

3 Talking with Images, Talking about Images

3.1 The City Between Two Rivers: Lyon's Strategic Position and the Printing Industry in the Sixteenth Century

Between 1480 ca. until the end of the sixteenth century, Lyon became one of the most important printing hubs in Europe, second in France only to Paris. Developed along the banks of the two rivers Saône and Rhône and placed in a unique strategic position bordering Italy, Switzerland, and the south of Germany, the Renaissance city was a crossover of people, goods, and ideas. Though it lacked a local university, it became a cultural hub of men of letters who moved there for various reasons while mainly following the economic growth of the city which encouraged the coming of merchants, bankers, and money.

The number of books printed in the space of one hundred years is estimated to be over 20,000 and they were published by the over one hundred printers living in the city and strategically located for the most part in the Rue Mercière.¹ These printers were competing with one another for the commissions of books primarily for export, as evidenced by the many editions printed in English, German, Spanish and Italian.² The so-called 'âge d'or Lyonnaise' of

¹ The city did not have a university, but it became one of the most important hubs in France. See Walsby 2021; Benevent et al. 2012; Hulvey 2020.

² Among the vast bibliography on Renaissance printed books, I quote here some of the fundamental works on the subject, with no pretension of exhaustiveness: Fevbre 1976; Eisenstein 1980; Pettegree 2010. On illustrated books: Passavant 1860-64; Pastoreau 1983; Parshall, Massari 1989; Landau, Parshall 1994; Field et al. 2005; Harthan 2011; Dondi 2016. On the presence of foreigners, and specifically of Italian men of letters and their influence on the printing production, see D'Amico, Gambino Longo 2017.

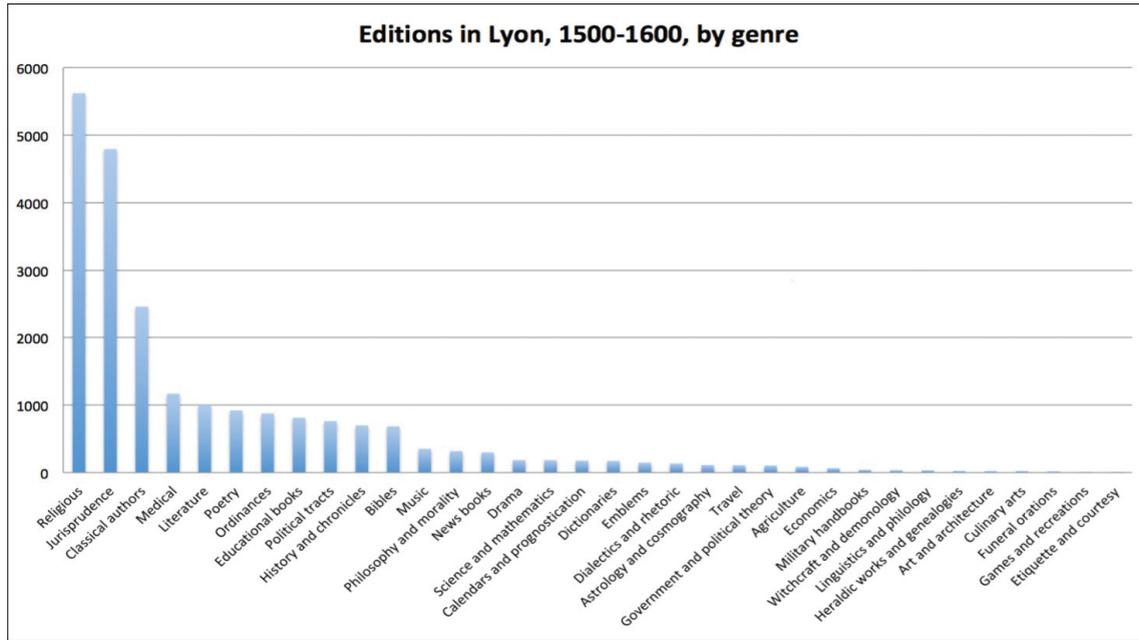


Figure 15
Editions in Lyon, 1500-1600, by genre. USTC catalogue

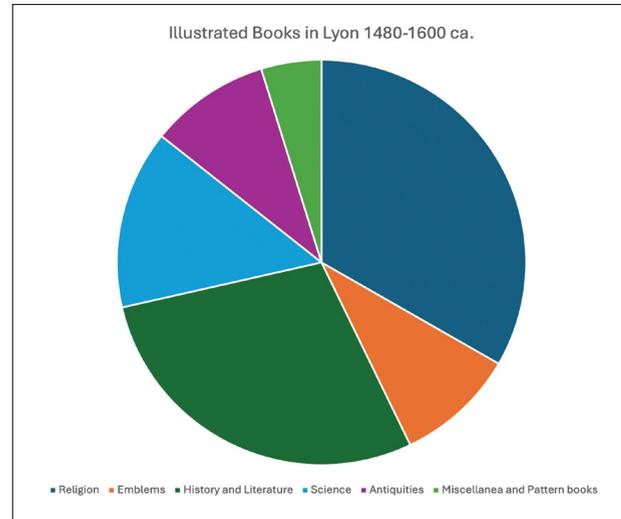


Figure 16
Illustrated editions in Lyon, 1480-1600

printing during the mid-sixteenth century and until the wars of religion saw the flourishing and production of books of which we estimate that around 12-15 percent were illustrated.³

In the first table we see the books printed by genre and a graph of the production of illustrated books [fig. 15]. The city hosted more than a hundred workshops in competition with the printing hubs of Basel, Venice and Paris. From 1520 to 1560, Lyon experienced exceptional economic and religious developments. Significantly, the *Collège de La Trinité* was founded under the leadership of the humanist Symphorien Champier in 1527.⁴ As Estelle Leutrat argued (2008), artistic and printing activities followed the movement in which the work of goldsmiths, in full expansion at the beginning of the century, was linked to the development of different types of prints.

The quality of the drawing and the *finesse* of the carving by artists such as Salomon, Woeiriot, Reverdy, Maître JG, Maître CC, Maître FG, and Eskrich made the woodcuts and engravings produced in Lyon known all over Europe. Local artists were stimulated and inspired by Italian and German models, adapting and creating their style characterised by a perfect combination of iconographic and decorative elements placed in harmony within the space of the printed page.

As different scholars have noted, the Lyon printing industry gave particular attention to the production of illustrations. Beginning with the *Le mirouer de la rédemption de l'humain lignage* (1483), the first illustrated book printed in France, the production flourished in the city until its apogee in 1530, when different printers decided

to publish illustrated editions of different types of books including religious books, emblem books, herbaria, astrological, and pattern books. Among the various types of publications in the city, particular attention should be given to the small-format religious books that became common in the middle of the century.

The table presents a summary of the types of illustrated books printed between 1500 and 1600 in the city, and it derives from the gathering of illustrated editions analysed during the *Biblissima* project [fig. 16]. As it shows, religious books stand out for being almost half of the production.

