

The Royal Three: Coming to TEFAF Online 2021



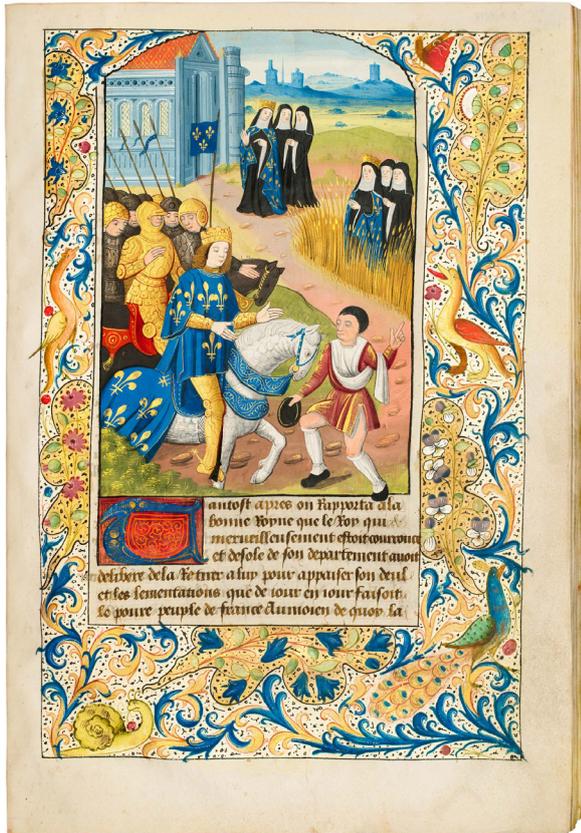
Jean Bouchet, *Life of St. Radegund*, including her Office, Mass, and Miracles accompanied by dedicatory poems, illuminated by the Master of St. Radegund, made for King Charles VIII and his wife Anne de Bretagne. France, Poitiers, c. 1496-1498.

Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books AG is delighted to return to TEFAF Online this September with a royal trio, exemplifying the highest quality of early book-illumination. Connected by their regal provenance, these three objects offer art-lovers and collectors the chance to experience the private luxury book of a European monarch.

Made for the King of France, Charles VIII, the *Life of St. Radegund* is an especially stunning manuscript with arresting illumination, including representations of the monarchs themselves in some of the miniatures. Illuminated by a Poitevin miniaturist, now dubbed the Master of Radegund, this manuscript is of prime importance to the history of France.

Radegund (518-587), around whom the text centres, was the daughter of the Prince of Thuringia, and was taken prisoner by invading Franks. Though she wished to devote her life to God, she consented to marry the despotic Clothaire “for the sake of France”, the country to whom she devoted herself once she became queen. The story takes a turn, however, when Clothaire murders her younger brother, prompting Radegund to flee and take refuge with the Bishop of Noyon, then founding a convent

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The earliest work presented here, the *Compendium* made for King Juan II of Castile and Leon, was intended as a kind of ‘Mirror of Princes’, a guide for Juan’s development as a monarch. As well as advice on how to govern, it includes a breakdown of the hierarchy of society, and the *res publicae*. It’s clear that the author, an unknown adviser to the king, is keen to give an opinion on how the kingdom should be run. He even levels critiques at the monarch, complaining of an injustice inflicted upon him: a mistaken imprisonment. Thus, the work provides a valuable insight into life in medieval Europe.

Compendium made for Juan II, King of Castile and Leon, in two parts followed by a third part with tables, illuminated manuscript in Latin on vellum. Spain, Castile, c. 1425.

near Poitiers where she spent the remaining years of her life. Though Radegund’s story has tragic elements, her piety and commitment to France was surely an important factor in the King’s decision to commission this work, an impressive artistic achievement. The artist’s style is characterised by a good use of space, volume, and dimensions, with a luxurious palette of azure, rose, and the lavish application of gold.

This is one of the finest books presented to King Charles VIII, a true bibliophile, and it even bears the arms of Queen Anne de Bretagne, who likely brought the manuscript with her to Brittany after the King’s death. The writer has also added a personal touch to the work with the expression of the wish that the Queen might give birth to a “*beau dauphin*”, after her two sons had died the year before.



