In 1996, a small illustrated prayer book, or book of hours, printed in Paris in the early 16th century, was purchased by the University of Melbourne Library under the terms of the Ivy M. Pendlebury Bequest (shelf no. SC RB 39A/16). The book is not complete; it lacks the first three quires and three other leaves (c1, c8 and l7). Information that might identify the publisher, printer and approximate date of publication, often found in the first few pages of a book of hours, is missing from this copy. Because of the difficulty in determining publication details, the book was described in the library catalogue only as a Parisian book of hours, c. 1520. After researching the book, however, I have identified it as the work of the great Parisian publisher Anthoine Vérard (died c. 1513), from around 1507–08. Furthermore, it belongs to a previously unrecorded edition and is extremely rare, being one of only two known copies, and not included in any of the standard references. The book is also of particular significance because, with the exception of two detached leaves in the State Library of Victoria, it appears to be the only Vérard imprint in an Australian public collection.

**Books of hours and printing**

Books of hours were personal prayer books, used mainly by the laity, and were the most popular and widely owned book of the late Middle Ages. They are usually small, portable and liberally illustrated with devotional images. The core text is the office or hours of the Virgin, which includes prayers to be recited at the eight canonical hours of the day (matins, lauds, prime, terce, sext, none, vespers and compline), each of which is introduced by a large devotional illustration relating to the life of the Virgin or Christ. Content varies considerably between versions, but some texts are standard. These include the calendar, gospel readings, the litany and the penitential psalms, Office of the Dead, Suffrages of the saints, and prayers to the Virgin such as *O intemerata* and *Obsecro te*. These texts are usually illustrated, and borders were often similarly adorned with religious and sometimes secular subjects. Many examples in manuscript survive, some of which are justifiably famous for the beauty of their painted illustrations, or illuminations.

In the late Middle Ages, Paris was a major centre for the production and illumination of manuscript books of hours. Demand did not abate, and indeed probably increased, when printing was introduced there in 1470. In the late 15th and early 16th centuries, literally hundreds of editions of books of hours issued from the presses of Paris, for both domestic and export markets. These printed volumes were undoubtedly more affordable than those in manuscript and, although books of any sort were still too expensive for most people, moderately wealthy individuals such as merchants could now acquire their own book of hours. Many practitioners in the book trade made their livelihood substantially (or, in the case of the brothers Gillet and Germain Hardouyn, almost entirely) by printing books of hours. These included Simon Vostre, Philippe Pigouchet, Thielman Kerver, Jean Du Pré, the Hardouyn brothers, and the bookseller and publisher Anthoine Vérard, for whom Jean Du Pré printed France’s very first printed book of hours, on 2 September 1485.

Unlike manuscript books of hours, which often included special prayers and devotions specific to the commissioning patron, printed books of hours were usually made for the open market. This meant they were not personalised at the time of manufacture—although coats of arms, inscriptions and special illuminations were sometimes added later by the purchaser. The technology of print imposed a level of standardisation on copies of an edition (although minor variations within editions were
common). But the efficiency and speed of printing also meant that many different editions could be published. These varied in format, typeface, contents and decorative programs, in order to appeal to a range of potential buyers. One way publishers made their books distinctive, as well as competitive in the marketplace, was to adorn them with newly commissioned woodcut and metalcut programs of illustration. The main subjects in the hours of the Virgin were largely fixed, but the borders gave publishers the opportunity to introduce new themes, such as the Destruction of Jerusalem or the Dance of Death. These borders must have been attractive to purchasers, for they were frequently promoted alongside the publisher’s device on the first page of the book.\(^5\)

**The University of Melbourne book of hours and Anthoine Vérard**

The University of Melbourne’s book of hours, now fully described in the library catalogue,\(^6\) is a characteristic example of an early 16th-century Parisian printed book of hours. It consists of 93 pages in 12 quires (a–m\(^8\)) and is printed on parchment in 22 lines of Gothic bastarda type. The numerous woodcut and metalcut illustrations include two metalcut border sequences representing biblical typological scenes and the Dance of Death. These are characteristic of illustrations used by Anthoine Vérard, and their presence indicates that the book was printed in late 1507 or shortly after. The leather binding with stamped gilt decoration on the spine dates from the 20th century.

