

# An Examination of Miniatures of the Office of St. Louis in Jeanne de Navarre's Book of Hours

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Historians agree that in the second quarter of the fourteenth century an elaborate Book of Hours (Paris, B. N., MS. n. a. lat. 3145) was executed for Jeanne de Navarre. This book includes the unusual addition of an Office dedicated to St. Louis. Marcel Thomas suggests that Philippe VI was this manuscript's patron and assigns the miniatures a date between 1332 and 1333.<sup>1</sup> Both the date and the patronage of Thomas' hypothesis are erroneous, and can be proven so in an examination of the illuminations of St. Louis' Office. Heraldry, subject matter, and iconography of this miniature cycle suggest a very different set of circumstances for the manuscript's commission. This article will show that the date of the manuscript was later than Thomas argues, and that Philippe VI is an unlikely patron. Further, it will show that Jeanne de Navarre is not only the recipient of the Hours,<sup>2</sup> but also a possible patron.

For an analysis of the Hours' miniatures, it is important to understand elements from the life of the person for whom they were designed, Jeanne de Navarre. She plays a very important and unfortunate role in the development of the Salic Law. After her father Louis X, and her half-brother John, died, the eight year old Jeanne was a possible heir of the French throne. However, her father's brother Philippe IV ascended the throne. After he was crowned King, a general assembly decided that although a woman could inherit other titles and properties, the royal line was unique: "only a man could be fit heir to St. Louis and Charlemagne."<sup>3</sup> This law was later called the Salic Law.<sup>4</sup>

Jeanne had difficulty inheriting lesser properties as well. On his deathbed, her father had expressed his wish that his daughter receive properties he had acquired from his mother: Navarre, Champagne, and Brie.<sup>5</sup> Though there was a precedent for female regency of these properties and Jeanne was the legal heir, Philippe became King of Navarre in addition to France. His succession ignored the laws of that region which recognized women as rulers.<sup>6</sup> Jeanne was twice denied her rightful succession by Philippe IV.

When Philippe died without a son, his younger brother, Charles, became King of both France and Navarre. When he died also without a male heir, there was a struggle in which many men claimed the French throne. Philippe VI won this struggle and was crowned as King of France. Once King, Philippe elaborated the Salic Law to ban women from transferring the rights to the French crown to their descendants. He did this to invalidate the claims of the powerful Edward III of England to the French throne. However, Edward could do more than the eight year old Jeanne when dealt with in this

manner, and this event sparked the conflict that became the Hundred Years War.

Philippe VI was not politically agile enough to inherit Navarre. The Cortes (the people of Navarre) rejected him as their ruler.<sup>7</sup> Jeanne was crowned, but because the Cortes thought she was too French, she acted only as regent until her son reached twenty-one.<sup>8</sup>

Much of Jeanne's problem attaining lands and title may have been due to questions about her legitimacy. In 1314, Jeanne's mother, Marguerite of Burgundy, was accused (probably falsely) of adultery.<sup>9</sup> This scandal resulted in doubts about Jeanne's legitimacy and became an important obstacle to her claims of succession.<sup>10</sup> These themes can be identified in the iconography of the illuminations of the Office of St. Louis in her Book of Hours.

The Hours of Jeanne of Navarre can be understood in terms of the concerns of Jeanne as a dubious Capetian and disappointed heiress. The iconography of the illuminations of the Office of Saint Louis suggests that Jeanne is a worthy and direct descendant of Louis IX who should not be denied her place in the Capetian lineage and succession.

The miniatures appear in chronological order and only show the first thirty years of the saint's life. The subjects of the eight miniatures of the Navarre Office have an unusual concentration on the saint's kingship which the other illuminated or textual portrayals of the saint's life do not share. The subjects are as follows:

Matins:	The Education of Louis*
Lauds:	Louis as a Child at the Mass
Prime:	Louis and His Mother Blanche Traveling to Reims for His Coronation
Tierce:	The Coronation of Louis IX: the Unction
Sixte:	The Coronation of Louis IX: the Support of the Crown
None:	St. Louis Carrying the Relics of the Crown of Thorns
Vespers:	St. Louis, Sick, Deciding to Go on Crusade
Compline:	The Preaching of the Crusade by the Legate, Eudes de Châteauroux

Instead of showing the pious works and miracles as earlier cycles of St. Louis, the Navarre miniatures concentrate on the events of Louis' early years of education and events of his reign as king of France. Three of the eight illuminations show events of Louis' coronation and two others portray events before his first crusade. The miniatures' emphasis on the kingship of

Jeanne's ancestor may reflect the princess' personal interest in dynastic succession.