As Roger Chartier argued, we need a case-study method for the understanding of the diverse roles assumed by print in society (Chartier 1987). Very practically, during the *Biblissima* project the choice was made to start considering two parallel case studies of printers who collaborated mainly (but not exclusively) with two renowned artists of the time. I gather the majority of the illustrated production by the French printer Jean de Tournes [fig. 17], who employed the artist Bernard Salomon (*le petit Bernard*, 1506-1561 ca.) for many of his illustrated works, as well as the illustrated production of Guillaume Roville and his collaboration with the artist Pierre Eskrich (also named Pierre Cruche, or Pierre Vase).⁵

Jean de Tournes (1504-1564) was known as a pupil of Sebastian Gryphius (Gryphe, or Grifo in the Italian version), with whom he collaborated on the editions of the classics. He founded his own printing house around 1540, where he produced accurate editions which were characterised by a high technical ability and the elegance of

³ This estimate may also be higher for what concerns the books printed before 1500, which the project did not specifically focus on, if we consider the estimates for Europe in Landau, Parshall 1994, 33.

⁴ On Champier, see Copenhaver 1979 and Cooper 1998.

⁵ For a bibliography on Pierre Eskrich, see among other works the relatively recent study by Selbach (2011); fundamental on the subject remains the work by Rondot (1901). On Guillaume Roville (or Rouillé), see Rajchenbach-Teller 2012.



Figure 17 Marque d'imprimeur of Jean de Tournes

the layout and characters.⁶ He used woodcut friezes, arabesques and capitals of rare *finesse* to illustrate his books (see for example [cat. II.26-7, III.32-3]).⁷

De Tournes published and illustrated writings by ancient and modern writers such as Petrarch and Dante, as well as several editions of the *Fables* of Aesop, differ-

ent works by Vitruvius, Marguerite de Navarre, Ariosto and others in carefully printed and philologically accurate editions. The printer was particularly interested in abridgements, anthologies, collections of poems, and other works. He notably started with French translations of the classics (such as Hesiod, Isocrates, Epictetus, Salust, Suetonius, and Virgil). After starting a collaboration with the printer Guillaume Gazeau, he published many ancient works and texts in foreign languages (mainly in Dutch, German, Italian, Spanish and English) conceived for the foreign market. Due to the wars of religion, De Tournes' son Jean II moved the printing and publishing business to Geneva in 1585, where his successors continued it until 1780.

For the illustrated editions, the printer initially hired the artist Georges Reverdy [cat. I.17] as a collaborator until 1547, when he started to work with fellow printers Guillaume Gazeau and Bernard Salomon.⁸ In Lyon, Salomon is mentioned for the first time in 1540 in the *charteraux*, where he is described as a “master painter”. In 1545, Salomon resided on the right bank of the Saône until 1557 when he moved to the Platière district (Lejeune 2012, 22).⁹

During the project, I collected over 200 illustrated editions by Jean de Tournes (father and son). The full list of titles and years of edition can be found in Appendix 1, along with the 80 illustrated editions printed by Guillaume Renville (Appendix 2). The titles include several editions of the *Fables* of Aesop, a substantial number of illustrated

⁶ On de Tournes see the fundamental work of Cartier (1937-38) and the more recent studies, to mention only few: Sharratt 2005; Lejeune 2012; Jourde 2012.

⁷ I rely here on the works by the Baudriers, father and son, then by Eugène Vial and Alfred Cartier in order to reconstruct the quarries and identify the productions of the Lyon printers. See Baudrier 1899-1921 and Cartier 1937-38.

⁸ Reverdy was an engraver and painter active between 1531 and 1564, mistakenly called Cesare Reverdino. He most likely studied in Italy, as some engravings which follow the style of Marcantonio Raimondi testify to; he illustrated some works published by B. Arnoullet. See on the subject the fundamental work by Leutrat (2008). See also the review by Jenkins (2008). For this latter suggestion, I thank Prof. Giovanni Maria Fara.

⁹ As Lejeune mentions (2012, 22 fn. 38), not much is known about the artists' formative years. He was probably also the author of a treatise on perspective according to Antoine du Verdier (Lyon, Honorat 1585, mentioned in Lejeune 2012, 25). For a comprehensive catalogue, see Sharratt 2005.

Bibles [cat. 1.9-11], several editions of *Book of Emblems* (primarily editions of Alciati's *Emblemata*) [cat. IV.45-8], and authors already mentioned above, such as the illustrations for Dante's work [cat. II.21] and French editions of Petrarch's *Triumphs*.¹⁰

The indexation in the Warburg Institute iconographic database proved extremely useful as it allows comparisons between images among those two printers (for example, Roville printed illustrated editions of Petrarch's *Triumphs* in 1551, 1558, 1564 and 1574, following the edition by de Tournes printed in 1547, with the images attributed to Salomon), as well as with the pre-existing corpus of images in the database (Sharratt 2005, 274-5 fn. 6).

The collection presented under the title "Special collection *Le livre illustré à Lyon - Biblissima Project*", as we mentioned above, does not have any claim to exhaustiveness; it includes but it is not limited to illustrations printed by de Tournes and Roville, though the production of these two printers is substantial in the corpus. However, many other examples of illustrated production were inserted to highlight some of the best productions of illustrated books in Lyon during the sixteenth century. The corpus is constituted of over 2,800 records and contains illustrated works printed by Huguetan [cat. I.5-6], Gazeau [cat. II.24, IV.45-8], Crespin [cat. II.19-20], Michel [cat. II.25], Honorat [cat. II.26-7], Sabon [cat. IV.50-2], Molin and Bonhomme [cat. IV.41-4]. The iconographic corpus presented in this catalogue includes a selection of 63 images from

the most representative illustrations reflecting the work in the database, which has a focus on the mid-century for the most part, although some incunabula (including the *Mirouer*) were also listed and indexed in the collection.

In order to understand the fluidity and importance given to the production of illustrations, we have an interesting book entitled *Pourtraits Divers*, printed by De Tournes, of which two editions were published (respectively in 1556 and in 1557) and which constitutes an exemplary case. It is, according to Maude Lejeune (2012), one sample book of different types of illustrations used and reused in other different books. This work is a curious collection of images [cat. III.32-5] which assembles together woodcuts that come from the workshop of Jean de Tournes and are attributed to Bernard Salomon (Sharratt 2005).

Without any text and devoid of title in the first edition printed in 1556, the book is in octavo format and it is an interesting case study as regards the function of images, as the latter are the sole protagonists in this peculiar publication.¹¹ The book presents 62 illustrations, each arranged on a single-sided page, bringing together only small compositions with varied subjects that include theatre, hunting and daily life scenes, portraits, mythological scenes, planetary deities and allegories.¹² These images will all be reused in other books by de Tournes, of diverse genres.¹³ One example is the portraits reused in the book by Johannes de Indagine on palmistry, the *Chiromance et Physionomie*, published by de Tournes in 1571 [cat. V.62-3], which collects among its illustrations the

¹⁰ See the record in the Warburg iconographic database: <https://iconographic.warburg.sas.ac.uk/object-wpc-wid-dpps>.