Anthoine Vérard was one of the major figures of early French publishing: a Paris-based book entrepreneur who dominated the industry in the city from 1485 to 1512, issuing more than 300 editions of various historical, classical and devotional texts. An adept businessman, he exploited the traditional patronage system by offering finely illuminated books printed on parchment to eminent figures such as Charles VIII of France and Henry VII of England, as well as operating on more commercial principles by printing books for a general market.\(^7\) Vérard astutely exploited the enthusiasm for printed books of hours. As well as printing the first in France, over the following 25 years he was responsible for over 80 editions, which constituted a sizeable proportion of his business.\(^8\)

Some individual books were intended for distinguished patrons, such as the *Grandes heures* for Charles VIII, Anne de Beaujeu and Charles d’Angoulême,\(^9\) but most, such as the Melbourne book, were less lavish examples destined for the broader market.

Vérard probably did not print his books himself, but over his career subcontracted an increasing number of printers to carry out the work, using typographical material that he owned, including the woodcuts and metalcuts. The printer of the Melbourne book of hours has not been identified, but is surely among those Vérard employed for these books, who include Félix Baligault, Jean Du Pré, Guillaume Godard, Étienne Jehannot, Pierre Le Dru, Pierre Le Rouge, Guy Marchand, Phillipe Pigouchet, Jean Poitevin and Simon Vostre.\(^10\) Vérard’s editions of books of hours vary in format (quarto, octavo and sextodecimo) and support (parchment and paper). They were also issued for use in various dioceses, such as Sarum (Salisbury—for export to England), Chartres, Bourges, Tours, Rouen, Amiens, Paris, Orléans, Metz and Le Mans, in addition to the standard Roman use.\(^11\)

The university’s book of hours is for the use of Rouen. This is indicated by the abbreviation Ro. on all signed leaves, as well as
Hilary Maddocks, ‘A book of hours by Anthoine Vérard’

characteristic responses for use of Rouen in the Office of the Virgin and the Office of the Dead, and various saints in the litany honoured in that diocese. A special prayer to St Romanus, a seventh-century bishop and the patron saint of Rouen, whose feast is celebrated there on 23 October, is also included (folio i4v.).

Four editions of books of hours by Vérard for the use of Rouen have been recorded, none of which can be identified with the university’s example. They include two quarto
editions or *Grandes heures* from c. 1490,12 and two octavo editions with almanacs of 1503–20. One of these octavo editions has 28 lines of text13 and the other—which, like the university’s book, has 22 lines—was issued by Vérard in conjunction with Rouen-based stationers Jacques Cousin and Pierre Huvin and printer Jean le Burges.14 The quire that included the almanac (showing the dates of Easter over a span of years) is lacking in the university’s book, although the discovery of another, complete copy of the same edition, in the Marian Library, University of Dayton, Ohio, reveals an almanac for 1503–2015 on the verso of the unnumbered title page.16 The recto is illustrated with Vérard’s customary image of the Holy Grail, indicating that the two copies constitute a previously unrecorded fifth book of hours for use of Rouen by Vérard.

**Illustration**

The University of Melbourne’s book is decorated with 13 full-page woodcut or metalcut illustrations, 17 small metalcuts, plus metalcut borders on every page. Two leaves that included illustrations (c8 and l7), including one full-page and one half-page, are lacking. The first three quires, also lacking, included several other illustrations. A comparison with the more complete Marian Library copy suggests that the book originally included 19 large illustrations and at least 27 small illustrations.

Some illustrations are metalcuts and others woodcuts, but all are relief prints, the plates of which were placed in the forme and printed at the same time as the type. The arrangement of plates could be quite elaborate; for example, up to eight small plates were assembled in order to print the borders on a single page. Perhaps unexpected for the modern viewer is the addition of hand-painting to the printed page. Initials, line endings, illustrations and the borders of pages bearing large illustrations are enhanced with coloured and gold paint, apparently by different artists, as the paint is applied more heavily on some. Sometimes the black lines of the woodcut are clearly discernible beneath the paint, such as in the Crucifixion (b4v., see p. 17); in other illustrations, such as the Raising of Lazarus (f6, see opposite), the print is obscured. It was common practice for publishers to have books of hours decorated and painted in this way before sale; no doubt it increased the selling price and enhanced the book’s value as a precious devotional object.

