

5 Questions: book dealer Dr Jorn Gunther | Antiques Trade Gazette

1 How did you get your start?

When I was 14, my father, who was a collector of historic materials, came home with a medieval manuscript. It was the *Weltchronik* (World Chronicle) by Rudolf von Ems (1200-54), a German knight and prolific writer. When I first saw it, I was so drawn into its world that I knew illuminated manuscripts would become a big part of my future. Eventually, the manuscript became my very first important sale in 1988. It is now in the collection of the J Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

2 How has the market changed in your experience?

I have the impression that the medium price segment has crumbled. Many buyers used to focus on a single theme. There were people who amassed early printed books from Strasbourg only, for example. It seems like this type of collector has disappeared. Now, it is all about the high-end.

3 What is one great discovery you have made?

The *Livre des faits du bon chevalier Jacques de Lalaing*, a deluxe manuscript that was probably written in the

1480s, left unfinished and illuminated some 30 years later by Simon Bening and his workshop.

The text and its magnificent images illustrate the exploits of Jacques de Lalaing, the most exemplary Burgundian knight and one of the best tournament fighters ever. It took me 30 years to get to this book, which was part of a private collection and had never been on the market before. It is now in the Getty collection, and, because I absolutely loved the manuscript, we also took an image as the main image on our company website.



The 'Livre des faits du bon chevalier Jacques de Lalaing' which was discovered by Dr Jörn Günther and is now in the Getty collection.

4 Who do you admire in the trade?

I admire Chilean businessman Alvaro Saieh a great deal for his passion. With great knowledge and enthusiasm, he built up the best collection of Italian gold-ground paintings, miniatures and manuscripts worldwide.

5 How far will you travel to buy an object?

To the moon and back!

guenther-rarebooks.com

If you would like to be featured in 5 Questions, please contact francesallitt@antiquetrade gazette.com