The illuminations themselves further emphasize Jeanne's ancestry and continue to allude to the character she and her son inherited from them. Her ancestry and character are offered as support of her legitimacy and her place within the Capetian lineage. Two illuminations of the Office make the personal nature of the cycle's iconography clear: the first, which decorated the Matins, and the third, illuminating the Prime.

The first illumination in the Office of Saint Louis begins the prayers of Matins. It shows the education of the young St. Louis (Figure 1). Louis' mother, Blanche of Castile, sits in a throne pointing at her son. The boy's tutor sits on a stool and directs his student's attention to the book held by the young prince. In his other hand the teacher holds a whip, ready to discipline his student, if need be. Louis sits on the floor, uncrowned with a halo. He has not yet become king. Hierarchically, he is humbled, but the halo suggests his saintly nature. Blanche is represented as a Queen, carefully watching her son, raising him to be a good ruler under the guidance of a monk's discipline. This picture emphasizes the role of a woman in the raising of a ruler.

The Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux includes an illumination of St. Louis being disciplined by his confessor (Figure 2), which has a composition similar to the Navarre education scene. The compositions of both the Navarre education and the Cloisters' manuscript scene of discipline recall the *topos* of Grammar common in medieval art. The Navarre Hours artist borrowed this *topos* of Grammar to illustrate the education of Louis. However, the Navarre Hours artist has altered the familiar portrayal of Grammar by including the child's mother in the scene. Blanche's presence would not have been important to a simple scene of education. The Queen was a purposeful addition which expanded the meaning of the traditional motif, but the addition of Blanche was not unique to the Navarre Office.

Marcel Thomas discusses a similar scene of the education of St. Louis illuminated in Guillaume de Saint-Pathus' *La vie et les miracles de monseigneur saint-Louis* (Figure 3).<sup>11</sup> The illuminations of both *La vie* and the Hours follow the words of Guillaume de Saint-Pathus.<sup>12</sup> They describe how the young king

was placed in the guardianship of the noble Madame Blanche his mother...who watched him very diligently. The King was always with his teacher who taught him letters...and his teacher never hit him for cause of discipline.<sup>13</sup>

Both illuminations generally follow *La vie's* description of Louis' education. Under Blanche's supervision, Louis is given a lesson by a teacher who directs the boy's attention to his studies. However, there are important differences between the two interpretations of this event. In Jeanne's Hours, the monk holds a small whip absent from *La vie*. Louis is at his teacher's feet instead of sitting on a stool as shown in the *La vie* education scene. The differences between the two compositions

show that the Grammar *topos* was an important source for the Hours artist. To compose the Navarre Hours' education miniature, the St. Pathus education scene that includes Blanche is combined with the Grammar *topos*.

The Hours miniature also changes the chronological placement of the education scene within Louis' life. In *La vie*, the event follows the coronation. It comes after a passage describing the regency of Blanche because although Louis was crowned, he was still too young to rule. In the Navarre Hours, this scene is well before those of the coronation; Louis was still only a prince in his father's kingdom. This lesser status may also help to explain why Louis' position at his teacher's feet was preferable to his sitting on a stool as in the St. Pathus miniature.

By altering the education's chronological placement in Louis' life, the Hours miniature also changes the event's meaning. In the scene from *La vie*, Blanche's appearance emphasizes her status as Regent for the young King, but in the Hours, she was not yet the boy's official guardian. In this light her role is different. This miniature portrays the queen's importance in raising heirs to the throne. Blanche appears here as a model or a parallel of Jeanne, a Spanish queen raising a future king. This scene almost seems to be one from Jeanne's life; the illumination from *La vie* has clearly been modified to accentuate the similarity of their situations.

Dynastic issues are involved in the miniature's emphasis on intergenerational parallels. After Louis' canonization, his descendants were eager to prove they inherited his character. Andrew W. Lewis showed that by the fourteenth century St. Louis' holiness had become a dynastic trait:

partially under the stimulus of dynasticism, the two basic models of legitimacy—the blood-right and worthiness or sanctity—were brought into close association, and sometimes fused, in royalist circles before the end of the thirteenth century.<sup>14</sup>

Holy qualities implied direct Capetian lineage. Actions paralleling ones by St. Louis and indications of his saintly character were effective evidence of direct Capetian descent. By paralleling the lives of Jeanne and her son with that of Blanche and Louis, the Navarre Office miniature suggests that Jeanne is following the example of her esteemed ancestors to raise her son well. This miniature intimates that the young Charles may become like his great-great-grandfather. Such an implication would certainly have pleased his mother, Jeanne. The parallel would also suggest the boy's legitimacy and possible claim to the throne.

