frame below, the King, accompanied by his symbol of authority, comes face to face with Death [Figure 9]. This treatment has resulted in

---

36 Translated as “Devout Virgin of Virgins, may she advance the way for us to God. Amen.”
37 Duffy, Marking the Hours, 148–50.
large ink smears throughout the ten frames, leaving the text unreadable. One possible explanation for the varying types of edits to the Dance of Death border frame text is that the top frame featuring the pope visited by Death was edited after the 1535 proclamation, removing reference to the pope. It was then later re-edited after the 1538 proclamation banning controversial marginalia. In this situation, edits to the text of the Office make sense. However, the erasure of the text of a non-liturgical border seems more fitting in light of state edicts than any doctrinal implication.

When viewing the types of censorship of appeals to Mary in the Smathers Hours, it is interesting to consider what they mean individually and in tandem. Regardless of the forms of censorship that the reader applied at this point or the extent of that censorship, the changes to the Smathers Hours as a whole signal that the book was still in use by its readers. Most of the deletions in the Smathers Hours constitute the erasure of ink from the vellum resulting in the permanent physical removal of prayers from the book. On the other hand, redactions, or the simple crossing through of lines of text in ink, do not permanently rid the book of the prayer. The text redacted in the Marian Mass can still be read and recited out loud, making it, in this case, a less severe form of deletion of the text.

### Fragmentation in the Later Life of the Smathers Hours

As an example of an early sixteenth-century prayerbook prized by readers for its many full-page prints and hand-painted details, it is notable that the Smathers Hours is now missing these images. A catalogue entry, printed in German and adhered to the book’s back inner cover mentions the border cycles but is silent on the printer and the book’s core illustrations, leading to the conclusion that these details were lost well before coming into the dealer’s hands. Books have been broken apart at many points in history, but the quantity and quality of illustrations in books of hours, in particular, invited their fragmentation. The separation of pages from their bindings allowed users to admire their single leaves as objects of art appreciated outside of the original context of the devotional book. Antiquarians and connoisseurs of art alike collected fragments of the medieval past and appreciated the same refined elements of the luxury printed books of hours that appealed to Kerver’s middle-class clientele centuries earlier: intricate illustrations printed on soft vellum decorated with petite hand-painted details, such as those initials missing from the pages of the Smathers Hours [Figure 2].

Multiple remaining folios of the Smathers Hours show evidence of the systematic removal of hand-painted initials, and the haphazard nature of the cuts indicates that they were likely made with scissors rather than the careful cuts of a pen knife. Victorian collectors appreciated these petite details, and they were often isolated from the page and used to embellish mixed media art pieces like albums and scrapbooks. The popularity of images in books of hours as collectibles in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is inherent in the biography of books of hours. In the Smathers Hours, this is defined by the mutilation and fragmentation of the book for its hand-painted initials and large illustrations.

Closely examining the book’s page gutters reveals evidence of the intentional removal of ten vellum folios featuring illustrations commissioned by Kerver from the manuscript workshops of the Master of the Apocalypse Rose

---

41 Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, vol. 1, no. 186, 270–76.
42 Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 150.
43 Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 152–53.
44 Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 155.
46 de Hamel, *Cutting up Manuscripts for Pleasure and Profit*, 2; Netzer, “Collecting, Re/Collecting, Contextualizing and Recontextualizing,” 17–30.
47 See Haas, *Fragmented Hours*, Appendix C for initial removal details.
49 de Hamel, *Cutting up Manuscripts for Pleasure and Profit*.
and Jean Pichore. Most of the book’s large illustrations were located in the Office of the Blessed Virgin and once bookmarked the opening of each of the eight canonical hours. The intentional removal of the leaves in this section is so extensive that their absence has compromised the structure of the binding, causing additional pages to be separated from the book. An examination could not confirm if the first five illustrations were separated from the book or purposely removed. Ten vellum folios have been deliberately separated from the Smathers Hours. Half of the metal-cut illustrations removed from the book consisted of Jean Pichore’s designs of 1504—Annunciation to the Shepherds, Adoration of the Magi, Presentation in the Temple, Flight to Egypt, and the Coronation of Mary—and were once part of the Office of the Blessed Virgin. The five remaining illustrations marking the openings of the Penitential Psalms, Office of the Dead, Hours of the Cross, Hours of the Holy Spirit, and Suffrages are intentionally sliced from the book. Jean Pichore’s 1504 Anointing of David, Raising of Lazarus, Crucifixion, and Pentecost are removed from the book and the Master of the Apocalypse Rose’s 1497 Emblematic Trinity. An examination of folio G4, where an illustration of the Anointing of David would have opened the Penitential Psalms, reveals only a thin sliver of vellum where the page has been crudely sliced away from the book [Figure 10].

