



Spotlight Light in Midwinter

Christmas Exhibition
3-14 December
at Dr. Jörn Günther Antiquariat

Spalenberg 55, 4051 Basel

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

info@guenther-rarebooks.com · www.guenther-rarebooks.com



Light in Midwinter

Celebrated in the Fauquier Hours
and fine, newly acquired miniatures



(details) The Nativity,
Fauquier Hours, f. 49v
France, Besançon or Amiens (?), c. 1420-
1440, 137 ff. , 180 x 130 (105 x 70) mm

The Fauquier Book of Hours is illuminated by two great artists, painting 13 miniatures of exceptional beauty. On pages no larger than 180 x 130 mm, full stories unfold. We present two of them here.

This manuscript had not been seen in public for more than 50 years (see Spotlight "Three beauties").

Rediscovered by Dr. Jörn Günther, the book was recently presented to great acclaim in London and New York.

Come and see it now during our Christmas exhibition in Basel!

Nativity, Fauquier Hours, f. 49v
France, Besançon or Amiens (?), c. 1420-1440, 137 ff., 180 x 130 (105 x 70) mm





With the ownership mark of the Fauquier family of Poligny in the French Jura, this Book of Hours presents a Nativity scene according to the vision of St. Bridget of Sweden (d. 1373, published in her *Revelations*). Bridget saw how Mary gave birth to Jesus while on her knees in prayer, miraculously without pain. The baby then lay naked on the ground on the seam of his mother's mantle, while divine light emanated from the holy baby, radiating into the night.

As Christ is the light of the world, no candle is needed.



Golden light,
(Detail) The Nativity, Fauquier
Hours, f. 49v
France, Besançon or Amiens
(?), c. 1420-1440, 137 ff. , 180
x 130 (105 x 70) mm





The vision ends in celebration with Joseph and Mary adoring the newborn on bended knee ... with immense joy.

Fauquier Hours, f. 49v
France, Besançon or Amiens (?), c. 1420-1440, 137 ff. , 180 x 130 (105 x 70) mm

The ox and donkey
are a reference to the prophecy of Isaiah: The ox
knows his owner, and the ass his master's crib....

Other apocryphal texts have the ass and the ox
worshiping the Christ child. Such writings had
enormous impact on medieval art and
depictions of the Nativity.

(Detail) The Nativity, f. 49v
Fauquier Hours,
France, Besançon or Amiens (?), c. 1420-1440, 137 ff. ,
180 x 130 (105 x 70) mm



By following a star, the three Magi came from the East to find Jesus in a simple shed. In art, the three Magi are represented as Kings who pay the child their respects, recognizing him as King of the earth.

The Evangelist Matthew tells the story in his Gospel 2:1-22



Adoration by the Magi, f. 52v
France, Besançon or Amiens (?), c. 1420-
1440, 137 ff. , 180 x 130 (105 x 70) mm

The birds on the roof and the crowded retinue show that the artist did not hesitate to add numerous details, as one would do on large medieval triptychs and altarpieces; this artist is thought to have been a panel painter too.

Adoration of the Magi, f. 52v
Fauquier Hours,
France, Besançon or Amiens
(?), c. 1420-1440, 137 ff., 180
x 130 (105 x 70) mm





Upon their arrival, the kings kneel down and pay the child homage.

They offer him valuable gifts to honour him: gold (precious metal), frankincense (expensive perfume), and myrrh (valuable anointing oil).

By taking off their golden crowns, a symbol of their royalty, the kings emphasize their respect for God's son.

(Detail) Adoration of the Magi, f. 52v
Fauquier Hours,
France, Besançon or Amiens
(?), c. 1420-1440, 137 ff., 180
x 130 (105 x 70) mm





The oldest king kisses the baby's foot. The child reaches out in a childlike, playful gesture, simply touching the man's head while, with his right hand, he makes a sign of blessing.

This painter knows how to convey a story.

