

MANUSCRIPTS ON MY MIND

News from the



No. 46 September 2025 📖 Editor's Remarks 📖 New Publications 📖 Exhibitions 📖 Conferences 📖 Projects 📖 etc.

📖 Editor's Remarks:

DEAR COLLEAGUES AND MANUSCRIPT LOVERS,

FOR SOME REASON I HAVE HORSES ON THE MIND THIS EVENING. It's interesting how many scenarios in Roman law involve them: for example, in Book 9 of the Digest at **Dig. 9.2.8.1**: "If a mule driver cannot control his mules because he is inexperienced and as a result they run down somebody's slave, he is generally said to be liable on grounds of negligence," graphically illustrated **at right** by a reader in Amiens 347.



Amiens BM,
MS 347, fol. 83v:



Paris BnF
Latin 15421 fol. 142v

At **Dig. 21.1.38** it is stated that those selling beasts of burden must not only declare if they have any defect or disease, but also deliver them in their best trappings, which, **at left**, another reader has done his best to portray as some sorts of fancy bands wound around the horse's body, as well as brushing out the tail. On the right, at **Dig. 13.6.23** the horse in profile was lent to someone for a journey, and if it suffers some deterioration along the way that was not the borrower's fault, he is not liable.

Lastly, at **Dig. 19.2.13pr**, the drawing **on the right** precedes a calamitous accident, in which the driver of the horse-drawn coach overturned it and killed a slave; we recognize the upended vehicle but are spared the bloody results. We find that readers have varying skill-sets but all manage to produce recognizable results.



Paris BnF
Latin 4461 fol. 182r



Paris BnF
Latin 4461, fol. 200v

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY AND LAST ITERATION OF THE ST. LOUIS CONFERENCE ON MANUSCRIPT STUDIES took place June 8–11, 2025, and evoked bittersweet emotions. **Atria Larson** valiantly put together a representative array of manuscript panels, the first two of which on Tuesday, June 10, were **Studies of Medieval Legal Manuscripts in Honor of Susan L'Engle**, which surprised and humbled me. In the afternoon **Adam S. Cohen** from the University of Toronto gave a fascinating plenary on **"The Getty's Rothschild Pentateuch: Synthesis and NonSynthesis"**. The final Tuesday session with the panel I had organized: **Updates and New Directions in Manuscript Studies**, was a high scholarly point in the conference. All three speakers gave excellent papers, ideal models for what dedicated research and imagination can contribute to manuscript studies: Frank Coulson, "Rethinking an Edition of the Vulgate Commentary on Ovid's *Metamorphoses*"; Gerry Guest, "The Male Nude in the *Très Riches Heures*: Embodiment, Devotion, and Desire in a Late Medieval Prayer Book," Richard Leson, Heraldic Geographies of Friendship in the Psalter-Hours of Jeanne of Flanders Manchester, John Rylands Library Ms. Latin 117). It is such a pity that the **St. Louis Conference on Manuscript Studies**, which since 1974 had featured many of the foremost international manuscript scholars in its yearly programs, had finally come to its end—but it lives on in the unextinguishable memories of dazzling performances and unforgettable revelations by its distinguished participants.

Let me remind people that this newsletter lives on for consultation of all issues in the two websites below!

—Susan L'Engle

Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies
Saint Louis University

<https://www.slu.edu/arts-and-sciences/medieval-renaissance-studies/publications.php>
First 21 issues at <http://lib.slu.edu/special-collections/publications/manuscripts-on-my-mind.php>

ACQUISITION TRIBUTE

THE WALTERS ART MUSEUM, BALTIMORE: New Acquisition in Memory of Will Noel

Manuscript of Vernacular French *Noëls*

Signed by **Pierre Fleuri**

France (Verneuil-sur-Avre), ca. 1596

Ink and watercolor on paper

Dimensions: 31.5 x 22 cm (12.6 x 8.8 inches)

Museum purchase in memory of William Noel (1965–2024), Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts (1997–2012), with funds from the Alton Jones Fund, 2025,

acc. no. W.966.

IN APRIL 2024, THE MANUSCRIPTS COMMUNITY suffered the devastating loss of a beloved friend and colleague, the irreplaceable Will Noel. That loss was felt profoundly by those of us who had the great honor of working with him during his transformative tenure as curator of manuscripts at the **Walters Art Museum**, and as his successor, acquiring a manuscript in his memory felt like an ideal way to honor his legacy. Will was my mentor and dear friend, so finding the right book has been a very challenging but meaningful quest. I set out to find something as unique as he was, and which captures the right balance of vibrancy, charm, and quirkiness to evoke what made him so special. After an extensive search, I believe this book truly feels like Will, and I hope all of you who knew and loved him will feel it is fitting, too.

The manuscript is an unusual and heavily-decorated late-sixteenth-century book of vernacular French Christmas carols. Of course, the term for these in French is *noëls* ... so Will's last name is quite literally written on every page! It's a connection he himself often made, explaining to new acquaintances that the spelling of his name was "like a Christmas carol." But there is also much about the character of the book that resonates with him more deeply. There is a playful and quirky charm to the art that captures something of Will's legendary sense of humor and joy in the irreverent. The book's subject matter also feels appropriate, as Will loved music, and would often sing the first few lines of the **Beaupre Antiphony** for groups he brought into the Walters's rare book library. As a curator, he was passionate about finding new works for the collection that made early books fun and relatable, and this one is bound to capture the imaginations of our visitors in a way he would have appreciated.



MS W.966, fol. 75r
detail



MS W.966, fol. 18r
detail



MS W.966, fol. 18r
detail



MS W.966, fol. 43r
detail

This extensively decorated manuscript is an important, and in some ways unique, witness to the tradition of early French *noëls*. The book documents sixty-nine songs that were sung by families during Advent and Christmas in the northern part of Normandy in France, capturing an important oral tradition that might otherwise have been lost 400 years ago. It is one of a relatively small number of surviving manuscripts of its kind, many of which are preserved in the **Bibliothèque nationale de France**, with an important copy also found at the **Free Library (Free Library of Philadelphia, Lewis E 211)**. The manuscript acquired by the Walters, however, is exceptional for its preservation of musical notation alongside the lyrics of forty-two of its songs, when most others only recorded the words. This book's cultural significance was recognized by the nineteenth century, when it was preserved in the grand library of the bibliophile **Ernest-Gabriel, Marquis des Roys**, and published with enthusiasm by music historian **Christophe Allard** in 1895. Allard notes that his work was part of a concerted effort throughout France to gather together and document the country's traditional vernacular songs before they were lost forever, and he celebrates this manuscript as a rare survival of early music from northern Normandy, and more broadly, as a rarity overall due to its inclusion of musical notation. It is the Walters' hope to collaborate with students from the nearby Peabody Conservatory to perform the music so it can be heard once more.