¹¹ As Lejeune (2012) notes, the only typographic characters present are those on the first page, at the place of the bibliographic address, presenting the place, the name of the printer-bookseller and the date of publication: "A LION // IAN DE TOVRNES // M. D. LVI". There was a second edition the following year (1557), of identical presentation, showing the same woodcuts, with nevertheless a notable difference: the addition of the title *Pourtraits Divers*. The digital record can be found here: https://iconographic.warburg.sas.ac.uk/category/vpc-taxonomy-026817https://iconographic.warburg.sas.ac.uk/results?mi_search_type=adv&mi_adv_search=yes&adv_reference_id=vpc-book-01365.

¹² The digital record can be found here: https://iconographic.warburg.sas.ac.uk/results?mi_search_type=adv&mi_adv_search=yes&adv_reference_id=vpc-book-01340.

¹³ The 1557 edition is indexed in the Warburg database, under the "Pattern books" category. On this book see Brunet 1842, 4: 850; Cartier 1937, 353 and 387; Sharratt 2005, 300-5 fn. 37.

schemes of the hand for hand-reading, the portrait of the author, various triumphs of deities and the physiognomic portraits already published in the *Pourtraits* almost thirty years before.¹⁴ The images which constitute the *Pour-*

traits shows an interest not only in producing but also in promoting and commercialising the illustrations for printed books, which were used and after reused in different kinds of publications.¹⁵

3.2 The Production of Religious Illustrated Books: An Overview

For what concerns religious books, we know that printers in Lyon used German blocks at first, such as for the images for the already mentioned *Mirouer* [cat. 1.1-2]. Early printers such as Guillaume Leroy, having learned the art of printing in Venice, set up a press in Lyon, financed by Barthélemy Buyer.¹⁶ Printers soon began to employ local artists and engravers and, by the third decade of the sixteenth century, a style and format of illustrated book typical of Lyon were developed similar to that of the English chapbook. As mentioned, it consisted of small format books (mostly octavo) that integrated image and text to create a unique balance of text and illustrations [fig. 18]. This format was used for religious books with popular intent (such as *Les Figures de la Bible* and *Les Figures du Nouveau Testament* printed by de Tournes and Roville in many different editions), which did not have a profound exegesis of the biblical text but instead cherry-picked different episodes of the Old and New Testament, framing an illustration on top of the page and inserting an explanation of the image in verses. One of the specialisations then became the illustrated episodes of the Old and New Testament, printed compendia which combined words and images [fig. 20].

As we see in the iconographic apparatus [cat. 1.9-11], *Les Figures de la Bible* and the *Quadrins historiques* offered a selection of biblical episodes accompanied by explanations written in the form of poems. It is difficult to decide which element, whether the image, text, or decorative frames, holds a prominent place.

It is both the written page that explained the image and the image that illustrated the verses, as the two are inextricably intertwined and as the complexity of the page above shows [fig. 6]. The elements included are the title, the poem, the illustration, and the decorative frame. All elements are placed together in harmony to be pleasing to the eye. As to the choice of the format (mostly in octavo for *Les Figures*) and of the layout, these many editions must have been influenced by the emblem book tradition [cat. 1.3], in which some of the illustrations are also reused. De Tournes and Roville produced several *éditions croisées*, in which they copy one another from the organisation of the page to the stylistic solutions. Salomon and Eskrich also influenced one another with similar solutions, although they retain some peculiarities of their own style (as we will see for the representation of the biblical episode of the creation of Eve further in

¹⁴ For the record of the *Chiromance*, see <https://iconographic.warburg.sas.ac.uk/category/vpc-taxonomy-026359>. The images are mentioned in Sharratt 2005, 279-80.

¹⁵ For a recount on the use of prints, especially ephemeral prints in the following century, see Goldstein 2012; an essential work on this subject remains Fevbre 1976.

¹⁶ It was there that, on April 18, 1476, LeRoy completed the printing of Jean de Vigne's (de Vignay's) *Legende Dorée*, a French translation of Jacques de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea*.

GENES. XI.



*L'audac' imprefe, e' configli ſuperbi,
Che preſumon contender co' celefti,
Son corn' oſi diſgiunti da' lor nerbi,
Quai ſi veggon', e leggon' eſſer queſti:
Qui ben' appar quel che Dio lor riſerbi,
Quand' è forzato, ch' in furor ſi deſti.
Deſtruſſe Dio la torre di Babello,
E voltò l' ſuo, ed ogn' altro ceruello.*

Figure 18 Bernard Salomon, *The Tower of Babel*. In *Le Figure del Vecchio Testamento* (Gen. 11). 1554. Lyon: de Tournes. Lyon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Rés 357524

Res B488453
FIGURES DE ^{et Bis}
LA BIBLE, IL-
LUSTRES DE
HVICTAINS
FRANCOYS,
POUR L'INTERPRETATION
ET INTELLIGENCE
D'ICELLES.



A LYON,
PAR GVILLAVME
ROVILLE,

M. D. LXIIII.



Figure 19 Title page of *Les Figures de La Bible*. 1564. Lyon: Roville. Lyon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Rés B488453



Figure 20 Bernard Salomon, *The Annunciation*, in *Le Figure del Nuovo Testamento* (Luc. 1). 1554. Lyon: de Tournes. Lyon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Rés 357524

this chapter).¹⁷ De Tournes also published in 1561 one of the best-known engraved works of the time, *L'Apocalypse figurée, par maistre Jehan Duet* [cat. I.3-4].¹⁸

One of the highest achievements in the production of sixteenth-century engravings (*gravure sur cuivre*, 'on copper') was achieved by the artist and goldsmith from Langres Jean Duvet, whom we see in the self-portrait portrayed as Saint John the Evangelist sitting at a desk, with a stylus in one hand, and pointing at an open book with the other [cat. I.4]. As Leutrat argues (2008), goldsmiths and engravers appeared in Lyon quite early around 1480-1490 and belonged to trades that occupied certain districts of the city. Lyon had one of the rare centres of engravings on copper, whose technique was more complex than that of the woodcut; it needed a specific type of press, different from the typographic one, and it was around 1546 that this technique truly started to be utilised to print illustrated books (Leutrat 2008; 2016). There were numerous links between the two professions of engraver and goldsmith, as well as between the men who practised them. Many engravers came from goldsmiths' families or were trained by a goldsmith, such as Jean Duvet himself, or Pierre Woeirirot [cat. II.29-30].

On Duvet, called *le maître à la licorne* as he depicted the unicorn in many of his works, not much is known. Different studies testify to his moving to Geneva in the 1540s, as many printers did a couple of decades later due, as already mentioned, to the wars of religion. The 24 plates of *L'Apocalypse*, whose first edition appeared in 1555, are one of the finest printed series of the period.¹⁹ The style of Duvet's engravings is notably influenced by Dürer, but also by Italian printers such as Marcantonio Raimondi and Domenico Campagnola (Fara 2021).

Aside from the editions of the *Speculum* and the illustrated Bibles, two other types of religious books, the *Horae* and the *Legenda Aurea*, are worth investigating as they were printed in illustrated versions in Lyon during the century. As regards the latter, we know that beautiful, illustrated editions

¹⁷ On the *éditions croisées* of the two artists, see Sharratt 2005.

