

Spotlight

on two books with
'imperial' content



Annunciation to the Shepherds from
Book of Hours, use of Cambrai, c. 1520, f. 49v

Piety and Humor

Book of Hours, use of Cambrai, c. 1520.



In all probability, this is an miniature featuring the commissioner

This small book (115 x 80 mm) in excellent condition was made for a man living in the diocese of Cambrai (today France). Most of the miniatures are surrounded by exquisite Ghent-Bruges style borders consisting of *trompe-l'oeil* flowers, foliage, insects, butterflies and other animals on gilt ground. Exquisite miniatures remind the viewer how brief life can be and to be prepared to face one's maker.



Three living kings meet three dead , f. 93r



The two illuminators, one of whom came from the circle of the Master of Charles V, give an interesting insight in early 16th century manuscript painting. Several miniatures are rendered in Renaissance style characterized by attention paid to background scenery and architecture.

This richly illuminated treasure on vellum features 14 large and 52 smaller miniatures.

David in penitence, f. 72v

Extraordinary in this codex is a series of, often, humorous miniatures illustrating the Nine Lessons of the Office of the Dead. The latter are highly fascinating both in terms of their visual quality and their contents, often emphasized with text scrolls. Lesson 6 “Souls in Purgatory” (next page to the right) for instance shows a cleric among the animated crowd of personified souls. Another miniature with entertaining character contains a man on his deathbed between a very ferocious looking devil, appearing from under the bed, and an angel lingering above it (next page to the left).



Lesson 3: God speaking to Job, text scroll: *memento homino quia cines et in pulvere reverte*, and: *manus tue domine fecerunt me*



Lesson 7: A man on his deathbed in the presence of his relatives. A priest administers the last rites, while a devil and angel are ready to take on the soul. *libera me domine, et pone me iuxta te* (f. 121v)



Lesson 6: Souls in Purgatory, *constituas mihi, tempus in quo recorderis* (f. 114v) thou would set me a time in which thou would remember me



Lesson 5: Above: Birth: *Homo natus de muliere*; below: Death: *Brevi vivens tempus*, in the centre to the right: *Merci*: a beggar on crutches entering the room: *Repletus multis miseriis*. (f. 113v, Bernard of Clairvaux)



Lesson 4: Priests praying at a funeral service, while one finishes his prayer: *Responde mihi*. the soul is already lost, taken by a devil: *Condemnatus sum*. (f. 112r)



Among the numerous miniatures the adoration of the Holy Sacrament stands out. The eagle on the armor of the emperor identifies him as the Holy Roman Emperor, presumably Maximilian I.

He had specially venerated the H. Sacrament since a pledge made when he had fallen ill in 1484.

Holy Sacrament adored by a bishop, pope, emperor and a layman (f. 209v)

A Book Commissioned by the Emperor Maximilian I

Wolfgang von Maen, *Das leiden Jesu Christi unnser erslösers*. Augsburg: Johann Schönsperger the younger, 1515, first edition, printed on vellum.



This finely printed book was most likely the personal copy of Emperor Maximilian I. Nearly half of the 68 leaves of the book (270 x 149 mm) consist of full-page woodcuts by the artists Hans Schäuferlein, Hans Burgkmair and Jörg Breu the Elder, all of them residing in Augsburg.

The coat of arms of Emperor Maximilian I, the only miniature of this book, is elaborately illuminated. It is headed with the large imperial crown and surrounded by the chain of the Order of the Golden Fleece. The breathtaking lapis lazuli coloured ground and the architectural frame confer this miniature precious allure. In addition there are 30 woodcuts.





The opposite page also stands out by its colouring: here Hans Burgkmaier depicted the author kneeling in front of the emperor while presenting him the book. In addition to the imperial arms he added the arms of Austria.

Only the emperor received a copy printed on vellum, as did his sister Duchess Kunigunde (now Munich, BSB); a third one always remained in Augsburg (Staats – und Stadtbibliothek).



Two further examples of the woodcuts featured in the book *Das leiden Jesu Christi unnsers erlösers*: On the left hand-side the scene “Agony in the Garden”. On the right hand-side the high priest Caiaphas addressing the scribes and the elders.