In the early 16th century there was no copyright protection for designers of illustrations. Publishers and printers frequently borrowed and copied designs and consequently it can be very difficult to identify an edition or publisher solely from the woodcuts or metalcuts. In recent years Ina Nettekoven and Caroline Zöhl have done much to elucidate our understanding of the illustrations in printed books of hours, and Mary Beth Winn has examined Vérard’s books of hours and their illustrative borders in considerable detail. Much of my discussion is based on their invaluable research.17

It seems that Vérard did not commission his own full-page designs, but ordered copies of designs already in use by other publishers. In the university’s book, the full-page metalcuts and woodcuts can be attributed to two designers. The first is the Master of the Apocalypse Rose of the Sainte Chapelle (or Apocalypse Master), named for his designs for the rose window of the Sainte Chapelle in Paris. This artist, who was also an illuminator, was active c. 1480–1510, and is also called the Master of the *Très petites heures* of Anne of Brittany. Four large illustrations in the university’s book were printed from his designs: Crucifixion (b4v., see p. 17),
Pentecost (b5v.), Trinity (i5, see p. 21) and Visitation (m3v., see p. 23). His style is very much in the decorative Gothic tradition, with clear-cut lines, shallow space and stocky figures. In the university's book his woodcuts and metalcuts can be distinguished by an elegant, richly decorative architectural structure that frames each scene like a proscenium arch.

However, the Apocalypse Master’s original designs were commissioned not by Vérard, but by another publisher and bookseller, Simon Vostre, around 1495–98, for use in his octavo books of hours. For Vostre, the Apocalypse Master designed a 21-plate set of large metalcut illustrations; 14 of these were completed by 1496 and the remainder a little later, around 1498.

Shortly after Vostre’s set had been completed, Anthoine Vérard began to use his own 18-plate set in his books of hours, based on the same designs by the Apocalypse Master. The nature of Vérard’s arrangement with Vostre and the Apocalypse Master is not known: possibly the artist supplied both publishers with the same designs, Vérard may have paid Vostre a copying fee, or perhaps he simply had them copied without permission.

Vérard’s copies, while very close in composition to Vostre’s originals, differ in their details because Vérard
had the 14 designs from Vostre’s metalcuts of 1496 cut in wood, not metal, and this has resulted in prints with cruder cross-hatching and less sinuous lines, particularly in the representation of hair. The woodcuts also lack the cross-hatched ledge on the lower border of the metalcut image. Three woodcut designs made for Vérard appear in the university’s book of hours: Pentecost, the Visitation and the Crucifixion. Missing from the university’s copy but evidently in the Marian Library copy is the Betrayal, probably also a woodcut copy of Vostre’s 1496 metalcut. The remaining four designs in Vérard’s 18-plate set were based on Vostre’s 1498 metalcuts and were similarly cut in metal. In the university’s book only the Trinity, which opens the Suffrages, is from this large metalcut sequence, although it is not a perfect copy of Vostre’s metalcut, as it lacks the cross-hatched ledge on the lower border. The remaining three of Vérard’s metalcut copies of Vostre’s originals.

The other nine full-page illustrations in our book were designed by Jean Pichore (active c. 1502–22) who, like the Apocalypse Master, was a prolific illuminator of manuscripts. Together these two artists were the principal designers of illustrations in Parisian printed books of hours. Pichore also ventured at least once into publishing; together with Rémi de Laïstre he published a book of hours, dated 5 April 1503 (1504 n.s.), which he had illustrated with his own printed designs. His designs were subsequently used by publishers Simon Vostre, Thiелman Kerver, Guillaume Eustache, Germain and Gillet Hardouyn and Anthoine Vérard, among others. Compared to the Apocalypse Master’s essentially French Gothic art, Pichore’s looser, more fluid style is indebted to French and German Renaissance artists such as Poyet, Dürer and Schongauer.