Will Noel continued

ACQUISITION TRIBUTE (continued)

THE WALTERS ART MUSEUM, BALTIMORE: New Acquisition in Memory of Will Noel



MS W.966, fol. 100r detail

The manuscript is dated to “*ceste p[rese]nte annee*” 1596, but includes additions dating into the early seventeenth century. References to “*mes bourgeois de Verneuil*” indicate it was created and used in what is today **Verneuil-sur-Avre**, and some of the residents are credited by name as composers of specific carols. This valuable information allows the traditions the book preserves, and those who created and celebrated them, to be localized with precision, and the personal stories of those involved with the book may be discoverable. An inscription at the beginning of the manuscript also reveals the name and profession of the artist who created it, stating it was “*Faict par lest [sic] mayins [i.e. mains] de Pierre Fleuri Broudeur,*” or “*Made by the hands of **Pierre Fleuri** embroiderer.*” The elaborate and creative imagery throughout the manuscript can therefore be connected with textile arts of the period, and this rare knowledge about the training of a book’s illuminator opens up exciting opportunities to explore the way an artist could work across media.

In addition to a single image of heraldry, the book’s sixty-nine ornate, large-scale initials provide a substantial amount of fascinating artwork that has never been publicly viewed or studied before, given that it has been tucked away in private libraries since its creation. Christophe Alard’s publication in 1895 focused only on the text, dismissing the initials as “curious” and “bizarre,” and calling them poor imitations of medieval illuminations that lacked imagination. On the contrary, from an art historical perspective, **Pierre Fleuri**’s artistry is strikingly inventive and unusual, and he creates his own unique world of imagery through his distinctive style, bold use of color, and intricate penwork. While the book is teeming with life, it is notable that the iconography rarely ventures into overtly religious imagery as does, for instance, the book of carols preserved at the Free Library in Philadelphia. Instead, the artwork in this manuscript is playful, edgy, and even irreverent, evoking the charm of early medieval illumination through interlace and grotesques. The opening initials of the *noëls* burst onto the page, often taking the form of undulating dragons that twist and transform into arrow-tongued snakes—arrows which often pierce the flesh of human figures tangled in their clutches. Yet there is a sense of humor and jubilation as well, with Fleuri’s complex knotwork weaving in and out of his figures in a way that suggests a playful nod to his profession as an embroiderer.



MS W.966, fol. 80r detail

My research on this extraordinary manuscript has only just begun, so there is much to be discovered, and I welcome the insights of this wonderful manuscripts community—I hope you’re all as intrigued as I am! And I hope you agree that this unusual book, with its unique charm, feels like something Will would have loved. As we approach the holidays this December, the Walters will be inaugurating a new annual tradition: the manuscript will be displayed in a special case in the galleries that will tell the book’s story, and Will’s. Open to a different carol during Christmastime each year, the installation will provide a special way to celebrate and honor Will, and to keep his memory alive at the Walters.

Lynley Anne Herbert, Ph.D.

Robert and Nancy Hall Curator of Rare Books and Manuscripts
The Walters Art Museum

MS W.966,
fols. 52v-53r

PROJECTS/DATABASES/CONFERENCES

Posted by Mary Dzon:

University of Tennessee Knoxville colleagues **Ryan Perry** (Project Co-Director and Lead PI), along with **Megan Cook** and **Taylor Cowdery** (Project Co-Directors) have just been awarded an NEH Grant for a new critical edition of John Lydgate's *Shorter Works*, involving almost 170 manuscripts. Listed on the NEH website in August 2025:

TENNESSEE (1) \$294,640 Knoxville University of Tennessee, Knoxville Outright: \$294,640 [Scholarly Editions and Translations] Project Director: Ryan Perry Project Title: A New Critical Edition of John Lydgate's *Shorter Works: Popular Culture and Lyric Poetry in the Later Middle Ages* Project Description: Preparation for publication of a two-volume, critical edition of the shorter works of English poet and monk John Lydgate (1370–1451).

Two Databases of **Latin and Old and Middle English Science and Medicine** are available online without paywall or password via the Medieval Academy of America's **Medieval Digital Resources**.

Access via Medieval Academy of America website, <https://mdr-maa.org>

or direct link <https://mdr-maa.org/resource/voigts-kurtz-search-program-for-etk-and-evk2-at-the-u-of-missouri-kansas-city/>

This resource includes three searchable databases for primary and secondary sources relating to the study of medieval science and medicine. There is no paywall or password for use of databases if accessed through the Medieval Academy of America. The first, **eTK**, is a digital database version of Lynn Thorndike and Pearl Kibre, *A Catalogue of Incipits of Mediaeval Scientific Writings in Latin* (Cambridge UP, 1963) and its supplements; the second, **eVK2** (last update: 2019), is Linda Ehrensam Voigts's and Patricia Deery Kurtz's *Scientific and Medical Writings in Old and Middle English: an Electronic Reference* (U of Michigan, 2000), originally published as a CD-ROM (**eVK**), and later revised and supplemented; the third, **eVK2** bibliography (last update: 2019), is a searchable bibliography of secondary literature related to the Voigts-Kurtz database. Also included is a searchable name list of variant spellings of authors' names.



Making the Medieval Archive: Celebrating Elizabeth A. R. Brown at Penn

September 12, 2025, 10:00am–7:00pm

Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts

Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

And online via Zoom

On September 12, 2025, the [Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts](#) at the University of Pennsylvania will host a day-long symposium commemorating **Elizabeth (Peggy) A. R. Brown**'s extraordinary legacy in the field of Medieval Studies. The event will also mark the official launch of the **Elizabeth A. R. Brown Medieval Historians'** archive, a [new initiative](#) at Penn Libraries to collect the professional papers of scholars of the Middle Ages and of associated professional organizations. The goal of the symposium is to honor Peggy's legacy and gift by celebrating research on her area of specialty, namely Medieval France. The symposium will consist of three panels of short papers devoted to subjects featured in Peggy's work: *Source and Archive*; *Politics and Kingship*; and *Liturgy and Sacred Image*. The day will also include an introduction to the research possibilities and historical interest of the medievalists' archive at Penn, presented by the inaugural **Elizabeth A.R. Brown Archivist**, an endowed position in the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts. The day will conclude with reminiscences by friends, students, and mentees, and a reception for all attendees.

Co-organized by [Nicholas Herman](#) (Schoenberg Institute for Manuscript Studies) and [Ada Kuskowski](#) (Department of History).

See the event details, program, and abstracts at: <https://www.library.upenn.edu/events/making-medieval-archive>

Registration: <https://libcal.library.upenn.edu/calendar/kislak/making-medieval-archive>

Donations to the Elizabeth A. R. Brown Medieval Historians' Archivist Fund can be made here: [https://](https://giving.aws.cloud.upenn.edu/fund?program=LIB&fund=406997&appeal=LIBEVENT)

giving.aws.cloud.upenn.edu/fund?program=LIB&fund=406997&appeal=LIBEVENT

Public messages honoring Peggy Brown's contributions to the field of medieval studies can be left here: <https://www.kudoboard.com/boards/FNm1Yhdn>

EXHIBITIONS

THE WALTERS ART MUSEUM, BALTIMORE

Paws on Parchment

August 6, 2025–February 22, 2026

Curated by Lynley Anne Herbert

<https://thewalters.org/exhibitions/paws/>

MS W.438, fol. 166v



MS W.274, fol. 186r

CAT LOVERS UNITE! The Walters is celebrating our feline friends with this paws-itively adorable exhibition. *Paws on Parchment* explores how medieval people thought about, engaged with, and admired cats through the animals' presence in manuscripts from the period. Centuries before cat memes took over the internet, the antics of fanciful felines were already popular in the margins of medieval manuscripts. These furry animals delighted readers back then just as they amuse us today.