¹⁸ The address in the database is <https://iconographic.warburg.sas.ac.uk/category/vpc-taxonomy-026358>.

¹⁹ On Duvet see, among the most important studies, Bersier 1976-77; Adhemar 1979; Grimme 1972; 1980; Hernmarck 1978 and catalogue entry.

gles & restabli la puolle au mu
 et. Il purga les demomades
 et nettoia les lepreux. Il guar
 les escames de mortel maladie
 il destruit l'idoles avecques le
 ple. **O**tre signe c'est de
 merueilleuse loueige qui desfer
 me auoir dignite & puissance
 d'apostre avec la dignite de ues
 que. Otre effort champion de iux
 seigneur. qui estoit la vestron
 de par aage eschauffe par per
 nes presche: forment es tormes
 ihu crist sauueu du monde.

De sainte ypine



Ypine est adue
 autant comme
 omte de celine
 Elle ot le basine
 de bonne odeur en coucufatio
 et luit de deuocion en sa re
 se et la benedicon de gloire

Ypine fut nee de es
 nobles parens en
 tre dytalic. et lamiff
 son pere en eue touu avec un
 chambereus et auoit avec lui
 les dieu dor et dargent. et po
 ce que elle estoit tresbelle elle
 estoit de plusieurs requise a
 femme & ses parens ne le bon
 louent atones. mais vouloiet
 quelle demourast a honorer
 les dieu. mais elle qui estoit
 itroduite du saint esprit doub
 tout les sacrifices des ydoles
 et nucoit lenens de qu'on
 sacrifioit en une fenestre. Et
 quant son pere vint une fore
 la. ses chambereus sur dret
 La fille qui est nix dame ne

Figure 21
 Saint Fabian and Saint Sebastian. In Jacques de Voragine, *Légende Dorée*,
 transl. by Jean de Vignay. Fifteenth century. BnF, fr. 242, 36r

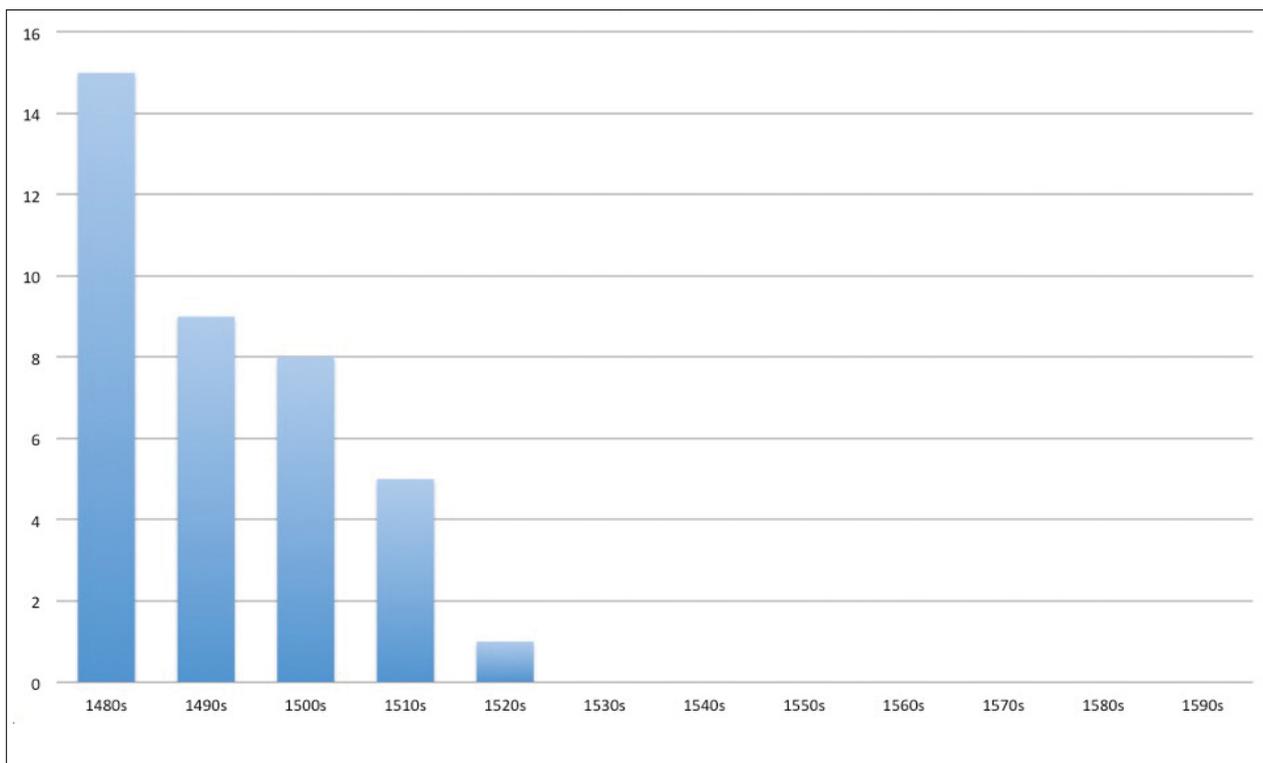


Figure 22 Editions of the *Legenda Aurea* printed in Lyon, 1480-1600. USTC catalogue

were produced in Lyon as early as 1483, when a printed version was published by Matthias Huss in collaboration with Pierre Hongre. It was republished in 1487 with different images.²⁰ We have other editions in those years by printers such as Guillaume Leroy (1483) and Nikolaus Philipphi and Markus Reinhart (1480), but they do not include illustrations.²¹

The publication of this fundamental work in printed illustrated versions was very much linked to the manuscript tradition, as many printers decided at the beginning to follow the familiar manuscript layout. It is interesting to note that they followed this tradition both for what concerns the organisation of the page as well as for the type of image-

²⁰ See the digital version of the BML in Numelyo: https://numelyo.bm-lyon.fr/f_view/BML:BML_00G000100137001103722687/IMG00000001.

²¹ See the BML catalogue entries: <https://catalogue.bm-lyon.fr/ark:/75584/pf0000303643.locale=fr>.

ry presented [fig. 21].²² It is also interesting to note that the production of this book disappears in Lyon by the 1520s (see table in fig. 22).²³

Other medieval books were published and illustrated in Lyon, such as the famous *De Proprietatibus Rebus* written in 1240 by Barthelemy l'Anglais, translated into French and printed in around fifty editions between the 1470 and 1600 by Huss, Siber and Guillaume LeRoy (see Krumenacher 2016).