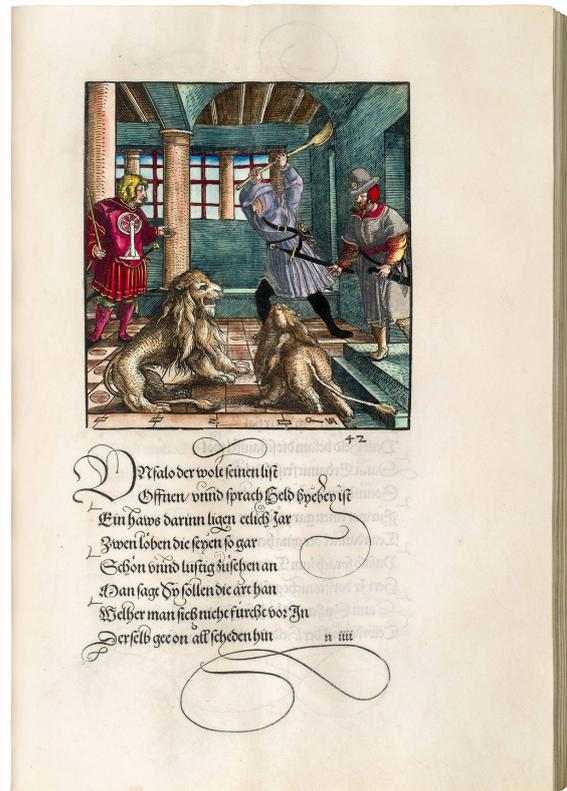
Accompanying the bold remarks of the writer are many fascinating and charming illustrations, portraying the king himself. We see the Juan II as law-giver, surrounded by lawyers and learned men, and as a governor, discussing matters with hooded men, as two young clerks make notes on a scroll. Included with these vignettes is a fascinating map of the known-world, with an expansive ocean taking up half the globe.



Compendium made for Juan II, King of Castile and Leon, in two parts followed by a third part with tables, illuminated manuscript in Latin on vellum.
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The final masterpiece to be exhibited at TEFAF Online this September is this 'Princes' edition' of Emperor Maximilian I's *Theuerdank*, a work of several artists and contributors that served as the embodiment of the ruler's great leadership. As Maximilian was concerned by his enduring image and fame on the European stage, he sought to create a narrative that would present him as a heroic, Arthurian knight and a strong ruler.

The story of *Theuerdank*, a knight who ventures through numerous perils to win the heart of Queen Erreich, mirrors closely the journey that Maximilian himself made in 1477 to marry Mary of Burgundy, daughter of Charles the Bold. Through fierce adversity the heroic triumphs, and the narrative is one of epic proportions, intended to present the Emperor in a glorious light.



Theuerdank – Maximilian I, *Die geuerlicheiten und einsteils geschichten des loblichen streytparen und hochberumbten helds und Ritters Tewrdannckhs*, edited by Melchior Pfintzing. “Nürnberg” [Augsburg]: Johann Schönsperger, 1 March 1517. First edition, printed on vellum, hand-coloured and illuminated.

Despite its propagandistic qualities, this book was privately printed in 300 paper and 40 vellum copies and not intended for sale: rather, it was used to commemorate the Emperor’s reign. This is one of only six known complete illuminated vellum copies.

Not only are the illustrations extremely detailed, crafted by leading woodcut artists of the era, but Maximilian also commissioned the ‘Theuerdankschrift’, a calligraphic fraktur type, to tell the story. These vellum, luxury copies were intended as gifts for the sovereigns of the German realm and contain many exciting, hand-coloured illustrations.

European court politics in the 15th- and 16th- centuries were, of course, highly intertwined, and the commissioners and recipients of these objects are tangentially linked. Juan II’s great grandson, Charles V, took over as Holy Roman Emperor after Maximilian I, for example. Additionally, Maximilian was married to Anne de Bretagne from 1490 until Charles VIII forced the duchess to renounce her marriage, allowing her to wed the French King. Yet, in this complicated web of politics weaves the continuing thread of bibliophily, and the creation of beautiful books with the purpose of furthering royal legacies, policies, and reputations through the ages.

DR. JÖRN GÜNTHER · RARE BOOKS AG
Manuskripte und seltene Bücher

Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books AG

Notes to editors:

Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books AG will be exhibiting at TEFAF Online from the 9th to the 13th of September 2021, with a preview day on the 8th of September.

Dr. Jörn Günther's passion for medieval books and manuscripts predates the establishment of his art dealership in 1990. With a team of specialists at the helm, Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books provides scholarly services, expert advice, long-term support on the development of collections, and the acquisition and sale of manuscripts, miniatures, and rare early printed books from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

After a lifetime of bibliophilia and 40 years of scholarly pursuit, Dr. Jörn Günther has earned a reputation as one of the world's foremost specialists and voices of authority in his field. He has been instrumental in the composition of some of the best collections worldwide, and has worked with leading international museums and institutions, such as New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art and the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, and alongside private collectors on a quest to create and develop their own collections.

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Press

Dr. Jörn Günther is a specialist in rare books and manuscripts. He is a confident spokesperson and is available for comment, television and radio interviews before and throughout the duration of the fair.

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