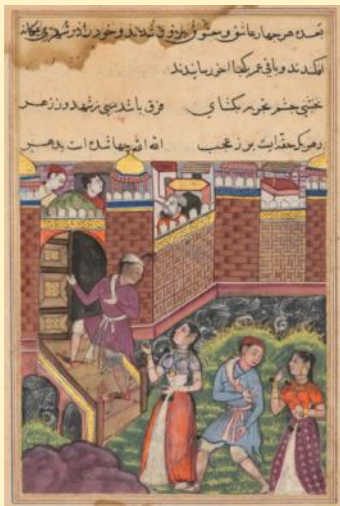
In *Paws on Parchment*, visitors will enjoy medieval depictions of cats preserved in the pages of manuscripts from across the world, including a fifteenth-century "keyboard cat." Most notably, visitors can see real pawprints left by a cat walking across the pages of a Flemish manuscript as the ink dried in the 1470s. A handful of these "pawprint" manuscripts are known around the world, and this is the first time the Walters's example will ever be shown.

**Indian Painting of the 1500s: Continuities and Transformations**

Saturday, March 15, 2025–Sunday, January 11, 2026

When the 1500s began, the dominant style of Indian painting was flat and abstract with a limited, mainly primary color palette. By the 1520s, a new style emerged with greater narrative complexities and dramatic energy that was to be foundational for later developments. Concurrently, some artists began working in the pastel palette and with delicate motifs reinterpreted from Persian art.

Then, around 1560, with the exuberant patronage of the **third Mughal emperor Akbar** (born 1542, reigned 1556–1605), artists from different parts of the empire and trained in a variety of Indian styles came together in a new imperial painting workshop. The workshop was led by Persian masters brought from the imperial court in Iran. The formation of Mughal painting shaped by Akbar's taste for drama and realism had a lasting impact on the cultural life of India. With its naturalism and vibrant compositions, the revolutionary new style was distinct from its predecessors, both Indian and Persian. The paintings in this gallery trace the dramatic changes that occurred during the 1500s alongside compositions that artists chose to retain and reinvent. Central to this story is a manuscript of the *Tuti-nama (Tales of a Parrot)*, an illustrated collection of fables made for Akbar around 1560–65 now in the **Cleveland Museum of Art**.



The two couples reach a foreign city where they make their home, from a *Tuti-nama (Tales of a Parrot)*: **Thirty-third Night**

AS BRIEFLY MENTIONED IN THE MAY 2025 ISSUE, the exhibition *Pride and Solace: Medieval Books of Hours and Their Readers* continues at the Groeningemuseum, April 4–October 7, 2025). The presentation brings together manuscripts, paintings, and objects from the Public Library, Musea Brugge, the Jean van Caloen Foundation, and the Government of Flanders, exploring how books of hours shaped devotion, identity, and status in late medieval Bruges. The accompanying publication, *Books of Hours, Books of Hope*, features new research on the use, makers, readers of these devotional books.



EXHIBITIONS (continued)

Il Tempo della devozione. Libri d'ore italiani tra Medioevo e Rinascimento

Rome, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana

December 11th 2025–February 15th 2026

Organized by Francesca Manzari, Lucia Tongiorgi Tomasi, Marco Guardo, and Ebe Antetomaso.

THE EXHIBITION AIMS TO SHED LIGHT on illuminated Books of Hours made in Italy in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Italian Books of Hours have remained comparatively little known with respect to the vast Franco-Flemish production of this type of manuscript, intended for the private devotion of lay people. Nevertheless, Italian Books of Hours have gained increasing scholarly attention over the past decades and a corpus of over almost 700 examples has been assembled, dating between the late thirteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries and including both manuscripts and fragments (published online by Francesca Manzari, in collaboration with Lola Massolo, on the website *Hours/Ore*: <https://sites.google.com/view/libridoreitalianimanzari/home-page?authuser=4>).



**Book of Hours of Margaret of Austria and
Alessandro de' Medici**

Rome, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale
dei Lincei e Corsiniana,
MS 55.K.16 (Cors. 1232), fols. 25v-26r.

It is the first time an exhibition has been dedicated exclusively to this manuscript genre, witnessing not only devotional and collecting practices, but also significant examples of Italian Medieval and Renaissance illumination. The display of over fifty Books of Hours, from the most important areas of production and dating from the early fourteenth to the first half of the sixteenth century, will provide an overview of the diffusion of these books in Italy. The Italian manuscripts, and a small group of European examples shown in comparison, have been selected from the **Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana** and other public and private libraries in Italy and in the Vatican, with the aim of presenting both manuscripts for everyday use made by specialized workshops, and precious works of art illuminated by highly renowned artists for outstanding patrons.



Chanting Clerics, from the Windmill Psalm
New York, The Morgan Library & Museum,
MS M.102, fol. 100r (detail).
England, London, late thirteenth century.

THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM

The Morgan Library & Museum will present ***Sing a New Song: The Psalms in Medieval Art and Life***, the first exhibition of its kind devoted to the importance of the Psalms throughout medieval art, prayer, and everyday life. **On view from September 12, 2025, through January 4, 2026.** *Sing a New Song* traces the impact of the Psalms on people in medieval Europe from the sixth to the sixteenth century, encompassing daily practices and performance, as well as the creation and illumination of Psalters (Books of Psalms).

Drawing on five years of scholarly research, the exhibition and accompanying publication take the Psalms out of their established place in religious texts and paint a vibrant picture of the people who used them—men, women, and children—both religious and lay. Psalms are some of the most beloved texts in the Abrahamic traditions of the three monotheistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These sacred poems constitute the longest and most popular book in the Bible. They include expressions of lament and loss, petitions and confessions, as well as exclamations of joy and thanksgiving—universal themes that speak to what it means to be human. Included in this show are the varieties of books that aided in these devotions—Psalters, Breviaries, Missals, and Graduals, among others—some of which were exquisitely illuminated. The exhibition explores how the Psalms were used, both at church and at home; how they were illuminated; how they were performed; and how they appear at both the beginning and the end of life.

Organized by **Roger S. Wieck**, Melvin R. Seiden Curator and Department Head of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, in collaboration with **Deirdre Jackson**, Assistant Curator of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts; **Frederica Law-Turner**, Contributing Guest Curator; and **Joshua O'Driscoll**, Associate Curator of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts.