For what concerns the illustrated editions of the books of hours (*Horae*), they were published more consistently throughout the sixteenth century. These were prayer booklets in which one could find the instructions to pray the liturgy of the hours, divided into fixed times during the day and following a set schedule for each prayer. The images were notably inserted and designed to guide the reader through the different liturgies. In Lyon, we have beautiful editions published by Macé Bonhomme (with the frames designed by Eskrich) and an interesting production of Italian and Spanish translations including *Las horas de nuestra Señora segun el uso Romano* (Lyon: J. Junty, 1560), as we know the book production was mostly intended for the foreign market. In the catalogue, we present an interesting, illustrated edition by Pierre Busseron [cat. 1.5-6], printed by Huguetan in 1538, which includes liturgical images with frames attributed to Georges Reverdy along with the Latin text.²⁴

Reverdy also produced the images for the Italian edition of the New Testament printed by Roville/Gazeau in 1547 [cat. 1.17].²⁵

Reverdy is now known for around 50 engravings on copper which have his monogram and for many woodcuts of which we do not have a comprehensive catalogue yet (Leutrat 2016). He collaborates with different printers in the city, always adapting the style to the technique he used, and sometimes following the style of the mysterious 'Maitre JG', another engraver whom Reverdy probably knew.²⁶ A similar organisation of the page can be found in the earlier religious book *Hortulus anime cum aliis quamplurimis orationibus pristinae impressioni super additis*, printed by Jean Clein in 1513 after a German edition by Anton Koberger of which the author is not known. It is a collection of 57 German woodcuts mentioned in Gültlingen (Gültlingen I, nr. 54, 140 [cat. 1.7]). We presented this selection in order to give a glimpse of which types of religious books were illustrated and printed in the city during the century, as well as the variety of recurrent themes that were utilised by the different printers of the city.

We will now analyse a number of prefaces of the period to understand how these images were spoken of in the books themselves and to enquire on their possible functions. We will subsequently conclude with a closer look at the iconography of two illustrations produced by the two competing artists, Salomon and Eskrich.

²² The *Legenda* is notably a medieval collection of hagiographic biographies composed in Latin by Jacopo da Varagine, Dominican friar and bishop of Genoa, which still constitute an important reference for the interpretation of the iconography in pictorial works. The bibliography on the subject is vast; see among others Legoff 2011.

²³ During my cataloguing work I did rely on the USTC and I found it most useful, although it is a work in progress, so mistakes are possible and additions are always being made.

²⁴ As the BML catalogue entry states, it is a reduction of the *Heures de Tory* (Baudrier XI, 318).

²⁵ See <https://catalogue.bm-lyon.fr/ark:/75584/pf0001383674.locale=fr>.

²⁶ I do not take here into account the issues of attribution to Maître JG, already discussed in Leutrat (2008) and others, or to other artists such as Maître CC or Maître FG, on whose identities still much is to be enquired upon. It will certainly be the subject for future research.

3.2.1 The Function of Images in Early Modern Books Printed in Lyon: Some Pieces of Evidence in Sixteenth-Century Prefaces

The exhibition *Lyon Renaissance: Arts et Humanisme* at the Musée des Beaux Arts in Lyon (2015) gave much-needed insight into the production of images during the Renaissance period.²⁷ It underlined the central role of Pierre Eskrich and Bernard Salomon as illustrators, though both of them were not mainly engravers, as Leutrat points out (Leutrat 2016).

While Salomon was employed by the city for the realisation of ephemeral décors for the entry of important noblemen and noblewomen in the city, Eskrich was, as we mentioned above, a goldsmith by trade. They can be described as versatile artists and talented draughtsmen skilled in working with small formats. They worked with complex objects such as printed pages, drawing their images, while probably the cutters were other personalities whose identities are not known, as Sharratt (2005) argues. Their illustrations were meant to be inserted in the page which was composed of different ornamental elements (the ornated letters, the frames), and obviously by the textual elements (the titles of the episodes, the poems). Their production was characterised by the diversity of genres, as it included religious works, scientific treatises, books of poetry, and works of classical literature. This diversity allowed publishers to reach a wide audience.

We know that printers collaborated with artists and printmakers to create quality illustrations. These collaborations helped to visually enrich books, making the works more appealing and informative. The aesthetic and the educational functions of the images were both implemented (Landau, Parshall 1994; Chartier 2014). The prefaces of some Lyon editions give us precious hints on the function of these images.

Starting from the illustrations utilised for different editions of *Les Figures de la Bible* and comparing them to the different genre but similar in format of the emblem books, I wish to briefly discuss the role of images printed in Lyon, and how the hierarchy image versus text is often reflected not only in the prefaces, but also in the layout of the page. Customarily, in the prefaces of illustrated editions of the Bible, as in other illustrated books, we find little explicit information on the role of the images. Apart from general praise for the quality of the woodcuts or engravings, and possibly some information on the cost, along with the usual *privilegio* which forbids other printers from re-publishing the book (images included), not much is explicitly said on the function of these illustrations. However, the new format of these compendia published in Lyon, as well as of the New and Old Testament which were printed in the city in different languages, usually provide readers with an explanation of what the book was intended to be.

Les Figures are spoken of as a prominent part of what the text is about. They are intended to explain the text itself, while the text also provides clarification for the most obscure parts of the illustrations. In an interesting German edition of *Les Figures de la Bible*, for instance, entitled *Wol Gerissnen und Geschnidten Figuren ausz der Bibel* (Lyon, de Tournes, 1554), we find a dedicatory letter from Caspar Scheydt in Worms to Nicola Gerbelio (see Appendix 4, nr. 1).²⁸ In this letter dated 1551 the author states that “he brought from France some printed figures drawn in Lyon, which were included with great cost

²⁷ See the catalogue *Lyon Renaissance*. Paris: Somogy, 2015.

²⁸ This German edition is in the Staatsbibliothek in Berlin. Nicola Gerbelio (in Latin Nicolaus Gerbelius) was a German humanist, part of the circle of Martin Luther; he corresponded with Erasmus from Rotterdam and edited many editions of Latin and Greek ancient authors, such as *Alexandra, sive Cassandra* (Basel, 1546). On him not much is known. See the work by Merker 1923, especially the chapters “Das Leben und die Persönlichkeit des Nicolaus Gerbelius” and “Die Schlussbeweise für die Autorschaft des Gerbelius”.

in the Bible". These images are said to be similar in style to both Holbein and Sebald Beham, and deemed to be of great use for "artists, painters and lovers of the arts".²⁹ The letter does not say much else, but it is interesting to note that the images are here valued for their cost and use, meaning they are granted the function of model and instructions not only for artists (*Kunstlers*) in general and painters (*Malers*), but also for that interesting figure of the 'art lover' (*Kunst Liebhaber*) which is still undefined

The instructive things which are represented to the sight and through which they enter into learning and from there on into understanding and then into memory [...] remain firmer and more stable than those which enter only through the ear. And for this reason, I have embellished this booklet with figures taken from the stories of the New Testament and which concern the main episodes, mysteries, and representation with the exposition in verses placed briefly under each illustration. Receive them therefore, oh reader, for pleasure to the eye, aid to the memory and lifting of the spirit that God always wishes to preserve for his honour and eternal praise.

The paragraph takes up the concepts of other dedications made by him and adds in the final sentence a summary of the three functions of illustrations: visual pleasure, mnemonic aid, and spiritual pleasure.³¹ To satisfy these three requests, de Tournes relies on a delicate and precise artist such as *le petit Bernard*.

