

**Gregory T. Clark, *Art in a Time of War: The Master of Morgan 453 and Manuscript Illumination in Paris during the English Occupation (1419–1435)*, Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2016, xxviii, 388 pp. 253 colour illus., \$ 125 cloth ISBN 9780888441973**

Jamie Kemp

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parmi les plus fous. Tout ça pour te dire que je n'en suis pas à la compromission.

Excuse l'écriture, mais je suis dans mon lit—il est 6 h ½ a.m. J'ai au fond une vie austère—entrecoupée d'excès—vivre seule, faire face à une finance toujours mitée n'est pas de tout repos. Insécurité totale qui me pousse et me stimule—c'est un vice de construction comme d'autres sont avares. Je suis dépourvue de toute possibilité de possession. J'ai une mentalité de pauvre. (519)

She eventually did return to painting on canvas, when her life was more secure after her return to Montreal in 1966.

*Le droit d'être rebelle* can be seen within the context of several publications such as the 2014 BBC series, *The Story of Women and Art*, with its account of the difficulties for women artists through the ages, notably for Georgia O'Keeffe in the New York scene of the 1920s; or *Joan Mitchell, Lady Painter* (Knopf 2011), by Patricia Albers, with its argument that, a generation later, Mitchell had trouble emerging from the shadow of her male abstract-expressionist friends in New York, and of her famous lover, Riopelle, in France. Marcelle Ferron was not alone in her struggles, but her rebellion against physical, financial, societal, and moralizing constraints seems particularly remarkable. When Manon Barbeau's film *Les enfants de Refus global* gave journalists an excuse to accuse the Automatist "revolutionaries" of caring more about their liberty than their children, Marcelle Ferron's three daughters were quick to set the record straight in solidarity with their mother, through an open letter published in *Voir* (March–April 1998). Behind that response lies the reality disclosed in the letters of *Le droit d'être rebelle*. ¶

Professor emeritus of York University, [Ray Ellenwood](#) has written a book and several articles on Montreal's Automatist movement, and has translated the group's manifesto, *Refus global*, and other Automatist texts.  
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Gregory T. Clark  
*Art in a Time of War: The Master of Morgan 453 and Manuscript Illumination in Paris during the English Occupation (1419–1435)*

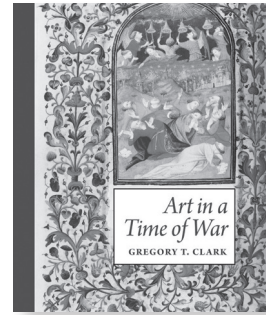
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Jamie Kemp

Gregory T. Clark's *Art in a Time of War: The Master of Morgan 453 and Manuscript Illumination in Paris during the English Occupation (1419–1435)* is an impressive new analysis and catalogue of illuminators of French Books of Hours in the first half of the fifteenth century. It is a new addition to the Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies' "Studies and Texts" series. In this book, Clark presents the first comprehensive study of the Master of Morgan 453, a manuscript painter active in Paris and Amiens during the English occupation of Paris (1419–35) and up to 1450. By presenting a stylistic analysis of six Books of Hours attributed to the Master of Morgan 453 in the context of Parisian illumination and its Netherlandish influences, Clark maps the complex history and output of a Master painter he describes as "probably the most eccentric and inventive illuminator to work in Paris, perhaps even in France, between the demise of the Limbourg brothers and the rise of Jean Fouquet" (296).

The identification and study of the Master of Morgan 453 began in 1968 when Millard Meiss isolated a series of miniatures produced by a painter with a distinctive Netherlandish aesthetic in a Book of Hours attributed to the Boucicaut Master (Morgan 1000, ca. 1415–20).<sup>1</sup> After this initial identification, Meiss expanded the list of manuscripts attributed to the painter, at that time named the Master of Morgan 1000, to include two other Books of Hours, specifically the Hours of Charlotte of Savoy (Morgan 1004, now dated ca. 1415–25) and Morgan 453 (now



dated ca. 1425–30). Over a decade later in 1982, John T. Plummer, then Curator of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts at the Morgan Library, extended the painter's body of work further to include another Book of Hours, Morgan 1004 (now dated ca. 1415–25). He also refined Meiss's discussion of the artist's style by highlighting the shifting, "protean" qualities of his work. He renamed the artist the Master of Morgan 453 after the manuscript that contains the largest number of miniatures by this painter (13).<sup>2</sup>

Gregory T. Clark entered the story of the Master of Morgan 453 as Plummer's PhD student at Princeton (begun 1981, completed 1988) and as eventual Assistant Curator of the Morgan Library (1983–89). Clark's doctoral dissertation continued the project begun by Meiss and Plummer by further defining the character and style of the Master of Morgan 453 and attributing to him the frontispiece of the Brussels *Grandes chroniques* (Royal Library of Belgium, Ms. 1, ca. 1415–20) (296). During this time, Clark also began to collaborate on what would eventually become the website "Beyond Use: A Digital Database of Variant Readings in Late Medieval Books of Hours," which expanded and digitized Plummer's hand-written recordings of calendars, litanies, and prayers (the "Obscure" and the "O intemerata") for the purposes of identifying French *Horae*.<sup>3</sup>