EXHIBITIONS (continued)

THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM

Going Places: Travel in the Middle Ages

J. Paul Getty Museum

Sep 2–Nov 30, 2025

IN MEDIEVAL ART, THE ACT OF MOVEMENT from one place to another was conceptualized in a variety of imaginative forms. Featuring manuscripts from the Getty's collection, this exhibition explores the reasons for travel, different modes of medieval travel, and examples of typical travelers. Illustrations often accurately documented the realities of travel and prompted viewers to travel virtually through their imaginations. The exhibition showcases the wide variety of contexts for medieval movement, from religious travel to diplomacy, trade, exploration, and exploitation. <https://www.getty.edu/exhibitions/going-places/>

Follower of Hans Schilling,

Barlaam Crosses a River,

from Rudolf von Ems, *Barlaam und Josaphat*,
Hagenau, 1469. The J. Paul Getty Museum,
Ms. Ludwig XV 9, fol. 38v

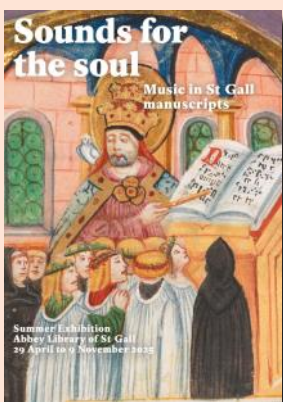


Continuing: Summer Exhibition in the Baroque Hall of the Abbey Library of St Gall
29 April to 9 November 2025

Music moves people deeply. In the monastery, singing helps monks and nuns lift up their souls to God. The monophonic chants of plainsong seem perfectly suited for this. Outside the monasteries, however, music evolved in different ways. There was polyphonic singing, yodelling, and instrumental music-making. Were these developments threatening devotion or could they be integrated into monastic music? In the Abbey of St Gall, abbots and monks have continually wrestled to find the right answer to the question of what music may, and may not, do.

Upcoming: The Cabinet of Curiosities at the Abbey Library – Beautiful and Unusual Objects Past and Present: Winter Exhibition in the Baroque Hall of the Abbey Library of St Gall

25 November 2025 to 19 April 2026

<https://www.stiftsbezirk.ch/en/forthcoming-exhibitions>

NEW ACQUISITIONS

THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM

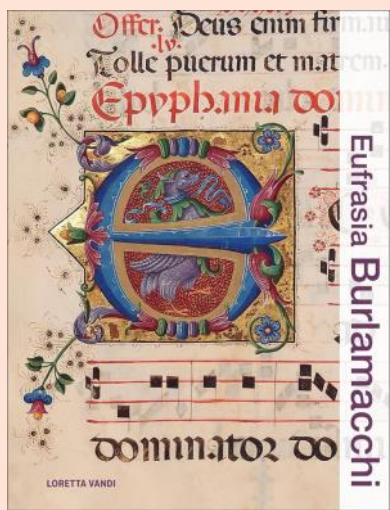


The J. Paul Getty Museum is delighted to announce the donation to the Getty Museum of the finest private collection of Italian leaves in the United States: <https://www.getty.edu/news/getty-receives-transformative-gift-of-rare-italian-manuscript-illuminations/>. The donation, made by T. Robert and Katherine States Burke, comprises thirty-eight leaves by Italian illuminators ranging from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries and represents all the regional artistic centers of Italy. The collection includes examples by such celebrated artists as Lorenzo Monaco, Don Silvestro Gherarducci, Giovanni di Paolo, Lippo Vanni, Cristoforo Cortese, and Don Simone Camaldolese. The addition of the Burke collection allows the Getty to represent the greatest artistic trends across the peninsula over five centuries. The donation will be celebrated with a dedicated exhibition in 2027 and the collection will be added to the Getty website in the near future.

Master of the Burke Saint John the Baptist and Messiah, Initial A:

Saint John the Baptist and the Messiah, cutting from a gradual, Umbria?, ca. 1400-1450. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. Burke 3

NEW PUBLICATIONS



A new monograph by **Loretta Vandi** introduces the life and work of a fifteenth-/sixteenth-century Dominican sister based in Lucca, who flourished as a manuscript artist and illuminator: **Eufrasia Burlamacchi** (Los Angeles, Getty Publications, 2025). Her range of expertise encompassed transcription of the texts as well as exquisite secondary decoration in colored ink found in the margins and penwork initials. The opening chapters describe Eufrasia's personal background, from her birth in 1478 through her involvement in the Dominican convent of San Nicolo Novelo and her co-founding of San Domenico—a more rigorous institution—in 1502. Successive chapters outline her developing expertise in the illumination of liturgical manuscripts, among them the graduals and antiphonaries fundamental to convent rituals. Read more about Eufrasia's religious and artistic context in the links below:

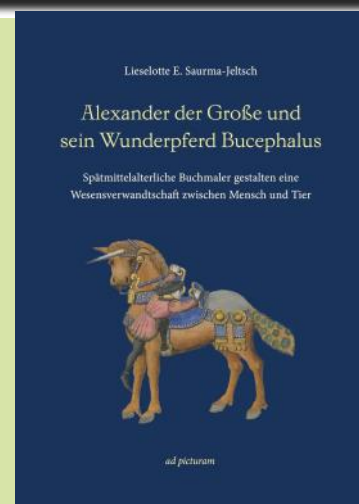
https://shop.getty.edu/products/eufrasia-burlamacchi-978-1606069561?srltid=AfmBOoq7A_I0dkCzbj qZkOYKBI-6j4y2-wS4v91a0QIIEF4qKUS3YW

<https://artherstory.net/sister-eufrasia-burlamacchi-lucca-1478-1548/>

<https://r-a-w.net/blog/illuminating-the-margins-eufrasia-burlamacchi/>

Forthcoming in October 2025: Lieselotte E. Saurma-Jeltsch, *Alexander der Große und sein Wunderpferd Bucephalus: Spätmittelalterliche Buchmaler gestalten eine Wesensverwandtschaft zwischen Mensch und Tier* (Merzhausen, 2025) E-Book [arthistoricum.net](https://ad-picturam.de/Alexander_Bucephalus/) (Open Access), see https://ad-picturam.de/Alexander_Bucephalus/

Alexander the Great, a godlike figure, and his colossal horse Bucephalus still appear today as exceptional. Their mysterious bond has been depicted in literature in many different and ambivalent ways. It also preoccupied medieval illuminators. While literature describes them as a wondrous pair with indistinct boundaries and hybrid characteristics, illustrators generally overlook Alexander's abnormalities, since the Macedonian ruler was regarded by the medieval recipient as a role model, if not an ancestor. Consequently, his monstrous characteristics are transferred to Bucephalus. In the images the horse is usually anthropomorphised, and its behaviour corresponds to the animal nature of humans. The creativity with which the illuminators depict this couple is characterised by fundamental ideas of close interconnection between humans and nature.



