

Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books Will Exhibit Rare Manuscripts at TEFAF NY

[Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books](#) returns to [TEFAF New York](#) (27-31 October 2018, stand 336) with an exquisite selection of museum quality, medieval and Renaissance illuminated manuscripts, miniatures, and early printed books. At the core of this year's exhibition are extremely rare, unique manuscripts of important literary works that have become beloved classics over the centuries. Readers all over the world continue to read, interpret and appreciate works by Ovid, Boccaccio, and Livy, making these beautifully painted books all the more significant for present-day collectors.

The line-up of classics begins with a singular and extremely rare compilation of five of Ovid's *Heroides*, in French translation by Octovien de Saint-Gelais, made for Anne of Brittany, queen consort of France. The letters by abandoned women to their faithless lovers, including the stories of Ariadne, Dido, and Oenone, are part of Ovid's early work. The subject matter, the heroines of antiquity telling events from their - female - perspective, might have encouraged Saint-Gelais to offer these translations to the Queen, whose own life was just as dramatically at the mercy of men as Ovid's female letter-writers. Heiress of Brittany, Anne was forced to marry Charles VIII and agree

that, if widowed, she would remarry only his successor. The Ovid translations are bound in one volume, together with three French poems that were presumably written for an exclusive audience, possibly explaining the extreme rarity of this compilation. The manuscript includes eight full-page compositions with outstanding illumination by the Master of the *Chronique scandaleuse*. One of the full-page miniatures shows Anne of Brittany herself, portrayed with her identified court ladies. This extraordinary manuscript has only recently come on the market and will be presented at TEFAF New York for the first time with an asking price of 1,200,000 euro.

Another timeless classic is Giovanni Boccaccio's collection of stories about the fortunes and calamities of the rich and famous, translated into French as *Des cas des nobles hommes et femmes*. The text starts with the biblical Adam, continues with mythological and historical figures from Antiquity, and concludes with several of Boccaccio's own 14th-century Florentine contemporaries. This manuscript is a notable addition to the Parisian luxury books associated with an artist who is commonly referred to as Maître François. Its miniatures mark the openings of the nine books of Boccaccio's work, which offers a moral commentary on overcoming misfortune by adhering to virtue. At the French princely courts, the destinies of famous men and women of all ages were read as popular, inspiring models. This beautiful manuscript is on the market at an asking price of 650,000 euro.

Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books will also bring to New York an extraordinary copy of Livy's *History of Rome*, translated into French as *Les décades*. Its text is a copy of the first translation of any major classical author into French, originally commissioned by the French King John II the Good. The manuscript is outstanding not only in historical importance, but also in size. The sheer dimensions of this 15th-century manuscript make it a showstopper highlight of the exhibition. Measuring 450 x 318 mm and with 87 large miniatures, this manuscript is the most profusely illustrated of all known copies of Livy. The extremely fine 16th-century binding *à la fanfare* is equally spectacular.

The engaging illustrations are a medieval feast for the eyes in a profusion of colour, evoking a world of chivalric splendour with knights in armour, kings, and maidens, battle scenes, jousts, and banquets. Extraordinarily, on the last leaf of the book, the makers of this manuscript are not only named, but are also pictured, including a self-portrait of the artist, a portrait of the scribe, and a portrait of their patron. This outstanding work is on the market at an asking price of 1,650,000 euro.

Image: Boccaccio, *Des cas des nobles hommes et femmes*. France, Paris, c. 1470. Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books AG. EUR 650,000