The third illumination of the Office of St. Louis (Figure 4) decorates Prime. It shows Blanche of Castile and Saint Louis riding in a carriage to Reims for the ceremony. Nobles on horseback surround the carriage. Other contemporary manuscripts do not illuminate or describe this event.<sup>15</sup> It is a peculiar event for the illuminator to choose. Since only eight illuminations show Louis' life in a Book of Hours, the scenes were chosen carefully. A transitional picture, such as this seems to be, is difficult to explain.

This illumination represents a peculiar incident in the life of Louis IX. His transportation to Reims was different from that of other French kings on their way to their coronations. Louis was so young that he was not strong enough to make the entire trip on a horse, so he rode in a carriage while the nobles rode their horses behind the prince. For his actual entrance into Reims, he descended from the carriage and mounted a warhorse.<sup>16</sup> By including this scene in the illuminated cycle, the Navarre Hours emphasizes the youth and weakness of Louis instead of his strength and power, much as the first illumination humbled the saint by seating him on the floor.

To further emphasize Louis' youth and weakness, it is not the arms of the soon to be King, but the Coat-of-Arms of Blanche of Castile which decorates the carriage. Marcel Thomas notes that the heraldry and the presence of the Queen Mother underscores the fact that Blanche acted as regent for Louis, ruling his kingdom while the King was too young.<sup>17</sup> On his deathbed, Louis VIII stipulated that Blanche was to be regent for his son. In view of Jeanne de Navarre's life, this event is a precedent for female rule of France, and therefore asserts Jeanne as the legitimate heir to the throne.

Because in the miniature Blanche rides in the carriage with her son, this scene emphasizes the maternal relationship between mother and prince. This scene may also parallel Jeanne's rule of Navarre after the death of her husband while she raised her son Charles. Indeed, when the miniature stresses the mother's legitimacy and the relationship of mother and son, it is also an argument for her son's position within the Capetian lineage.

Together, the iconography of these two illuminations throw doubt on Marcel Thomas' theory of the manuscript's patronage. Thomas suggests that Philippe VI commissioned the Hours and gave them to Jeanne.<sup>18</sup> This hypothesis hardly seems likely considering the iconography of the Office of St. Louis. The King of France would not have commissioned a set of illuminations that portrays the king as weak, while asserting the power and position of a woman, Blanche. Thomas' theory is even less acceptable when one considers that Philippe VI was one of the kings who ascended the throne after Jeanne was denied it. Finally, this manuscript seems to argue for the legitimate dynasty of the Capetian line. The ascension of Philippe VI to the French throne ended the rule of the Capetians. Philippe was the first Valois. All these aspects of the manuscript argue against Philippe's involvement in the commission of this Book of Hours, especially as a gift to Jeanne de Navarre.

Thomas tries to date the Hours of Jeanne de Navarre around a certain crusade of Philippe VI. Since the Hours depicts Louis' crusade as not yet begun, Thomas assumed that the fourteenth-century crusade had also not begun. He thus dated the manuscript to a period between 1333 and 1334. Not

only does Thomas' suggested date ignore the iconography of the manuscript which throws doubt on Philippe's involvement, but it also overlooks the heraldic evidence. The coat of arms of Champagne does not appear in the Book of Hours. Jeanne de Navarre was Countess of Champagne until 1336. If the Book of Hours had been executed before that, the arms of Champagne should appear in the manuscript. Since they are absent, the Book of Hours could not have been executed before 1336.

If this manuscript was completed after the death of Jeanne's husband many anomalies in the manuscript would be understandable. The first few illuminations of the youth of Louis might represent the youth of Jeanne's son Charles. He was heir to the throne of Navarre and France (before the institution and elaboration of the Salic Law), and the most direct male descendant of Louis. If his father died before the execution of the illuminations, the absence of a strong male king would be explained. The prominence of the Queen without the King may portray her role as regent for her son after the death of her husband. Though she was Queen of Navarre, she and her husband were only allowed to rule until their son reached twenty-one; her position paralleled that of Blanche as a queen who was very conscious of her role in raising a future king whose early years and coronation are illuminated in the first five Office miniatures.

There is no reason to believe that Jeanne could not have been the patron of her Book of Hours. Her family had a history of manuscript collection, especially by women. She also had the monetary resources required to pay for such an elaborately illuminated manuscript. She and her husband controlled large and prosperous territories. While Philippe spent most of his time on crusade or fighting in the war against France, Jeanne was in charge of administration of their properties and of directing their assets.<sup>19</sup> With her control of their money and her business experience, she could have easily directed the manuscript's commission herself.