Sous la direction de
Frédéric Elsig, Samuel Gras et Dominique Vanwijnsberghe
Peindre en France
Trente ans de recherche sur les manuscrits à peintures
(1440-1520)



Peindre en France: Trente ans de recherche sur les manuscrits à peintures (1440-1520), ed. Frédéric Elsig, Samuel Gras et Dominique Vanwijnsberghe, Biblioteca d'Arte, (Milan, 2025)

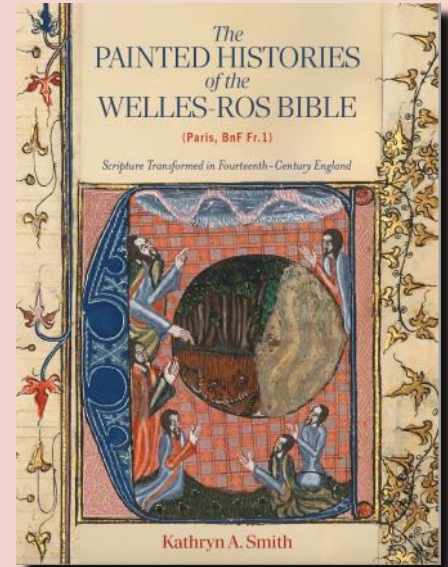
THIS NEW BOOK, AVAILABLE IN SEPTEMBER 2025, draws on the exhibition organized at the **Bibliothèque nationale de France** from **16 October 1993 to 16 January 1994**: *Quand la peinture était dans les livres a fortement marqué les esprits*. Its catalogue, edited by **François Avril** and **Nicole Reynaud**: "Les manuscrits à peintures en France, 1440–1520," instantly became an indispensable reference, opening up new avenues for research. Thirty years later the present volume presents a review of the scientific legacy of this monumental catalogue. It examines its lasting influence and the numerous discoveries and avenues of research that it brought to light in the study of French illumination and painting. It contains contributions by Ariane Adeline, François Avril, Alix Buisseret, Mireia Castaño, Rachel Chenu, Gregory T. Clark, Aurélia Cohendy, Isabelle Delaunay, Frédéric Elsig, Constantin Favre, Samuel Gras, Ilona Hans-Collas, Maxence Hermant, Marie Jacob, Marie Mazzone, Nicolas Oget, Dominique Vanwijnsberghe, Rafaël Villa, and Hanno Wijsman.

NEW PUBLICATIONS continued

The Hand Decays, the Writing Remains
Byzantine Scribes and Their Manuscripts
Nadezhda Kavrus-Hoffmann



Nadia Kavrus-Hoffmann is pleased to announce the publication of her new book, *The Hand Decays, the Writing Remains: Byzantine scribes and Their Manuscripts* (Ann Arbor, MI, 2025), available in the second half of September 2025. It comprises an anthology of her best articles produced during her long career as a Greek paleographer. Most were published in specialized scholarly journals and are not easily accessible. Some of the early articles were published in Russia and were originally written in the Russian language. Many of her colleagues expressed a wish for these works to be translated and published in English, which she fulfilled for this book. The articles are thoroughly revised, and bibliography updated.



Kathryn A. Smith, *The Painted Histories of the Welles-Ros Bible* (Paris, BnF fr. 1): Scripture Transformed in Fourteenth-Century England, Boydell Studies in Medieval Art and Architecture 27 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2025)

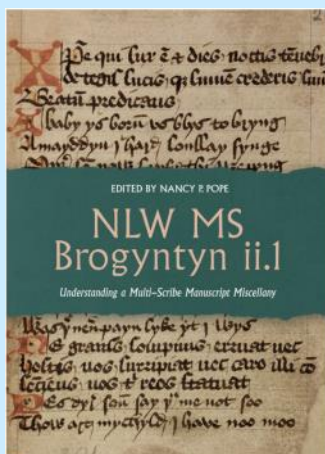
AT SOME POINT BETWEEN c.1366 AND 1373, the noblewoman **Maud de Ros**, widow of the Lincolnshire baron John de Welles, commissioned what is now the earliest surviving entirely-translated Bible from England. **The Welles-Ros Bible** contains the most complete edition of the Anglo-Norman Bible—a highly literal translation of the Vulgate into insular French—as well as eighty-two narrative, strongly personalized illustrations.

As **Kathryn A. Smith** argues in this first protracted study of the manuscript, Maud commissioned the Bible to serve as a mirror, guide, family archive, dynastic chronicle, and source of spiritual instruction and consolation for her youthful son, John, 5th Baron Welles (1352–1421). Moreover, Maud played key roles in the production of the text edition and the design of many of the images. This book analyzes the manuscript, its text, and its vivid illuminations in the context of rich traditions of medieval biblical translation, production, and illustration, offering fresh insights into the roles of images in shaping and mediating scripture and religious experience. Adding to our understandings of life among the lower nobility in later fourteenth-century England, this cultural history of a major artefact also expands our picture of the cultural patronage and creative agency of laywomen, as well as medieval strategies of memorialization; responses to the Plague, crusade, and the Hundred Years' War; illuminators' literacy and working methods; the activities and influence of the Carmelite Order; and medieval ideas about gender, identity, sexuality, and the emotions. For more information, see <https://boydellandbrewer.com/book/the-painted-histories-of-the-welles-ros-bible-paris-bnf-fr-1/>



AN ARTICLE BY HELEN COOPER: "Five Strokes of the Axe: Patronage and the *Gawain-poet*" was published in *Studies in the Age of Chaucer* 46 (2024), pp. 97–120. Amidst a lot of speculation about who might have been the G-poet's patron, her argument extends to a plea to include the bishops in the range of possibilities as patrons of late medieval Middle English verse, alongside the much-explored gentry and townsmen. Working from the widely favoured hypothesis that one man wrote all four poems, but with a concentration on *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, this paper considers the combined evidence for the cultural backgrounds of the possible poet and patron. In place of earlier suggestions, which have ranged from the royal court to the gentry, it explores the possibility of episcopal patronage.

NEW PUBLICATIONS continued



NLW MS Brogyntyn ii.1: Understanding a Multi-Scribe Manuscript Miscellany, ed. **Nancy P. Pope** (York Medieval Press, 2025)

This collection is the first book-length study of an interesting Middle English manuscript from the 1460s. Not only are its many unique texts and uniquely altered versions of familiar texts noteworthy, but also the codex as a whole raises important questions. This book provides for the first time complete information on the number of scribes and their dialectal locations, as well as first editions of several items, thereby making possible further investigation and discussion by scholars. Moreover, this book will be useful to students as a collection of approaches to manuscript studies. The chapters on social class, on dialects, and on paleography discuss their methods and evidence in a way that will help readers understand these subfields. The chapters focused on specific groups of texts cover a wide range of critical approaches: using epistemology to analyse practical didactic works, surveying genres and voices in lyrics, considering the effect of juxtaposing poems, and comparing long prose texts to their source materials and to analogous items in the manuscript. For more information, go to <https://boydellandbrewer.com/book/nlw-ms-brogyntyn-ii-1-9781914049309/>

COURSES

The Folger Shakespeare Library hosts a series of informal sessions each spring and fall called **Practical Paleography**, with a dual educational and practical goal—teaching English secretary hand while building up a corpus of transcribed manuscripts, making incredibly rich primary sources available to the (print-)reading public. It's almost time for another round of Practical Paleography. Please considering joining us on Zoom in either the beginner or mystery manuscript room, Thursdays from 1pm -2pm EST, September 4 through November 6. If you are interested in participating, please email sbschliep@folger.edu.