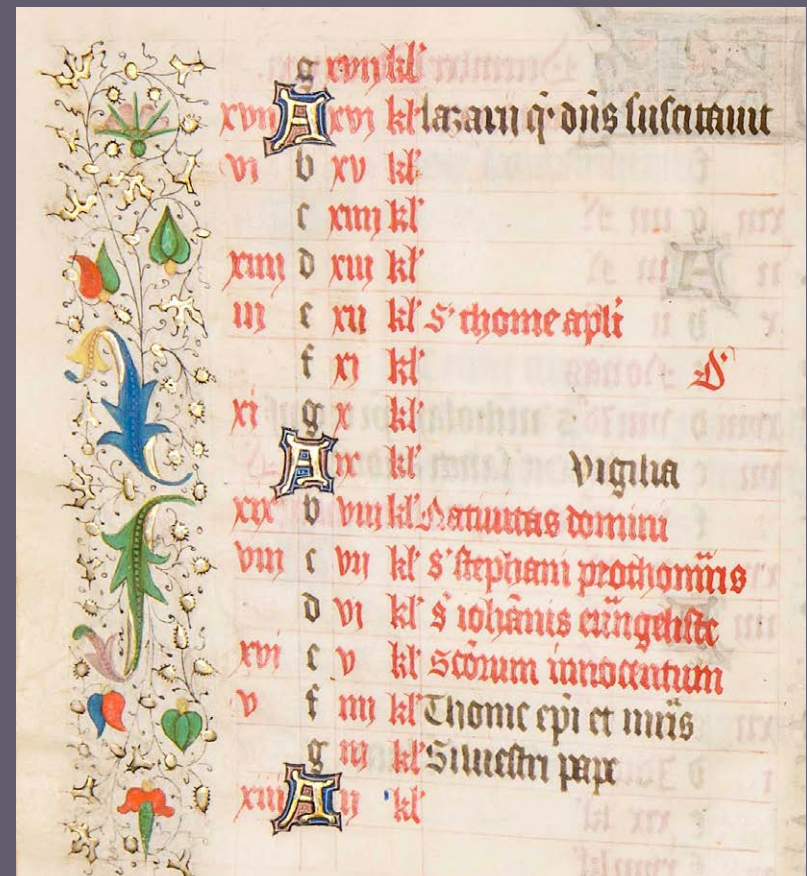
Adoration of the Magi, f. 52v
(Enlarged Details)
Fauquier Hours,
France, Besançon or Amiens (?), c. 1420-
1440, 137 ff., 180 x 130 (105 x 70) mm



Adoration of the Magi, f. 52v
(Enlarged Details)
Fauquier Hours,
France, Besançon or Amiens
(?), c. 1420-1440, 137 ff., 180 x
130 (105 x 70) mm



Golden gifts contrast with the Holy Family's simple jug.



In the Western church calendar, these events are commemorated as the feast of the Nativity on 25 December and of Epiphany on 6 January . On 28 December, the Massacre of the Innocents tells another story, when the Holy Family escaped into safety to Egypt.

Nativitas Domini: 25 December
Sanctorum Innocentium: 28 December
Epiphania Domini: 6 January

The celebration continues...



3 single leaves:
The Annunciation,
Adoration of the Magi, and
Flight into Egypt. All
painted by the Dunois
Master who worked in Paris,
c. 1440



Annunciation,
Full-page miniature painted by Jehan
Haincelin, also known as the
Dunois Master,
Paris, c. 1440

The Archangel Gabriel, messenger from God, kneels before the Virgin. He is richly dressed in a red cape trimmed with gold brocade and gems, closed by a large jewelled clasp. Mary, modest and devout, kneels at her lectern before her open prayer book. Above, the Holy Spirit descends in golden beams.

This miniature has been sold.



An enlarged detail of Gabriel's face, shows this gifted artist to be an accomplished portraitist and quite powerful in his modelling.

(Detail) The Annunciation,
Full-page miniature painted by Jehan Haincelin, also
known as the Dunois Master,
Paris, c. 1440



Two more full-page miniatures tell the story of the Three Magi and the Flight into Egypt, part of a series of miniatures attributed to the Dunois Master /Jehan Haincelin and his workshop.

Paris, c. 1440, 193 x 145 mm



The Adoration of the Magi and the Flight into Egypt by the Dunois Master show minutely rendered details of clothing and landscape.

Paris, c. 1440,
193 x 145 mm





The Kings offer their gifts. The eldest king presents a casket full of gold coins. Baby Jesus reaches into the box with childlike curiosity. The king's bright coat, sumptuously trimmed and lined with ermine, contrasts remarkably with the child's nudity. The other kings hold golden goblets that recall liturgical vessels.

(Enlarged Detail) The Adoration of the Magi, Dunois Master, Paris, c. 1440, 193 x 145 mm



Details in the margin continue the story told in the miniature, referring to the retinue of the Kings, who came with servants, horses, and camels.

The Adoration of the Magi, Dunois Master, Paris, c. 1440, 193 x 145 mm



Joseph has been warned to take Jesus and Mary to Egypt. The family must flee the wrath of King Herod who orders all new born babies to be killed - intensely jealous and afraid someone will take his throne. In the medieval calendar, this event is commemorated on 28 December.

The Flight into Egypt,
Dunois Master, Paris, c. 1440, 193 x 145 mm



Such miniatures are the supreme representatives of French religious art and show a mastery of expression of spiritual depth. As a kind of jewel, even in this smaller form, they successfully achieve a monumental effect.

(Enlarged Detail) The Flight into Egypt,
Dunois Master, Paris, c. 1440, 193 x 145 mm



Christmas 2018

Spotlight

Light in Midwinter

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

info@guenther-rarebooks.com · www.guenther-rarebooks.com