The concept of visual pleasure is taken from the function of the books of emblems, and we see this parallelism not only in the organisation of the page. Although the usu-

al set of instructions for creating an emblem page is missing in *Les Figures*, we have here many of the elements summarised that are similar to those instructions for the creation of the emblems. We can find these detailed instructions in prologues such as the famous one by Lodovico Domenichi dedicated to Alessandro Farnese in the Italian edition of *Imprese* by Paolo Giovio published in 1559 (Appendix 4, nr. 3):

in the sixteenth century, and which will gain a much greater consideration from the seventeenth century onwards.³⁰ We have another interesting preface to a French edition of *e Les Figures du Nouveau Testament* (see Appendix 4, nr. 2), printed in 1554 and entitled "L'Imprimeur au lecteur salut", in which de Tournes clearly states that the figures create an aid for the reader's memory and, at the same time, they delight him with pleasant images. In this preface, he makes his words very clear:

Though I do not doubt that seeing published now the dialogue about M. Paolo Giovio's *impreses* offers you a sublime wonder, I am sure that once you understand the reason you will cease to be amazed [...] But before I come to these details, I must tell you the universal conditions that are sought to carry out a perfect *impresa*. Know therefore

²⁹ I thank my colleague and friend Celine Camps for helping me with the translation of this passage.

³⁰ See the studies on the Dutch *liefhebber* by Alexander Marr (2010) and Lara Yeager-Crasselt (2016). On production rates, costs and market value see Landau, Parshall 1994, 30-2.

³¹ On the contents of these Bibles before and after the wars of religion see Pettegree 2007, especially chapter 4, "Protestant Printing during the French Wars of Religion. The Lyon Press of Jean Saugrain".

that the invention or true *impresa*, if it is to be good, must have five conditions: firstly, the right proportion of soul and body, secondly, that it is not obscure in nature, that it has the mystery of the sibyl for people who want to understand it, nor as clear as any plebeian understands it. Third, above all it is a beautiful sight, which is made to be very entertaining, having stars, suns, moons, water, trees, mechanical instruments, bizarre animals and fantastic birds. Fourth, it seeks no human form. Fifth, it requires the *motto*, which is the soul of the body.

Although less enigmatic and intellectually constructed to stimulate the sagacity of the user, the figures of the Bible comply both to the first criterion of “right proportion between soul and body”, or between image and text, and to the third, “being beautiful to see”, that is pleasing to the reader’s eye. Moreover, the aesthetic function

is stressed for both types of images as it will be in other publications such as the 17 woodcuts illustrating the *Hymnes du temps et de ses parties* by Guillaume Guérout published in 1560 [cat. III.39-40]. In the preface to this edition, the author states that:

I hope that [this work] will delight you, having come from a good hand; because the invention is by M. Bernard Salomon, an excellent painter who has no equal in our hemisphere [...] if I see that you will receive them with good grace, I will shortly show you some other similar booklet.³²

This short comment also summarises the qualities of Salomon’s style: having a good hand (or *docta manus*), being able to provide a good *invenzione*, and being able to create images that will be pleasing to the eye. The eye must be content in the balance between text and image which will be achieved in the small-format Bibles following the layout of the book of emblems. From the *Morosophie* of Guillaume de la Perrière to the many editions in different languages of Alciati’s *Emblems* [cat. IV.45-7], the page in both kinds of illustrated books seems to be similar in organisation and scope.

It was also used for other types of books, such as Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and the innumerable editions of Aesop’s *Fables*. The balance between text and image is evident, and although it is traditionally said that the text was add-

ed to explain the image, these and other different prefaces testify that the two tasks were interchangeable. The last preface we consider here belongs to another highlight of the Lyon production. It is *Les Figures de la mort* printed in Lyon in several editions, from Holbein’s drawings. In this Italian edition printed in 1549 [fig. 23] we find a preface to the “wise and savvy readers”, in which the issue of the quality of these famous images is questioned. The first Lyon edition was published by Melchior and Gaspar Trechsel for Jean and François Frelon in 1538 with 41 woodcuts after the drawings by Holbein. It was followed by two editions in 1542 by Frelon, one in French and one in Latin. In 1547, Frelon again published one Latin and one French edition adding 12 woodcuts, and in 1549 he published the first Italian edition in octa-

³² See Appendix 4, nr. 4; also, Cartier 1937-38, fn. 456; Sharratt 2005, 313-14, fn. 48.

vo, with 53 illustrations. After this edition, he republished one French edition in 1562 with 5 new illustrations.³³

In the preface to the 1549 Italian edition (Appendix 4, nr. 5) we read:

Frellone having in the past brought to light with beautiful figures the symbols of death, first in the Latin language, and then in the French vernacular, has now endeavored to give them to you in the Italian vernacular. And he did this with such admirable diligence and curious study that, wishing to satisfy you as much as possible, he had many other figures designed and engraved which in the past had never been printed, nor figures already for others printed in the Italian language. Therefore, take them with a happy heart, kind readers, not paying attention to the words of some Fool, who after having made use of the drawings of the figures already made by the said Frellone [*sic*], not knowing how else to embellish those figures which are much less beautiful than those of France, wrote that he had them drawn and carved so well, these figures of the above-mentioned *Simolachri*, which are not just equal (as he says) but far better, more beautiful than those of France: which although it is said rashly and without judgement, those with a judicious eye will consider those in France, commissioned by the said Frellone, as a fair judgement, and they will easily be able to judge those made in other places.³⁴

Whether the French illustrations were superior to those printed 'elsewhere' or not, the issue of the importance of the quality of these images is clearly stated here, not only questioning the quality of the drawings, but also of the printed edition itself. It raises questions of aesthetic criticism and comparison between printers and editions which testify to the interest of these images for the readers of the time.

We do not wish here to go deeper into the issue of these

images which have been analysed by different scholars in the past. They are presented as a 'hybrid' sort of publication, in between the emblem book, the book of hours and the Lyon *Figures*, which testifies to the fluidity of these genres and the appropriation of one format for different types of books. This included the series of *immagini moralizzanti*, which present both an aesthetic value and a didactic purpose to the reader.

³³ See Brun 1969, 222. These images will have an incredible success in Europe during the sixteenth century. Lützelburger and Holbein's *Images of Death* series was always intended to illustrate a printed book. The devotional texts were written by Nicholas Bourbon and Jean de Vauzelles or Gilles Corrozet. In the first edition in 1538, the introduction states that several of the blocks were incomplete when Lützelburger died. The printers failed to find a block cutter of equal ability to complete the images (ultimately hiring a less skilled artist), which is why the book was not published until 1538, twelve years after Lützelburger's death. Nevertheless, the edition was hugely successful and reprinted in Lyon into the 1560s. Holbein's compositions were copied by dozens of printers and artists across Europe into the nineteenth century (from the Morgan Library Exhibition: <https://www.themorgan.org/exhibitions/online/holbein/les-simulachres-historiees-faces-de-la-mort>).

³⁴ Preface to the Italian edition *Simolachri, Historie et Figure de la morte* (Lyon: Frellon, 1549).