About Practical Paleography:

These sessions are free and open to anyone, anywhere.

Participants can participate in as few or as many sessions as they like.

No previous experience required.

Sessions will be hosted by Sara Schliep, Nicole Winard, and Heather Wolfe.

More details on [Folgerpedia](https://folgerpedia.org/).

We look forward to seeing you!

The Paleography/Transcription Team at the Folger

PROJECT AND CONFERENCE

The **BBD—Burchards Dekret Digital**—is a project to compile the first reliable, critical edition of Burchard's *Decree*, a work produced from the first quarter of the eleventh century. **Burchard, the Bishop of Worms**, organized and standardized the existing ecclesiastical law for this collection, containing detailed rules and instructions for clergy and laity in twenty books with over 1785 chapters. The manuscript tradition of the *Decretum Burchardi* consists of over eighty manuscripts and fragments. The project will examine the work's wide distribution and reception, especially in Germany, Italy, France, and Spain, and it will be published in print and in a digital edition.. See <https://burchards-dekret-digital.de/index.html>

A conference is planned on **Burchard of Worms** and the manuscripts of his scriptorium on **October 16-18** in Worms, and you can find the program in the conference flyer at https://burchards-dekret-digital.de/data/docs/2025_10_16-18_Flyer_BDD.pdf



Bamberg manuscript
of the *Decretum Burchardi*
(Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, MS Can. 6)

PROJECTS (continued)

AN UPDATE ON MARILENA MANIACI'S PROJECT:

MeMo – MeMory of Montecassino
A Digital journey into the Heart of Medieval Written Memory

Vision

The ***MeMo – Memory of Montecassino*** project (<https://memo.unicas.it/>) aims to open the extraordinary written heritage of the Abbey of Montecassino to the world. By combining historical research with advanced digital technologies, it transforms manuscripts, incunabula, and archival documents into freely accessible resources. What was once consultable only within the abbey walls is now available to scholars, students, and curious readers everywhere.

Heritage

Montecassino preserves one of Europe's most important cultural legacies: more than a thousand manuscripts—some dating back to the sixth century—thousands of fragments and parchments, and a rich collection of incunabula. Thanks to ***MeMo***, part of this heritage has already been digitized: over 200 manuscripts, 800 archival documents, and nearly 100 incunabula are accessible online via the ***MeMo Digital Library*** (<https://memodl.unicas.it/>). These are only the first steps in a broader effort that will eventually bring thousands of hidden texts to light.

Technology

The project employs the most advanced technologies. Manuscripts are catalogued in **TEI-P5 XML**, digital images are stored in **FITS**, and access is provided through the **IIIF** framework. This ensures high-resolution browsing, annotation, and even virtual reunification of fragments dispersed worldwide. The portal is multilingual (Italian and English) and will evolve further by integrating **Big Data** tools and new accessibility features.

Team and network

MeMo is directed by the ***LIBeR. Libro e Ricerca*** Laboratory at the University of Cassino (<https://www.unicas.it/liber/>). It involves senior scholars, postdoctoral researchers, doctoral students, and young collaborators, making it both a research project and a training ground for future specialists in manuscript studies and digital humanities. **Sapienza University of Rome** (archival research) and the **University of Catania** (incunabula cataloguing) are partners of the project. Collaboration with the monastic community of Montecassino and guidance from an international scientific committee strengthen the project. Prestigious partners—including the **Vatican Apostolic Library**, **CNRS-IRHT**, the **Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin**, and **ICCU**, the Italian national cataloguing institute—further enhance its scientific credibility and reach.

Education and outreach

MeMo is not just a digital archive but an educational and cultural platform. Didactic modules explain manuscript production and book typologies, while innovative tools such as a virtual lectern enable contextualized reading. Outreach is central: conferences, publications, exhibitions, and active social media channels share progress with scholars and the public, making Montecassino's treasures part of a wider cultural dialogue.

Future directions

MeMo plans to expand its digital library to over 1,000 manuscripts, 14,000 documents, and 150 incunabula. A *Virtual Museum of Written Heritage* will offer 3D reconstructions, animations, and multimedia content, with strong attention to accessibility. Ultimately, ***MeMo*** is more than a digitization project: it is a bridge between tradition and innovation, local heritage and global community, turning memory into dialogue, education, and growth.

For further information see the project leaflet at <https://memo.unicas.it/storie/un-viaggio-digitale-nella-memoria-di-montecassino/> and the current list of *Memo's* publications at <https://memo.unicas.it/bibliografia/>. If you are interested in 'adopting' the digitisation of a manuscript please contact Nicola Tangari (nicola.tangari@unicas.it) or Marilena Maniaci (marilena.maniaci@unicas.it).

MANUSCRIPT CATALOGUES!

Where would we be without manuscript catalogues? This literary genre is fundamental to the divulgation of manuscript collections, and has in recent times greatly improved with a closer focus on codicological details. Here are two new publications (one still under preparation):

Manoscritti miniati della Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli. II. Francia, Inghilterra, Spagna, Belgio, Germania, Boemia (secoli XIII-XIV), con addenda ai codici miniati italiani (Indici e Cataloghi, n.s., XXXI), a cura di T. D'Urso, A. Improta, M.G. Mansi, Roma 2025 [ISBN: 978-88-240-1252-2]

The book contains entries for fifty-five illuminated manuscripts of non-Italian origin from the National Library in Naples, dating from the thirteenth to the fourteenth century. Most of the manuscripts are of French provenance (mainly Paris and Southern France). However, there are also English and Spanish manuscripts, and Germany, Belgium and Bohemia are also represented. Some Italian illuminated manuscripts that were not included in the first volume of the series are listed in the *Addenda*.