In conclusion, Marcel Thomas' theory concerning the date and patronage of Jeanne de Navarre's Book of Hours is not supported by the information in the illuminations. Heraldic evidence suggests a later date, and the patronage of Philippe VI is unlikely due to the miniature's iconography. The illuminations continually undermine the king's power and often assert that of a woman. The emphasis on Jeanne and her son's legitimacy would not likely be a part of a book commissioned by one of the kings who kept her from the French throne. The iconography of the miniatures is very personal, and its intimacy also suggests that Jeanne may have been the patron. She had the resources and experience to accomplish such an expensive project, and there is no reason to ignore her as a possible patron of her own Book of Hours.

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<sup>1</sup> Marcel Thomas, "L'iconographie de Saint Louis dans les *Heures de Jeanne de Navarre*," *Septième centenaire de la mort de Saint Louis* (Paris: C.N.R.S., 1970) 230.

<sup>2</sup> Cockerell long ago proved that Jeanne II de Navarre was the manuscript's original owner and the person for whom the manuscript was designed. A short prayer on folio 151 recto describes the owner of the manuscript

as a Queen named Jeanne who ruled Navarre, "pro ancilla tua Johanna navarre regina." S. C. Cockerell, "Horae of Jeanne II Queen of Navarre," *A Descriptive Series of Fifty Manuscripts (nos. 51 to 100) in the Collection of Henry Yates Thompson* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1902) 155-6. Cockerell was able to identify this queen as Jeanne II of Navarre by study of the heraldic devices in the manuscript. The arms of France, Evreux (this set of arms belonged to Jeanne's husband, Philippe d'Evreux), and Navarre decorate the Book of Hours. Jeanne II was the only Jeanne of Navarre who was entitled to all three coats of arms.

- <sup>3</sup> Andrew W. Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France: Studies on Familial Order and the State* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 1981) 154.
- <sup>4</sup> Rachel Bard, *Navarra: The Durable Kingdom* (Reno, Nevada: University of Nevada Press, 1982). Also see Elizabeth M. Hallam, *Capetian France 987-1328* (London and New York: Longman, 1980) 284. Hallam also mentions that the next few kings of France strengthened the Salic Law which they claimed was based on laws of the Salian Franks. Much of the history of the Salic Law was falsified to give it more strength. For the history of the Salic Law, see Ralph Giesey, "The Juristic Basis of Dynastic Right to the French Throne," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, n.s. 51 (1961), pt 5: 1-47.
- <sup>5</sup> Bard 66.
- <sup>6</sup> Bard 66.
- <sup>7</sup> Bard 67.
- <sup>8</sup> Bard 68.
- <sup>9</sup> Hallam claims that several chroniclers believed that Isabella of France, wife of Edward II of England, brought charges of adultery against all of

her sisters-in-law (Blanche of Burgundy was charged with adultery; Joan of Burgundy was charged with keeping their secrets). Some suggest that she meant to discredit them to help her recently born son attain the throne of France. Her son, Edward III of England, came close to the throne, and his struggle for succession with Philippe of Valois began the Hundred Years War.

- <sup>10</sup> Hallam 283. Also see, C. T. Wood, "Queens, Queens and Kingship; An Enquiry into Theories of Royal Legitimacy in France and England," *Order and Innovation in the Middle Ages: essays in honour of J.R. Strayer*, eds. W. C. Jordan, B. McNab and T. Ruiz (Princeton, 1976) 385-400.
- <sup>11</sup> The connection of this illumination to the same scene in the Navarre Hours was made by Thomas (211).
- <sup>12</sup> Thomas 211.
- <sup>13</sup> Guillaume de Saint-Pathus, *La Vie et miracles de monseigneur saint-Louis*, transcribed by M. C. d'Espagne (Paris: Les Editions du Cèdre, 1971) 26.
- <sup>14</sup> Lewis 125.
- <sup>15</sup> Neither the research of Marcel Thomas nor my own has uncovered any comparable scenes. Thomas 215.
- <sup>16</sup> Margaret Wade Labarge, *Saint Louis: Louis IX, Most Christian King of France* (Boston and Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1968) 34.
- <sup>17</sup> Thomas 215.
- <sup>18</sup> Thomas 230.
- <sup>19</sup> Bard 69.



Figure 1. Unknown, *Education of St. Louis*, from the *Hours of Jeanne de Navarre*, 1336-1349, glair and gold on vellum, 7" x 5 1/4", Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS n.a. lat. 3145, fol. 85v.