After a career of publishing many articles and several books on fifteenth-century manuscript illumination in France and northern Europe,

Clark returns to his earlier work on the Master of Morgan 453 in *Art in a Time of War*. He cites as impetus an article by Patricia Stirnemann and Claudia Rabel that redates the Bedford Hours (British Library, Add. Ms. 18850, ca. 1410–30) in a way that “allows for a long fallow period following the violent, plague-ridden years of 1416–19, which led to the diaspora of the French court and the retrenchment of the surviving artists.”<sup>4</sup> Clark uses the story and illuminations of the Master of Morgan 453 to demonstrate that the period of the English occupation of Paris was not “fallow,” but characterized by artistic goals that differed from the previous and subsequent periods’ emphasis on naturalism (Chs. 1–6). Specifically, Clark argues that the Master of Morgan 453’s work features compositional and iconographic inventiveness alongside a fluency with tradition and imitation (10). Flexibility is the distinguishing feature of this artist’s style. The Master of Morgan 453 can be seen to both “paint by numbers” in adherence to traditional models, and innovate as an “animated expressionist and iconographic trailblazer” (54). Clark is explicit about his standards and demonstrates these characteristics through a narrative that develops chronologically. The book’s six main chapters tell the story of the Master of Morgan 453 through detailed visual analysis and by carefully charting the artist’s stylistic developments, his interactions with collaborators, his influence on painters in northern France, and his movements from Paris to Amiens and back again.

According to Clark’s narrative, the Master of Morgan 453 was a successful and well-known painter in Paris who, by ca. 1415–20, could take on “plum job(s)” in collaboration with significant workshops (54). During the time of the occupation, the Master of Morgan 453 produced four surviving Books of Hours in the city of Paris:

Morgan 1000 (ca. 1415–20), the Grenoble Hours (Grenoble 1003, ca. 1420), the Hours of Charlotte of Savoy (Morgan 1004, ca. 1415–25), and Morgan 453 (ca. 1425–30). His collaboration with such painters as the Boucicaut, Bedford, Spitz, and Guise Masters reveals the extent to which he was “integrated into the machinery of contemporary Parisian manuscript production” (101). Furthermore, stylistic and compositional borrowings from his work demonstrate that his Parisian corpus influenced painters in northern France in the 1420s and 1430s.

The Master of Morgan 453 likely moved to Amiens in the 1430s where he created his only known work outside of Paris, The British Library Hours (Add. Ms. 31835, ca. 1430–40). The reasons for the artist’s move to Amiens are unclear, but Clark questions whether both the move and the less characteristically innovative miniatures in the London Hours reflect the artist’s wavering creativity rather than a lack of available patronage in Paris (158–59). By ca. 1450, the Master of Morgan 453 returned to Paris where he produced his final surviving manuscript, the Harvard Hours (Ms. Typ. 32, ca. 1450). Unusually, the Morgan 453 Master painted every miniature in this manuscript himself. This leads Clark to speculate that he may have been unable to find new collaborators among younger Parisian painters who had been strongly influenced by the naturalizing style of the Netherlandish *ars nova* since the 1440s (7, 169–70).

The six chapters on the Master of Morgan 453 are followed by a catalogue of the artist’s manuscripts and a series of important appendices that contribute more broadly to our understanding of French manuscript painting after 1420. These appendices present a very useful summary of Plummer and Clark’s “Beyond Use” database (App. I–III) and extend Meiss’s 1974 catalogue of Parisian illuminators and their works with a handlist that reaches from 1420 to 1450 (App. IV).

In an early review of Meiss’s expansive monograph, *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry*, L.M.J. Delaissé wrote in praise that “Some periods of history in general and of art history in particular are more tantalizing than others.”<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the period covered by Meiss’s study, ca. 1380–1420, has been considered a pinnacle of French manuscript illumination, in terms of both lavish aristocratic patronage and the increasing luxury and naturalism found in the work of painters like the Limbourg Brothers and the Boucicaut Master. The period that follows, 1420–36, is often associated with an aesthetic decline and, as a result, it has proved to be a less “tantalizing” field of study than the preceding period for art historians from Meiss forward.

