



Spotlight on some of our finest miniatures

DR. JÖRN GÜNTHER · RARE BOOKS AG

Manuscripts & Rare Books

Basel & Stalden





On view at

Frieze Masters, London,
Stand E3

October 5th – 8th
2017

and

Tefaf, New York, Stand 55
October 28th – November 1st
2017

Twelve apostles in an initial M



*Michi autem nimis honoratis sunt
amici tui*

‘But to me thy friends, O God, are
made exceedingly honourable’
(Ps. 138:17)

First chant sung at mass for the feasts
of various of the apostles.

Vellum leaf from a Gradual,
illuminated by Jacobellus, so-called
Muriolus, of Salerno.
Italy, Bologna, c. 1290

490 x 340 mm



Newly attributed to

Jacobus Muriolus ('little mouse') of
Salerno worked as a copyist of music and
text as well as illuminator

He signed two choirbooks that are now in
Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum,
ms. Ludwig VI.I 83.MH.84
and in Brussels, Conservatorium,
ms. B-BC-99287.

Both volumes were made for Dominican
use in Bologna and localize the artist in
that city at that time. Our leaf exhibits
similar characteristics to the illumination
and dates therefore also to
c. 1270



St. Margaret worshipped by two nuns in an initial A

Ad te levavi animam meam

‘To thee, O Lord, I have lifted up my soul’

First chant for Advent Sunday – a period of great
joy preparing for the birth of Christ.

Vellum leaf from a Gradual,
for use by Cistercian Nuns

Bohemia, c. 1320

445 x 265 mm



Margaret, the saintly martyr, coronated by an angel in heaven

Beautiful Margaret refused marriage proposals from a local prefect – as she preferred to devote her life to Christ. She was then imprisoned and tortured. Having been swallowed by a dragon, prayers helped her to escape his belly unharmed

She thus became the patron saint of pregnant women and supposedly helps at childbirth

Interestingly, the dragon that here forms the letter's body, stretches out his claw as if to prevent the angel from placing the crown on Margaret's head

Four sister leaves are known, two of which at the Princeton Art Museum



Apparently, prayers helped in taming frightening animals that have become just adorable.

Details from the initial A on a vellum leaf from a Gradual, Bohemia, c. 1320,





Virgin Saint being crowned at the moment of her martyrdom, in the initial V

*Veni sponsa Christi accipe coronam quam tibi
dominus preparavit pro cuius*

‘Come, thou bride of Christ, accept the crown
which the Lord has prepared for you’

Chant for the Common of Virgin Martyrs

Vellum leaf from a Sanctorale illuminated by the
Master of the Montepulciano Gradual.

Italy, Florence, c. 1325-1335,

506 x 365 mm

Possibly made for Santa Trinita in Florence



The initial V encloses a female saint with a delicately shaded blue-grey face, kneeling in prayer, and gazing upward towards an angel that holds out the crown of martyrdom to place it on her head.

Behind her a soldier with a raised sword is ready to decapitate her. His body is partly hidden behind the initial so that it looks as if he has to cut through the letter before he can accomplish the slaughter.

The artist, bold and innovative, has only in recent years been identified as the Master of the Montepulciano Gradual, named after two volumes in the Museo Civico in Montepulciano (H/2 and I).

Italy, Florence, c. 1325-1335



St. Peter

vellum leaf from the Chester Beatty
Book of Hours, illuminated by the
Mazarine Master

Opening of the Suffrage to St. Peter:

*Beatus es, Symon Bariona, quia caro et sanguis non
revelavi tibi...*

‘Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because
flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee,
but my Father who is in heaven
says to thee: Thou art Peter; and upon this
rock I will build my church’

France, Paris, 1408
176 x 130 mm



This portrait is a fine witness to the Mazarine Master's ability to convey sense and refinement. He provided a solemn image of the first Christian pope, who is seated on a throne with a large key in his right hand and presenting an open book with his left. The key refers to Jesus' statement to Peter in Matthew 16:19, "I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven."

The miniature unites a graceful flow with upright formality. It is a typical example of the International Gothic Style. The meticulous illustration of the details shows this master's artistic talents, much sought after by a highly distinguished clientele.

The Mazarine Master's works were initially united with the Boucicaut Master's oeuvre until their subtle personalities were separated and defined.

Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane

Full-page miniature on vellum from a
Book of Hours

The artist applied colour fluidly, but not in too many layers. Although he used a great deal of gold, his painting rather resembles a watercolour. The palette is dominated by a variety of blue and green hues. Cleverly placed red zones strategically predetermine a sigmoid eye movement from the lower right to the upper right, touching and lingering, of course on the praying Christ.

Spain, c. 1480-1500

134 x 98 mm



Betrayal and arrest of Christ

Full-page miniature on vellum from a
Book of Hours

The Franco-Flemish impact in these two miniatures that likely came from Spain (possibly Valencia), is tangible in various aspects.

Quite obviously both topics are inspired by Flemish or French models but the intricacy of the fine border tendrils interwoven with lush acanthus leaves recalls Italian illumination.

The miniatures and their fine border decoration may be related to two leaves from a Book of Hours in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge (Marlay cuttings Sp. 1a-b) attributed to an illuminator working in Valencia.

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