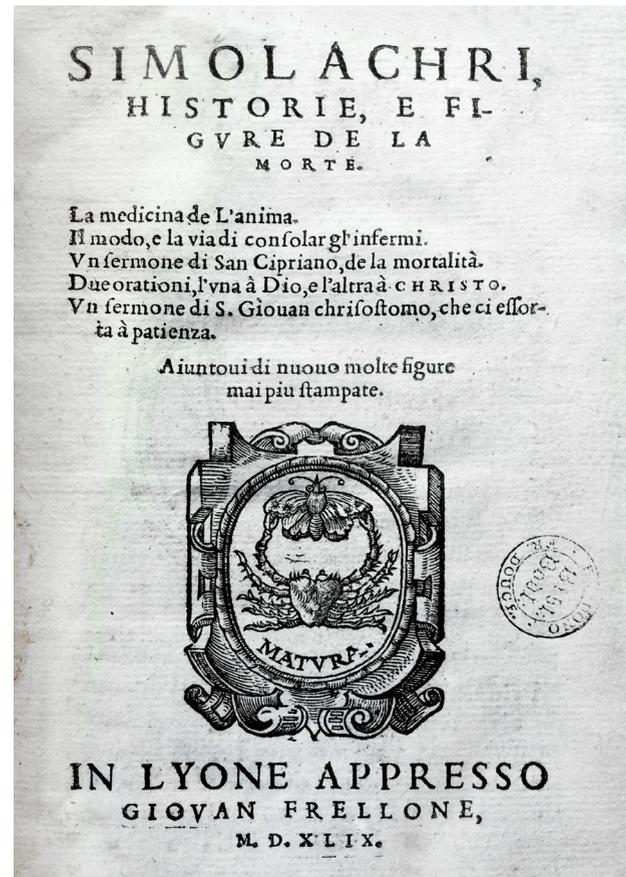


Figure 23 Title page of *Simolachri, Historie et Figure de la morte*. 1549. Lyon: Frellon. Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, Crynes 567

3.2.2 From German Blocks to the Emergence of the Lyon Style, Influences and Original *Invenzioni*: The Iconographic Choices for the Creation of Eve in Salomon and Eskrich

In order to understand the emergence of what we could define as the 'Lyon style' one needs to look at the images produced by Salomon and Eskrich more closely. The two artists, although not employed exclusively by de Tournes

and Roville, stand out for the quality and fine details of the illustrations that accompany various biblical compendiums, including the editions of the figures of the Bible published in different languages and in the same years.



Figure 24 Bernard Salomon, *Creation of Eve* (Gen. 2), 1553. In Claude Paradin, *Quadrins historiques de la Bible*. Lyon: de Tournes. Lyon, Bibliothèque Municipale, Rés 377665 (1)

For Roville, we mentioned some important titles such as *Les Figures de la Bible*, 1564; *Le Figure della Bibbia illustrate da Stanze Toscane*, in the editions of 1564, 1565, 1577; the *Biblia Sacra ad Vetustissima Exemplaria Castigata*, 1569; and the *Biblia Sacra ad Optima quaeque Veteris* published in 1564, 1565, 1566, 1567, 1569. For Jean de Tournes, in parallel, there are the *Quadrins Historiques de la Bible*, published in various editions in 1553, 1555, 1558, 1560, 1583, whose illustrations are also used for other titles, namely in the *Biblia Sacra* (1554, 1556, 1558, 1569); in *La Sainte Bible* (1551, 1554, 1557, 1559); *The Bible* (1561); *Figures from the Old Testament*, (1554); *Histoire de Fl. Joseph* (1562); *Figuren Ausz der Bibel* (1554).

As mentioned above, Salomon and Eskrich produced series of biblical illustrations, influencing each other stylistically both in terms of iconographic and organisational choices of the page. As Leutrat and Lejeune pointed out (Leutrat 2015; Lejeune 2016), and as I will exemplify here, Eskrich was inspired by the work of Salomon but with original results. Salomon models the volumes for the figures in a synthetic way, though with more grace and virtuosity, while Eskrich is more descriptive and more organised in the realisation of the biblical scenes. They both utilise a series of ‘types’, forming models for both religious and profane books, which will travel around Europe and will influence not only book illustrations but also the decorative arts.³⁵ They both insert in their illustrations a great deal of details and almost an obsession against the *horror vacui* (Andreoli 2024). Despite this need to fill the pictorial space, the images remain readable and under-

standable, in harmony inside and outside the vignette, constituting a page heavily illustrated but still in balance.

I cannot claim to conduct an exhaustive analysis between the two artists, which has already been done to some extent by other scholars already mentioned. However, I believe that in order to understand this process of ‘influence’ (I prefer to use this term instead of merely ‘copy’), it is useful to focus on a case study taken from the most famous images by the two artists. I will therefore take into account here one biblical scene represented by both artists to give a comparison of the stylistic choices, similarities and differences. The episode of the creation of Eve, taken from the Book of Genesis quite significant in terms of iconographic rendering and editorial strategies. I argue that, while Bernard Salomon illustrates the birth of Eve following the iconographic canons of the manuscript tradition, Pierre Eskrich interprets the episode more freely by introducing a descriptive and in some ways innovative narrative, in which the figure of Eve is exalted in her uniqueness.

The first edition in which we find Salomon’s illustration of the episode is the edition of the *Quadrins* of 1553, in which the artist creates the drawings for the various episodes of Genesis in sequence (starting from the creation of the world and man). Salomon draws God who, after creating the cosmos, the lands, the seas and man, extracts Eve from Adam’s rib [fig. 24]. The scene takes place in the idyllic landscape of paradise on earth, represented in detail and populated with varied flora and fauna.

From the biblical text we read:

Then the Lord God caused a torpor to descend upon the man, and he fell asleep;	
he removed one of his ribs and closed the flesh in its place.	21
The Lord God made a woman out of the rib that he had taken from the man and	
brought her to the man.	22

³⁵ We find examples of plates and caskets inspired by Salomon’s drawings for instance in the Musée des Beaux Arts in Lyon and in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. For the influence of Salomon on majolica, see Deswarte Rosa 2003.



Figure 25
Konrad Schlappertzin, *God Creating Eve from Adam*.
c. 1445. New York, Public Library, MssCol 2557, fol. 6r

Here the printer takes up the didactic role of images in the paragraph below his prologue as he adds: “So that you, (reader) if you do not have the time to read and enjoy writing as you would like, can at least wallpaper the chambers of your memory with those figures”. We should note how in this case the editor underlines the social class of the potential buyer. He writes “if you do not have the time”, and not “if you do not have the ability”; we are far from the images that hung in churches to help the illiterate faithful.