While Clark does not elevate the Master of Morgan 453 and the age of the occupation of Paris to the level of the Limbourg brothers or Jean Fouquet, he does convincingly argue that to designate the period as “fallow” is to ignore “the high regard [in which] tradition and imitation were held in the late middle ages and, more importantly, to ignore other avenues of artistic creativity” (10). Beyond the impressive contributions of presenting the first significant study of the Master of Morgan 453 and being the first to extend Meiss’s seminal catalogue, *Art in a Time of War* shows us how much we have been missing by fixing our gazes so steadily on the tantalizing corpus of Meiss’s studies. Through meticulous scholarship and lively writing, Clark’s “quicksilver *petit maître*” emerges as at once innovative and traditional, protean and definable (10). We can be grateful to Clark, who has been examining this oeuvre over the course of a distinguished career, for providing us with so clear a framework for understanding the importance of this little-known body of work. ¶

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1. Millard Meiss, *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry: The Boucicaut Master* (London, 1968), 104–05.
2. John T. Plummer with Gregory T. Clark, *The Last Flowering: French Painting in Manuscripts, 1420–1530, from American Collections*, exh. cat., The Morgan Library (New York, 1982).
3. John H. Plummer and Gregory T. Clark, “Beyond Use: A Digital Database of Variant Readings in Late Medieval Books of Hours,” <http://arthur.sewanee.edu/BeyondUse/index.php>.
4. Patricia Stirnemann and Claudia Rabel, “The ‘Très Riches Heures’ and Two Artists Associated with the Bedford Workshop,” *Burlington Magazine* 147, 1229 (Aug. 2005): 534–38, 538.
5. L.M.J. Delaissé, “French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry, Part I: The Late Fourteenth Century and the Patronage of the Duke by Millard Meiss,” *The Art Bulletin* 52, 2 (June 1970): 206–12, 206.

Viviane Gosselin and Phaedra Livingstone, eds.  
***Museums and the Past: Constructing Historical Consciousness***

Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016

299 pp.

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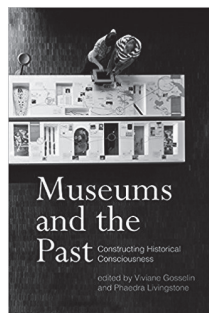
\$34.60 paper ISBN 9780774830622

Michael J. Prokopow

History combines in our language the objective as well as the subjective side. It means both *res gestae* (the things that happened) and *historica rerum gestarum* (the narration of the things that happened). This is no coincidence.  
 —G.W.F. Hegel<sup>1</sup>

Concerned with the concept of historical consciousness—or, as the journal *History and Memory* defines it, “the area in which collective memory, the writing of history and other modes of shaping images of the past in the public mind merge”<sup>2</sup>—this collection of writings is focused largely on Canadian institutions and subject matter (despite the absence of any reference to nation in the title). The volume makes a solid contribution to what is a substantial, expanding body of scholarly literature investigating museums as sites of knowledge production and consumption.<sup>3</sup> The editors, museologist Phaedra Livingstone and Viviane Gosselin, curator of

contemporary culture at the Museum of Vancouver, have assembled an impressive group of museum experts (including project managers, curators, and educators) and scholars from the disciplines of history, heritage, visual culture, and museum studies. The discussions, which range widely from close readings of institutional programming to the complex challenges attending the concept of public engagement, are effectively linked by the volume’s central premise: that historical consciousness can be developed or inculcated, and that it operates in the context of late capital-



ism and the challenges to narratives of nation-building and shared or unified consciousness. Comprised of fourteen essays that offer what the editors describe as “compelling juxtapositions” with each other, the volume is divided into three logically framed and linked sections. The first, titled “Programming Historical Consciousness,” presents case studies showing how markedly different institutions have worked to generate public interest in their exhibitions, whether travelling or permanent. Here, the focus is on the ways that museums have sought to change their methods of engagement with diverse audiences, acknowledging both the complexities of the past and its interpretations and the fact that history is always an intellectual and ideological construction. In Chapter Three, discussing *The Voices of the Canoe Project*, a web-based initiative supported by the Museum of Anthropology at the University of

British Columbia, authors Jill Baird and Damara Jacobs-Morris explain how this work was aimed at introducing students to Indigenous history, to Haida, Squamish, and Fijian material culture, and to the work of historical investigation and interpretation. Central to the project was the desire to explore cultural identity, epistemology, and practice by way of oral history, empirical research, and collaborative analysis. The goal, as the authors explain, was to “create a learning” where previously isolated traditions and scholarly practices—methodological and philosophical modes of being and thinking—could “live together” (a goal in keeping with the acknowledgement by museums and like institutions of the need to shed what might be called the static cultures of display and education in favour of technologically current and participatory modes of engagement). In contrast, Lianne McTavish’s consideration of the Torrington Gopher Hole Museum in Torrington, Alberta, in Chapter Four, demonstrates the promise, pedagogical and otherwise, of what are described (or categorized) as “ostensibly marginalized museums” and shows how a museum famous for its amusing, at times politicized dioramas of taxidermied gophers stays true to its popular idiosyncratic mission.

It is, however, Susan Ashley’s essay that offers the sharpest and most successful discussion of how museums seek to change their exhibition practices to address the complexities of contemporary society. Writing about the politically volatile situation attending the Royal Ontario Museum’s mounting of an exhibition of the Dead Sea Scrolls borrowed from the Israel Antiquities Authority, Ashley’s analysis is balanced, effective, and revealing. Prefacing her close readings of events with a brief history of the institution’s ostensible renewal under director William Thorsell and of a widely publicized new approach to museum practice replete with the aspirational tagline “Engage