

# **Timothy Matlack Book of Hours**

**ca. 1475?**

**Mss.264.02.R662**

American Philosophical Society

2003

105 South Fifth Street

Philadelphia, PA, 19106

215-440-3400

[manuscripts@amphilsoc.org](mailto:manuscripts@amphilsoc.org)

## Table of Contents

---

Summary Information .....	3
Background note .....	5
Scope & content .....	6
Administrative Information .....	7
Related Materials .....	7
Indexing Terms .....	7
Other Descriptive Information .....	8
Collection Inventory .....	9
Contents (partial).....	9

---

## Summary Information

---

<b>Repository</b>	American Philosophical Society
<b>Title</b>	Timothy Matlack Book of Hours
<b>Date</b>	ca. 1475?
<b>Call number</b>	Mss.264.02.R662
<b>Extent</b>	1.0 Volume(s)
<b>Extent</b>	1 vol. (161 leaves)
<b>Location</b>	LH-MV-E-7
<b>Language</b>	Latin
<b>Container</b>	1
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>Books of hours were among the most common devotional texts of the Middle Ages. Produced throughout western Europe until the early 16th century, books of hours were important status items, often elaborately illuminated, that might be tailored to the specific tastes of well-heeled clients to reflect interests in particular saints or to incorporate other elements of their personal lives and religious, political, or social commitments.</p> <p>Although the illuminated pages have been removed from this book of hours, the gift of Timothy Matlack in 1811, it remains an elegant and ornate manuscript, with initials and line fillers in prominent gilt, red, and blue. Only one page remains from the calendar (the last), however many of the major elements of the book can be identified, including the prayers</p>

to the Virgin, the Stabat Mater Dolorosa and stations of the cross, the penitential psalms, litanies, and prayers, and the office of the dead.

**Preferred Citation**

Cite as: Timothy Matlack Book of Hours, American Philosophical Society.

## Background note

---

Books of hours were among the most common devotional texts of the Middle Ages. Produced throughout western Europe until the early 16th century, books of hours were important status items, often elaborately illuminated, that might be tailored to the specific tastes of well-heeled clients to reflect interests in particular saints or to incorporate other elements of their personal lives and religious, political, or social commitments.

The several texts comprising books of hours descend from the texts that comprised the liturgical service book known as a breviary, including the Divine Office and the Hours of the Virgin. Typical books of hours almost invariably included a calendar of feast days and holy days, the Hours of the Virgin (with devotional readings for each of the eight canonical hours), the penitential psalms and litany of petitions to the saints, the Office of the Dead, and various suffrages of the Saints. To these could be added a variety of other texts, depending on the wishes of the patron, including selections from the four gospels, the stations of the cross, prayers to the Virgin Mary (the *Obsecro te* and *O intemerata*), and short Offices such as the Hours of the Cross. Books of hours increased enormously in popularity during the 13th and 14th centuries and were wide spread in western Europe until the time of the Reformation. Although always an expensive item, less elaborately illustrated (and therefore more affordable) books were available to families of lesser means.

## Scope & content

---

Although the illuminated pages have been removed from this book of hours, the gift of Timothy Matlack in 1811, it remains an elegant and ornate manuscript, with initials and line fillers in prominent gilt, red, and blue. Only one page remains from the calendar (the last), however many of the major elements of the book can be identified, including the prayers to the Virgin, the Stabat Mater Dolorosa and stations of the cross, the penitential psalms, litanies, and prayers, and the office of the dead.

The volume (14.5x10.5 cm) consists of 161 vellum leaves bound in full leather with five spine bands. The front and back covers are decorated with an incised gilt design featuring a geometric motif with birds at the four corners, and the spine has stamped leaves between the bands. The binding has been repaired.

## Administrative Information

---

### Publication Information

American Philosophical Society 2003

## Provenance

---

### Acquisition Information

Gift of Timothy Matlack, April 19, 1811. (cf. APS Minutes, p.428.) There is no indication of where Matlack might have obtained the volume.

### Processing Information

Recatalogued by rsc, 2002.

## Related Materials

---

### Related Material

The APS also houses a heavily illustrated French [Book of Hours \(Mss.264.02.R66\)](#), circa 1475, donated by Detmar Basse Müller in 1806.

## Indexing Terms

---

### Genre(s)

- Illuminated manuscripts
- Manuscript Essays
- Miscellaneous
- Printed Material

### Personal Name(s)

- Matlack, Timothy, 1736-1829

## Subject(s)

- Beyond Early America
- Books of Hours--France
- Religion

## Other Descriptive Information

---

This fifteenth century Book of Hours was a gift from Timothy Matlack to the APS in 1811.



**Contents (partial)**

---

**Collection Inventory**

---

**Contents (partial)**

---

Calendar	folio 1
Stabat Mater dolorosa (stations of the cross)	folio 17
Obsecro te	folio 30
O intemerata	folio 34
Vespers	folio 79
Psalms, litanies, and prayers	folio 94
Office of the dead	folio 121

---