Figure 2. Jean Pucelle, *St. Louis Disciplined by His Confessor*, from the *Hours of Jeanne d' Evreux*, 1336-1349, grisailles on vellum, 3 5/8" x 2 3/8", New York, the Cloisters Collection, 54.1.2, fol. 103.



Figure 3. Unknown, *Education of St. Louis*, from *La vie et les miracles de monseigneur saint-Louis*, early 14th century, glair on vellum, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS fr. 5716, fol. 16.

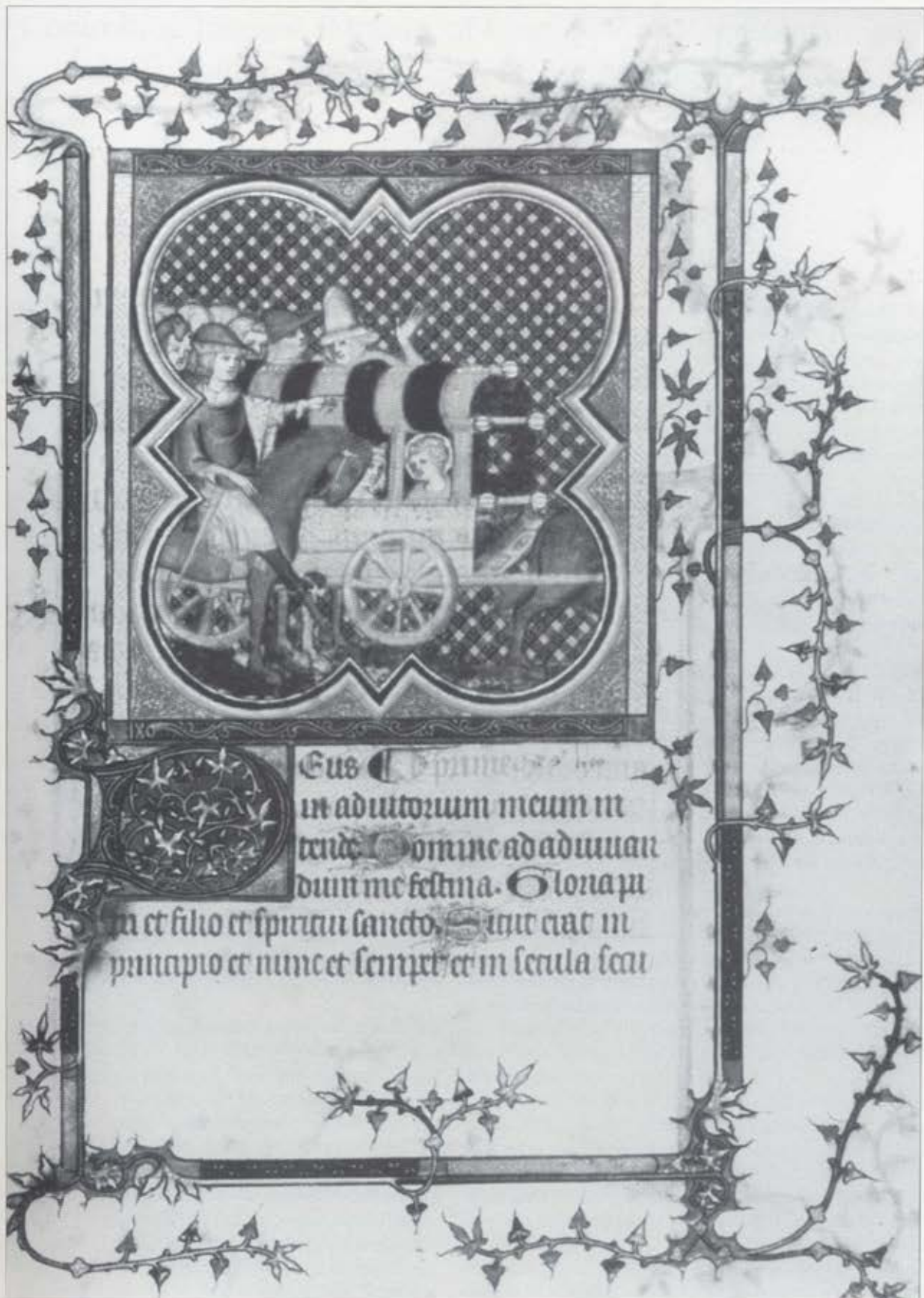


Figure 4. Unknown, *St. Louis and Blanche of Castille Riding to Reims for the Coronation*, from the *Hours of Jeanne de Navarre*, 1336-1349, glair and gold on vellum, 7" x 5 1/4", Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS n.a. lat. 3145, fol. 97.