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## 09, Typological Images and Thought

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*Typological Images and Thought*  
Courtney Rhoades

Portland State University's Kerver Book of Hours contains typological images in sets of three. Typological images are more commonly displayed in sets of two consisting of a type and an antitype. Typological thought uses images from the Hebrew Bible placed alongside the images of the New Testament in order to act as a prophecy.<sup>1</sup> By viewing the Hebrew Bible as a prophecy for the New Testament, the church is able to justify the existence of the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew Bible must be preserved in order for it to be interpreted, and the Book of Hours was used as a tool for preservation.<sup>1</sup>

In the Book of Hours printed by Kerver, two of the images are depictions from the Hebrew Bible, and one image positioned between the two depicts an image from the New Testament. These typological images are located on folio g5v through k7v and can be identified using the *Biblia Pauperum*. The 1405 *Biblia Pauperum*, for example, illustrated by the Master of the Hours of Margaret of Cleves, contains three miniatures on each recto, similar to those found in the Kerver Book of Hours.<sup>2</sup>

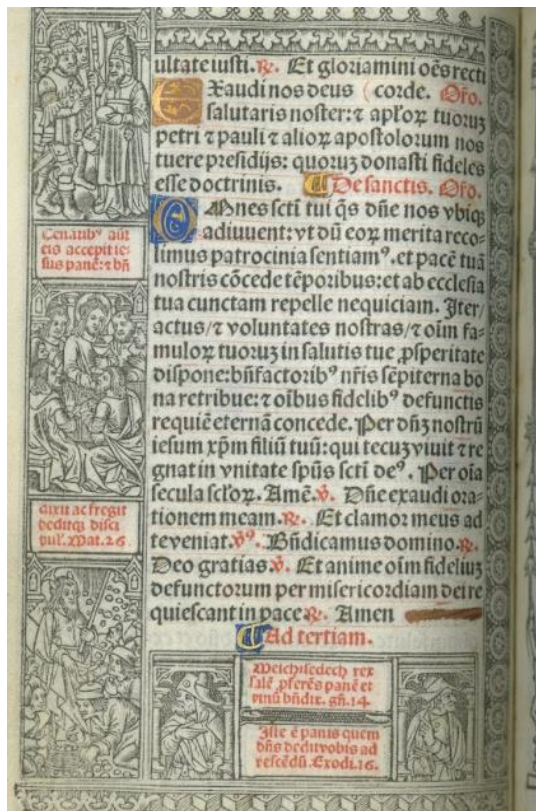
The Last Supper appears on folio i1v. Three typological images are aligned into a column with Latin printed between the images. The topmost image is the Bringing of the Bread and Wine by the High Priest. The center images show Christ at the center of a table sharing food with surrounding figures in the Last Supper. The third image at the bottom of the column is the Bestowing of Manna from Heaven with Moses taking center. Each image shows a holy figure from different points in history offering bread, a symbol of sacrifice, to individuals in need. Both the Bringing of Bread and Wine to Abraham and the Bestowing of Bread from Heaven by Moses

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<sup>1</sup> Rodney Stenning Edgecombe, *Typology and After: A Taxonomy of Variants*, 5.

<sup>2</sup> *Biblia Pauperum*, British Library Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts.

foreshadow the sacrifice of the body of Christ through bread. The symbol of bread as holy sacrifice is emphasized through the three images.

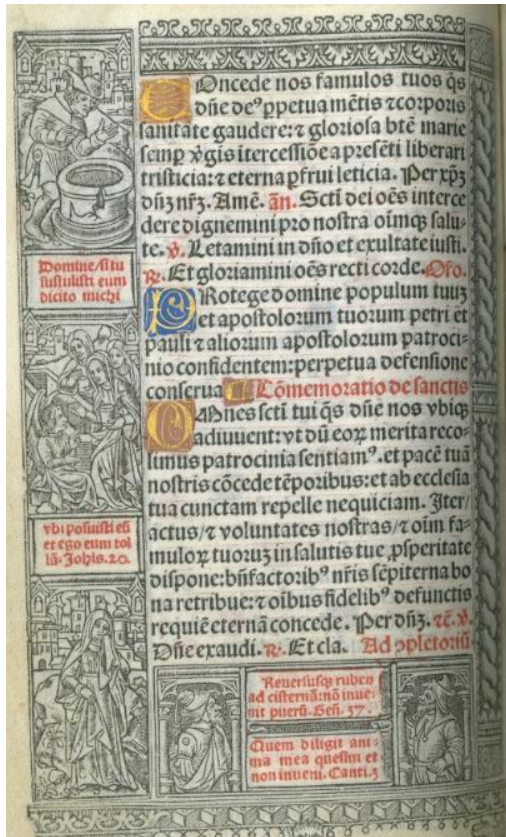


**Left margin: Bringing of Bread and Wine by the High Priest**

**The Last Supper**

**Bestowing of Manna from Heaven**

Grieving figures are shown on folio k3v with three images aligned in a column on the left side of the page. The top image is Reuben Grieving after Failing to Find Joseph in the Well. In the Hebrew Bible Reuben returned to the well to save Joseph only to find him gone. The second image continues the theme of grieving with the Holy Women at the Tomb. They arrive in grief to anoint the body of Christ and encounter an angel that tells them not to grieve as Christ has risen. The final image is of the Bride Seeking Her Beloved. The bride awakens to meet her beloved only to find that he is gone. The first and third images are from the Hebrew Bible and represent grief over the loss of someone loved. The second image of Christ represents this same grief but with a new hope of new life and the relief of sadness and loss.



**Left margin: Reuben Grieving after Failing to Find Joseph in the Well**

**The Holy Women at the Tomb**

**Bride Seeking Her Beloved**

Usually typological images come in pairs, yet as we have seen the Kerver images are rendered in sets of three, two from the Hebrew Bible and one from the New Testament. These images are linked by an underlying theme such as sacrifice and grief. The figures of literature and art must stand for more than themselves, in this case the Hebrew Bible stood for events that were to come in the New Testament.<sup>3</sup> Christianity gave meaning and hope for the people in the middle ages when faced with hardships, suffering and death.<sup>4</sup> Preserving this hope through art gave them something tangible for their faith and devotion. It was also important to ensure the existence of the Hebrew Bible did not discourage people from following the Christian faith.

Kerver used typological thought that was already set in place to insert meaning into the images he included alongside the text within the Book of Hours. Images of bread bestowed upon

<sup>3</sup> Morton W. Bloomfield, *Symbolism in Medieval Literature*, 74.

<sup>4</sup> Bloomfield, 75.

the people through Jesus and Moses gives a sense of connection between followers and God and having these existing ideas as tangible images reminds the readers of this connection. The holder of the Book of Hours is also comforted in grief through the images of sorrow in the Hebrew Bible which is then contrasted through hope and rebirth through the rising of Jesus. These images in the Kerver Book of Hours perhaps provided comfort to their original viewers, reminding them of the typological idea that current sorrows may become new beginnings as seen in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament.

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