To purchase the book from Italy:

<https://www.shop.ipzs.it/it/manoscritti-miniati-biblio-naz-napoli3000046322.html> To purchase the book from abroad, please send an email to: editoria@ipzs.it



Medieval & Renaissance Manuscripts at University College, Oxford

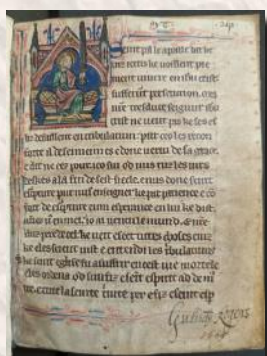
PETER KIDD IS PREPARING A NEW CATALOGUE of the pre-1600 manuscripts at **University College, Oxford** (approximately 135 volumes, including two guardbooks of fragments), to supersede the catalogue by H.O. Coxe published in 1852. He has completed a first draft of the descriptions and is beginning to revise them for publication by the **Oxford Bibliographical Society**. He would be glad to hear from anyone who is working towards publication of any of the College's manuscripts, or who has mentioned any of them in print recently. You can email him at peter.kidd@univ.ox.ac.uk

The collection is especially strong in Middle English (*Cloud of Unknowing*, **MS 14**; *Scale of Perfection*, **MS 28**; *Piers Plowman*, **MS 45**; *Rolle's Commentary on the Psalter*, **MS 56**, his *English Psalter*, **MS 64**, and his *English Psalter with Commentary*, **MS 74**; *The Quadrilogue Invektive*, *The Secreet of Secretes*, and *The III Consideracions Right Necessarye to the Good Governauce of a Prince*, **MS 85**; Wycliffite biblical texts, **MS 96**; *Mirk, Festial*, **MS 102**; *Love, Mirror of the Life of Christ*, **MS 123**; *Pricke of Conscience*, **MS 142**; a unique bilingual Latin-English Book of Hours, **MS 179**; *Pilgrimage of the Soul*, **MS 181**; and *Partonope of Blois*, **MS 188**); unusual liturgy (Carmlite Breviary, **MS 9**; Bridgettine Breviary, **MS 25**; Missal of the Use of Hereford, **MS 78A**; Missal of the Use of York, **MS 78B**; Cluniac Breviary, **MS 101**; and the Barking Ordinal, **MS 169**); books from English monastic houses; books from the medieval university of Oxford; many medieval bindings; several fragments of fifteenth-century English polyphonic music; as well as a wide selection of Classical texts, Bibles and biblical commentaries, patristics, collections of sermons, astronomy, Books of Hours, and so on. The most lavishly illuminated are the famous *Life of St Cuthbert* produced at Durham, c. 1100, **MS 165**; two Apocalypses, c. 1300, **MS 100** and **MS 120**; and the *Quadrilogue* manuscript mentioned above.



MS 85

The Quadrilogue Invektive, The Secreet of Secretes, and The III Consideracions Right Necessarye to the Good Governauce of a Prince, in English [England (London?), 15th century (3rd quarter)]



MS 100

Apocalypse with commentary, in Anglo-Norman French [England (perhaps York), late 13th or early 14th century]



MS 120

Bestiary [England, late 13th or early 14th century]

MS 165
Bede, *The Life and Miracles of St Cuthbert* [England (Durham), early 12th century (before 1104?)]





WEBINARS

Save the Date: Mmmonk School 2025 – Dive into the world of Books of Hours!

Posted by Dr Evelien Hauwaerts, Manuscripts curator, Public Library Bruges

BOOKS OF HOURS WERE THE BESTSELLERS OF THE MIDDLE AGES – but how do we study and analyse them today? During Mmmonk School 2025, four international experts offer practical tips and clear introductions.

Thursday 11 December (4–6 PM CET): **Lieve De Kesel** (Ghent University) and **Jessica Savage** (Princeton University) highlight key tools and checkpoints for the art historical analysis of Books of Hours.

Thursday 18 December (4–6 PM CET): **Dominique Stutzmann** (IRHT Paris) and **Greg Clark** (Sewanee, University of the South) guide you through the world of liturgical practices – essential for understanding, dating, and localising Books of Hours.

Practical, clear, and to the point – these webinars are perfect for anyone with some prior knowledge who wants to deepen their understanding of the material. Don't miss them!

Mmmonk School sessions are free and open to all! More information and a registration link will be available after the summer at www.mmmonk.be.

ANTIQUARIAN NEWS

Dr. Elisabeth Wingerter, PR and Marketing Manager at **Dr. Jörn Günther Rare Books AG** shares the highlights of their display for this year's **Frieze Masters** fair in London: https://www.guenther-rarebooks.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Press-Release-Frieze-Masters-2025-by-JGRB_EN-compressed.pdf



OCTOBER CONFERENCE

The upcoming **International Van Lymborch Conference** to be held October 2-3, 2025 in Nijmegen—<https://www.maelwaelvanlymborchstudies.com/internationalconference2025/>, organized at the occasion of the monumental exhibition of the *Tres Riches Heures* in Chantilly in collaboration with the Musée Condé—opened for registration, but apparently very few spots remain. Tickets if still existing may be booked through <https://shop.ikbenaanwezig.nl/tickets/event/international-van-lymborch-conferenc>

The program may be accessed at <file:///C:/Users/Susan/Dropbox/Newsletter%20September%202025/rob%20duckers%20Van%20Lymborch%20Conference%20Brochure.pdf>

QUERIES TO THE MANUSCRIPT COMMUNITY

Michael Elam has a question about the publishing world, specifically about concordances. He has been working on a concordance to the Pearl-poems (**British Library, MS Cotton Nero A X/2**) and the text of St Erkenwald (**British Library, MS Harley 2250**), and wonders about publishers' willingness to take on such a project. There are at least two potential obstacles to overcome:

- 1) There is an existing concordance (**Kottler and Markman, 1966**), but it isn't exhaustive, and it is not diplomatic—his project would include expanded and abbreviated forms from the manuscript, as well as emendation-words from various editions (over two-dozen regularly cited ones so far). He has finished transcribing the texts from both manuscripts, and compiled emendations from fourteen editions of the various works so far.
- 2) A lot of online search tools (maybe even AI itself) suggest redundancy or lack of necessity for a print edition, though he would suggest that having all entries listed for a reader is superior to having only a list of search results or highlighted instances of a word.

Would anyone in the manuscript community have any insights, information, or suggestions on this topic?

If so, please contact Michael Elam at mdelam1972@gmail.com

Scott Gwara's Auction Round-Up: Spring & Summer 2025



Fig. 1.
Tally stick at OSU

THE STRONGEST SALE OF MEDIEVAL AND RENAISSANCE MANUSCRIPTS THIS SEASON was held by **Christie's** on 9 July. **Lot 1**, a tally stick said to be thirteenth-century, achieved a staggering £50,400 (with premium). Think of it as a wooden receipt. After being notched for pounds, shillings and pence, a willow planchette was split, yielding halves of irregular grain that could later be fitted together as proof of payment. They are now rare, because nearly all of them were *intentionally* burned in 1834 in a blaze that *unintentionally* consumed the houses of Parliament. The current Gothic Revival building dates to 1840. Surviving tallies (I've learned) were given to the poor for kindling and probably ended up in the hands of antiquaries. Twenty-one were sold by Heritage Auctions (Dallas) on 18 December 2012 (**lot 1151**; the same collection sold by Sotheby's on 23 June 1992, **lot 43**), six by Sotheby's on 26 November 1985 (**lot 31**) and a single specimen by Sotheby's on 1 December 1987 (**lot 20**). In North America **Ohio State University** has a specimen [**fig. 1**], while the **Thomas Fisher Library** (University of Toronto) has two. Few of the miniatures at Christie's held much interest, except for a weird illustration of *De sex alis cherubim* included in an album of cuttings (**lot 28**; £5040) [**fig. 2**]. Late-ly attributed to **Clement of Llanthony**, the mnemonic "Six Wings of the Cherubim" associates five moral virtues with the feathers on each wing of a Seraph (not a Cherub). Thirty virtues are listed under headings like "The Love of God" or "Purity of Thought."