Pichore’s designs in the university’s book were copied by Vérard from two sources: an octavo set designed for the 1504 hours by Pichore and de Laïstre, and later adopted by Vostre; and another from a set designed for Gillet Hardouyn in 1505–06. From late 1507, Vérard copied selected compositions from these two sets for use in his books of hours. These include five that first appeared in Pichore’s 1504 hours, all of which were used for the university’s book: the Annunciation (a1), Nativity (b6v.), Massacre of the Innocents (d3), Dormition (d7v.) and David and Uriah (e3v.). Vérard copied the others from Hardouyn’s set and, again, all are included (or were once included) in the university’s hours: St John the Evangelist with the Poison Cup, Augustus and the Tiburtine Sibyl (a7), the Annunciation to the Shepherds (c2), the Adoration of the Magi (c5), the Presentation in the Temple (c8) and the Raising of Lazarus (f6). The university’s copy almost certainly once contained all these illustrations; the pages with the Poison Cup and the Presentation have been removed but are present in the Marian Library copy. Vérard first employed these Hardouyn copies in a book of hours dated October 1507, which suggests late 1507 or 1508 as the earliest possible publication date for the university’s edition.

For the Pichore copies, Vérard again chose to execute them in woodcut and, because of the less pliable medium, the prints are noticeably simpler and less detailed. For example, a comparison of Hardouyn’s and Vérard’s cuts of Augustus and the Tiburtine Sibyl reveals that Vérard’s version omits the intricate criblé work in the background and replaces the ornate marbling on the pavement with simple cross-hatching.
Small illustrations and borders
The 17 small metalcuts that illustrate minor texts in the book appear to have been made for Vérard around 1498. They are in the style of the Apocalypse Master, similar to those he designed for Vostre and Kerver around 1495–97 but somewhat cruder and less detailed.

Printed books of hours were frequently decorated with elaborate printed borders; the university’s book is no exception. Two cycles in the style of the Apocalypse Master appear: the Dance of Death in the lateral borders of the Office of the Dead, and typological scenes in most of the other lateral borders.

The typological scenes are supported by two unidentifed prophets in the lower borders. Other non-narrative subjects also appear, such as peasants picking apples and playing music and fantastic Renaissance-inspired vases in the vertical borders, and cavorting cupids, wild men and dragons in the lower borders. These non-narrative
scenes, which first appear in Vérard’s books of hours in around 1500, are copies in reverse of the Apocalypse Master’s c. 1497 designs for Vostre.

The allegorical Dance of Death metalcut criblé borders each show three men or women from different levels of society engaged in a ritual dance with Death, represented as a cadaver (see p. 20). These images in the Office of the Dead encouraged prayer by reminding the viewer of their own mortality and the inevitable and indiscriminate nature of death. Pictorial cycles of the Dance of Death, including frescoes and printed versions, first appeared in the 15th century. Vérard copied his set in about 1500 from Simon Vostre’s 66-figure version of 1495–98 by the Apocalypse Master; however Vérard’s appear in reverse, with the cadaver to the right of the figure, and he appears not to have copied all of Vostre’s plates. In the university’s hours, 16 different plates, comprising 24 men and 24 women, are represented.21 From chambermaid to queen, peasant to pope, we are all equal before Death.

Most of the remaining vertical borders illustrate typological scenes, where an event or type from the New Testament is shown with two Old Testament prefigurations or antitypes. For example, the Entombment of Christ appears between Joseph being cast into the well (Genesis 37:23–4) and Jonah cast into the sea, (Jonah 1:15 – 2:1) (see above). Thus the Old Testament events are fulfilled in the New Testament, and Joseph and Jonah are antitypes of Christ. The New Testament text appears in two panels between the lateral metalcut with, on the lower border, an Old Testament text between two prophets who witnessed the events.