So he who merely hears or reads, without seeing in presence, or almost in presence, the things depicted, has no true knowledge of the many parts, or barely the slightest knowledge of the movement of the soul. [...] Therefore we have taken the principal and almost chief parts of the New Testament, and we have explained them, painted them and almost alive to the eyes of the faithful, so that they may be more powerfully drawn to the knowledge and contemplation of them. Then for greater consolation of noble spirits, we have accompanied them, adorned them and illustrated them with short poems, to make up for where the painting is lacking in some part.³⁹

From this passage the importance of the illustrations becomes clear. The printer aspired to create a page full of grace, where stylistic synthesis and beauty were complementary and exalted the glory and sacredness of the episode described with images and then accompanied by words. The synergy between image and text results in a powerful synthesis of the biblical episodes. It is no coincidence that this format for illustrated Bibles, in which verses and images coexist in a delicate balance, was inspired by the pages of the books of emblems for which Lyon became famous during the sixteenth century.

The scene of the creation of Eve is a clear example of this stylistic success: although small, the woodcut is aesthetically pleasing and precise, very detailed in the landscape, and each element is rendered with delicacy and stylistic grace.

The reader of these valuable illustrated editions is a cultured man who reads and looks at the illustrations for the pleasure of the mind and for personal aesthetic delight. The same statement can be found in the preface to the reader in the Italian edition of the figures, the *Figure del Nuovo Testamento illustrate da versi vulgari italiani* by Damiano Maraffi (published by de Tournes in 1559), in which he states:

God holds out His hand to Eve as if wanting to accompany her at her birth, in a manner very different from the gesture found in other artists’ representations of the same episode, such as the famous one by Hans Holbein the Younger for the Dance of Death series mentioned above. This image, which Salomon may have seen since two editions of the work were printed in Lyon in those years, found success in the years to come outside of France.

Despite the differences, both artists choose to represent Eve emerging from Adam’s rib following the tradition of the manuscript illustration, which sees Eve still partially anchored to the body of the first man. We can find this iconographic choice, for example, in a German manuscript from 1400 by Konrad Schlapperitzin, currently in the New York Public library [fig. 25], where Eve is repre-

³⁹ “Onde chi solamente ode o legge, senza veder presenti, o quasi presenti le cose fatte: non ha delle molte parti la vera cognizione, o del movimento dell’animo appena la minima. [...] però haviamo presi i principali et quasi capi del Nuovo Testamento: et gl’haviamo spiegati, dipinti et quasi vivi à gli occhi de’ fedeli: acciò più potentemente sieno tirati à la cognizione, et contemplazione d’essi. Poi per più consolazione degli spiriti nobili, gl’haviamo con brevi versi accompagnati, adornati et illustrati: per supplire dove la pittura in qualche parte mancassi”.

sented emerging from Adam's body and, as a slight variation, is kneeling with her hands clasped before God, who takes them and blesses her. The wrist grip in the illustration of the first French translation printed in Lyon of the *Speculum*, *Le Mirouer de la rédemption*, is similar. Here Eve seems to free herself from her sleeping body to be born smiling before the blessing Lord [cat. 1.1].

Another interesting variant that we often find in manuscript form is with Eve still part of the rib and only half in human form, as in the depiction of a *Speculum* manuscript from around 1410, at Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. In this case, the image underlines Eve's metamorphosis from rib to human being, as are Adam's ribs in plain sight, while we find the Lord always blessing with his right hand. This iconography will be abandoned during the sixteenth century.

All these versions, although with different stylistic choices, have in common the position of the characters (God blessing on the left, Adam sleeping on the right, Eve in the middle), a position that Salomon takes up together with the choice to portray Eve emerging from Adam's body. The style is lyrical and the landscape more detailed, as stated in the comments on the artist made by de Tournes on the

invention of *le petit Bernard* in the prologue to Guillaume Guérault's *Hymnes du temps et de ses parties* presented above (Appendix 4, nr. 4). Salomon is praised as being admirable at creating inventions, that is, representations of the stories frequently cited by sixteenth-century art treatise writers. If we compare the choice of Salomon's invention for the creation of Eve with that of Pierre Eskrich [cat. 1.15], we will notice that while the former follows the iconographic tradition of representing Eve being born from Adam's rib, the latter chooses a different solution.

As we can see from the woodcut used for *Figures de la Bible, illustrees de huictains francoys, pour l'interpretation et intelligence d'icelles* published by Roville in 1564, which will then be reused in various editions and in various other titles, Eskrich chooses to represent Eve already created by God, who holds her by the hand and shows her Adam asleep, pointing to Adam with his right hand. The act of giving birth to Eve from his rib has already occurred. Eve is fully formed and naked with her hair flowing down to her ankles (an iconography similar to that of Mary Magdalene). The bucolic landscape is well represented although the variety of animals present is less than the choice Salomon offers us. The text reads:

God seeing that it was not good that man
Lives alone, aspiring to his good,
He put him into a deep, heavy sleep
Then he took a rib from his body.
And he gave him a sweet dream at that hour
And he created for him a steady help:
This happy couple is lucky
And possesses the garden of delights.

This rhyming text is longer and more descriptive than that of the *Quadrins historiques* (Lyon: de Tournes, 1554), which reads:

The Lord God took an entire rib
Of Adam's body, making him sleep,
And he formed Eve the first woman
Whom he showed him when he woke up.⁴⁰

The text of the *Quadrins* on this page does not mention the reason why Eve was created, but focuses on her creation. In the text of *Les Figures*, however, much importance is given to the reason why Eve was born, that is, to be of 'sure help' to Adam. In this case, the illustration also seems to emphasise this purpose. God points to Adam instead of blessing Eve as He seems to say to her "this is whom you were created for". It is possible that Pierre Eskrich, in creating the drawing for the book, saw the text for which he had to create the illustration and chose to portray the scene a moment after Eve's exit from Adam's body to emphasise this aspect of the text. This would explain the decision not to copy his colleague (and rival) Salomon, whose *Quadrins* he knew, and to distance himself from the manuscript tradition that sees Eve emerging from Adam's body, an iconography that we not only find in printed illustrations, but which has a long tradition in the visual arts. The result is a didactic illustration that, although it loses some of the lyrical aura we can find in Salomon's work, denotes Eskrich's stylistic independence

and will to innovate with a pleasant but decidedly stiffer result. In this solution, Eve's body loses a certain elegance in its transformation into an elongated body with little grace compared to Salomon's Eve/Venus. This image will be reused for over a decade by the printer Roville, in the following editions and translations of the work and for other works of a religious nature.

We must therefore conclude that both versions received good editorial success and were appreciated by the city's literary and merchant public, as well as for the foreign market, given their numerous editions and translations in Italian, German, English and Dutch. Although similar in the organisation of the page, in the division of text and image, and in regard to the purpose of the work and the editorial strategies, the comparison between these two scenes suggests an independence and an autonomous reflection regarding the iconographic choices of the two artists, who, although influencing each other, have maintained their style and their originality in the representation of the biblical subjects assigned to them.⁴¹

⁴⁰ "Le Seigneur Dieu print une costole entire | Du corps d'Adam, le faisant sommeiller | Et en forma Eve femme première | Qu'il luy monstra venant à s'éveiller" (fol. 3).

⁴¹ The illustrated editions of Roville and de Tournes, as has been said, were created for that wealthy upper class who could afford to buy and enjoy such pamphlets. The iconography we have analysed here is only one example of the possibilities offered by the direct comparison of these images.