The illustrations in the Smathers Hours have been removed from the original context of the devotional book. To readers of the prayerbook, these illustrations served multiple purposes. From a practical standpoint, they bookmarked primary texts of a book printed in Latin. When a reader comes upon the image of the Anointing of David, they know they have reached the Penitential Psalms, whether they read Latin or possess no literacy skills. From a devotional standpoint, the illustration served as a space of visual delight that invited further contemplation of the story of David as King of Israel and the parallels between the Old Testament King and the New Testament Savior. As a didactic aid, the Anointing of David introduced young learners and readers to the fundamental concepts of a religion steeped in interactions between image and text. At first, the young or novice user is guided through an image illustrating the story of David and the trials and tribulations the shepherd encountered on his way to becoming king. Next, when the reader has matured in their literacy and religious education, the now-familiar illustrations support and enrich the Penitential Psalms, the text written by David that emerged from these early obstacles.

Though removed from the book’s original context, the illustrations may have served similar functions. Sliced from the book, they may have been displayed like any two-dimensional image would be today, perhaps framed or pinned to a wall. In this case, the illustrations removed from the Smathers Hours still acted as a place of spiritual contemplation and visual delight that taught the stories of a young shepherd who became King of Israel. However, its combined contemplative and didactic function extends to the sense of nostalgia and admiration of the single leaf as a token of the medieval past. When showcased outside the devotional book, the isolated illustration assumes the primary dimension of a fragment of an artistic past, a piece contemplated, studied, and admired within the confines of the framed art object. Form of deletion of the text.

Conclusion

The Smathers Hours was printed during a potent moment in the history of the book, print, and religion, and therefore requires equally robust methodologies to identify, reconstruct, and interpret the prayerbook. As a prayerbook printed in the handful of decades spanning the largescale transition of book production from manuscript to print, the Smathers Hours retains elements of both mediums, complicating how the book is approached. The first section of this article alone leverages methodologies from anthropology, the history of the book, the analytical bibliography, and the social history of books of hours, making the Smathers Hours a compelling subject for the study of the social, cultural, and religious attitudes of book owners. An artifact of early print culture and the audience that clamored for books of hours, the Smathers Hours holds much evidence of printshop practices and the many hands

50 See Haas, Fragmented Hours, Appendix E for a full list of missing illustrations and corresponding designer.
51 Haas, Fragmented Hours, Appendix E; Claerr, Annex XV–XIX; Nettekoven, Horae B.M.V.365, 2386–90.
52 de Hamel, Cutting up Manuscripts for Pleasure and Profit, 8.
53 Hindman, Manuscript Illumination, 52.
54 Duffy, Marking the Hours, 155.
that crafted the physical book in the early decades of a pivotal moment in the history of Europe. As an artifact of how readers used their devotional books when Christianity in Europe was undergoing seismic transformation, the book reflects the personal challenges of erasing a central figure from veneration. Finally, as an artifact of art, the Smathers Hours reflects collecting trends that privilege the illustrations outside of their devotional contexts.
Bibliography


Kerver, Thielman, Horæ Intemerate Virginis Marie Secundum Usum Romanum
——— BX 2080 .A2 1500z, University of Florida, 1500.
———. Velins 1510, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1506.
———. Velins 1513, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1510.
———. Wing MS ZW 5351.1, Newberry Library, 1510.


Figure 1. *The Smathers Hours*, folio(s) D8 verso and E2. BX2080 .A2 1500z, University of Florida, 1500. Photo Credit: author.

Figure 2. *The Smathers Hours*, folio(s) L3 verso and L4. BX2080 .A2 1500z, University of Florida, 1500. Photo Credit: author.
Figure 3. *The Smathers Hours, folio G3 verso.*BX2080 .A2 1500z, University of Florida, 1500. Photo Credit: author.

Figure 4. *Wing MS ZW 5351.1, folio G3 verso.* Newberry Library, 1510. Photo Credit: author.
Figure 5. Bibermühle 60.2, folio G3 verso. Antiquariat Bibermühle AG, 1511. Photo Credit: Antiquariat Bibermühle AG.

Figure 6. The Smathers Hours, folio C7. BX2080 .A2 1500z, University of Florida, 1500. Photo Credit: author.
Figure 7. *The Smathers Hours*, folio(s) L2 verso and L3. BX2080 .A2 1500z, University of Florida, 1500. Photo Credit: author.

Figure 8. *The Smathers Hours*, folio L8. BX2080 .A2 1500z, University of Florida, 1500. Photo Credit: author.
Figure 9. *The Smathers Hours, folio li.* BX2080 .A2 1500z, University of Florida, 1500. Photo Credit: author.

Figure 10. *The Smathers Hours, folio G5.* BX2080 .A2 1500z, University of Florida, 1500. Photo Credit: author.