The typological sequences derive from the ‘Picture Bible’, the *Biblia pauperum*, which had a long manuscript tradition and was also printed as a block-book in the Netherlands in 1480–85. Winn has shown that Vérard used typological borders as early as 1488 in the hours of the Virgin in his books of hours, based on the 50 sets in the printed *Biblia pauperum*. Vérard’s early sets included 49 central subjects (he conflated the Circumcision and the Presentation) and they appeared in sequence, from the Birth of Mary to the Crown of Eternal Life. He even helpfully included an explanatory table or repertoire to help the reader identify the subjects.22 Vérard used two different sets of typological metalcuts. The second, represented in the university’s book, was designed by the Apocalypse Master. These later borders first appeared in books of hours printed by Etienne Jehannot for various publishers, including Vérard, from 1497.21 However, it seems that Jehannot did not have more than 15 of the 50 possible plates, as the latest he uses represents the Betrayal. The Apocalypse Master’s typological borders were also used in Vérard’s hours until about 1510; however, a maximum of only 14 different borders were ever used, and some editions have as few as eight.24 Without the full contingent of 50 subjects, the chronology loses meaning, and consequently the borders appear in no particular order. This is the case with the university’s book, where only 13 of a possible 50 borders were used, repetitively and not in logical order. The first chronological subject is the Circumcision, the last the Resurrection.25 Winn has suggested that the plates wore out and were discarded, or that perhaps a full set of typological borders was never cut from designs by the Apocalypse Master.26

In conclusion, the University of Melbourne Library is fortunate to have this printed book of hours in its Rare Books Collection. A rare copy of a hitherto unrecorded edition by Anthoine Vérard, it is also a characteristic example of a 16th-century publishing phenomenon. Many printed books of hours remain undiscovered in public collections;
neither manuscript nor fully printed book, they are overlooked and under-researched and, because of incomplete cataloguing, it is often impossible to identify specific editions without examining them at first hand. While individual copies are increasingly being digitised, many are still unrecorded, and it is hoped that this brief analysis will assist towards further understanding of how these books were made and used.

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1 The university bought the book in 1996 from Kenneth Hince Old & Fine Books. Nothing is known of its provenance before this date. I thank Anthony Tedeschi, curator of rare books at the University of Melbourne Library, for this information.

2 The State Library of Victoria holds one leaf from The passion of our Lord Iesu Christe wythe the contemplatio[n], c. 1508 (call no. RARESEF Sticht Coll. (England) 30) and a leaf (fol. e8) from the 1489 edition of...
Tristan printed by Jean le Bourgeois (call no. RARESEF 093 H11W). This is included in Konrad Haefler (trans. André Barbey), West-European incunabula: 60 original leaves from the presses of the Netherlands, France, Iberia and Great Britain, Munich: Weiss & Co., 1928.


4 The only extant copy is in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, call no. ChL1447C.


6 http://cat.lib.unimelb.edu.au/record=b2186890


8 Winn, Anthoïne Vérard, p. 221. The universal short title catalogue (www.ustc.ac.uk) lists some 120 editions of books of hours by Vérard, suggesting that Winn’s figure of 80 is a conservative estimate.

9 Winn, Anthoïne Vérard.

10 Winn, Anthoïne Vérard, pp. 486–9.

11 Universal short title catalogue.


18 See Tenschert and others, Horae B.M.V. (especially p. 128) and Nettekoven, Der Meister (especially p. 90).

19 See Tenschert and others, Horae B.M.V. (especially p. 537) and Zöhl, Jean Pichore, pp. 172–5.


21 These subjects range from ‘the pope’ and ‘the emperor’ to ‘the usurer’, ‘the child’, ‘the widow’ and ‘the fool’.

22 See Winn, ‘Biblical typology’; Winn, ‘Vérard’s hours of February 20’; and Winn, ‘Vérard’s hours of 8 February’.

23 See Tenschert and others, Horae B.M.V., pp. 60 ff, nos. 5 and 6.

24 For example, see the Vérard imprint in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, NF Res. 2905, almanac 1489–1508, http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k10577449/f1.image.


26 Winn, ‘Biblical typology’, p. 113, n. 22.