For me, **lot 5**, a late thirteenth-century English copy of **Peter Lombard's** *Sentences*, was the most desirable book in the sale (£47,880). Not only was it bound in medieval pigskin over oak [**fig. 3**], but its provenance had also been ingeniously traced to **Burton Abbey** and **Winstanley Hall**. A misconception that the manuscript would not receive export permission doubtless explains the low price. The summer volume of an illuminated noted breviary from Langres achieved £25,200 (**lot 6**), though lacking some twenty-seven folios (probably all with illuminations). Four additions had been made to the book over about a century. Described misleadingly as a "Portable Magna Carta," **lot 9** comprised a fourteenth-century English Book of Statutes (*Statuta Angliae*) in Latin and Anglo-Norman, which opened with *Magna Carta* (**lot 9**; £32,760). Other texts bear similarly legalistic titles like "Charter of the Forest," "Statute of Fines" and "Distresses of the Exchequer." Nearly all of these diminutive manuscripts and the related *Registers of Writs* date from the early to mid-fourteenth century, an early bibliographical fad. Incidentally, **Sotheby's** offered a teensy copy of the *Statutes* in their 10 July online sale of "Books, Manuscripts and Music from Medieval to Modern" (**lot 4**; £44,450 with premium). The Christie's manuscript boasted an early English provenance. The merchant **Arthur Maister** of Hull owned it by 1815. His son and heir **John Maister** rediscovered it thirteen years after his father's death: "found in the Old House in High Street Hull." The house survives nowadays in the care of the National Trust [**fig. 4**].

A few lots at **Christie's** held Books of Hours, none really "spectacular." **Lot 12** was a complete, untrimmed and clean Hours of Rouen Use by the so-called **Talbot Master**, ca. 1445–1450 (£56,700). The Dr. Seussian backgrounds of the images evoke open-pit mining [**fig. 5**]. An even finer Book of Hours, also apparently complete with seven large miniatures and 25 small ones, sold for £88,200 (**lot 20**). Illuminated by the so-called "**Master of Dobrée 33**," the manuscript was allegedly produced in the Hainault in the 1480s. The radiant miniatures, pristine condition, fanfare binding by **Joseph Thouvenin** (d. 1834) and potential connection to **Simon Marmion** ("this production ... may have started within his workshop and under his direction") explain the strong interest. Lots **21**–**22** also sold well. Although small, **lot 21** had twelve full-page miniatures by a follower (or perhaps the workshop of) the Paris "**Maitre François**," ca. 1480–90. As one might expect, the illustration of "Sudden Death" in the Office of the Dead evokes the Paris charnel house of Holy Innocents cemetery [p. 8 at <https://www.slu.edu/library/vatican-film-library/publications/-pdf/vfl-newsletter-no-17.pdf>]. **Lot 22**, the provincial "**Hours of Jean Boutin**," serves as a curious contrast (£30,240). Missing only a single folio, it boasted one panel miniature in addition to fourteen large and twenty-six small illuminations. The name "**Jean Boutin**" is inscribed on the architectural frame of the "Flight into Egypt," and in fact most of the miniatures have text incorporated into them.



Fig. 2.
De sex alis Cherubim



Fig. 3.
Medieval binding



Fig. 4.
Maister House



Fig. 5.
Seussian landscape

Scott Gwara's Auction Round-Up (continued)



Fig. 6.
Father and son

Lot 10, the **Gladstone Missal**, reached a mere £151,200 against an estimate of £200k–£300k. Here it should be noted that estimates are hammer prices, while the reported prices include premiums. This outcome therefore reflects a “private treaty” sale at a hammer of £120k. Dated 1420, the book was commissioned for the bishop of Padua, **Pietro Marcello**, in memory of his deceased father Francesco (d. 1419). Both are depicted in the first miniature on fol. 7r [fig. 6], in addition to which are twelve other historiated and illuminated initials. All were painted by a Paduan artist known as the “**Maestro degli Statuti Padovani**.”

Christie’s offered quality text manuscripts too. A Florentine copy of **St. Augustine’s** *Enchiridion* included the “Letter of Lentulus,” a forgery describing the appearance of Jesus (**lot 13**; £10,080). It seems to have influenced a lot of European art in the late fifteenth century, including a “Salvator Mundi” miniature in a Book of Hours sold by **Van de Wiele** (Bruges, 21–22 March, lot 806; unsold), see https://www.vdw-auctions.com/en/catalog/lot_pagina/36?id=8795&f%5B0%5D=8&keyword=&page=1&sort=

A handsome, complete and very clean Genoese copy of **Cicero’s** *Epistolae ad Familiares* on vellum did not sell (**lot 14**; est. 25k–30k), but a Spanish compilation of *Satires* by **Persius** and **Juvenal** made £37,800 (**lot 16**). Belonging to **Charles IV of Spain**, the manuscript was seized when the English army captured **Joseph Bonaparte’s** baggage train after the battle of Vitoria in 1813. They became the property of **Lord Wellington**. This exciting provenance as much as the secular contents explain the strong price.



Fig. 7.
High school chemistry

Four “scientific” volumes included the unsold *Libro di Sidracho* in Italian from mid-fifteenth-century Verona (**lot 17**; est. £40k–£50k). This rather common encyclopedia was translated into multiple languages. The Christie’s copy had an impressive **Heber-Phillipps-Kraus-Ritman** provenance. One wonders how medieval readers could ever have credited the compilation’s alleged origin: “**The prologue relates that Sydrac, a descendant of Japhet and astronomer to King Tractabar, inherited a book of divine revelation of all mysteries and sciences, which had been dictated to Noah by an angel. He passed on his knowledge to King Boctus ... who had been engaged in a fruitless and frustrating war with his neighbour King Gharab of India ... and Boctus had his own questions and the prophet’s answers recorded in a book.**” Hardly more grounded is an alchemical miscellany with recipes primarily drawn from **Raimundus Lull** and **Arnold of Villanova**, including Arnold’s treatise on the Philosopher’s Stone (**lot 15**; £100,800). Dated ca. 1465–1500, the book came from northeastern Italy, with sources centering on and around Ferrara. Accompanying drawings resemble those from a high school chemistry textbook [fig. 7]. Like the **Book of Sidrac** (above), this treatise belonged to **J.R. Ritman’s** *Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica*, a private/public library in Amsterdam with a problematic history. A volume of “hippiatric” (“equine”) medicine and a second alchemical treatise—both sixteenth-century—went unsold (resp. **lot 23**, est. £20k–£25k; **lot 24**, est. £8k–£12k).

As mentioned above, **Sotheby’s** held an online sale that closed on 10 July. They are trying to re-enter a market they abandoned some years ago. Among a few humdrum Books of Hours and text cuttings were several sleepers, especially **lot 3**, an illuminated Psalter from the Netherlands, perhaps Ghent, ca. 1255–1265 (£330,200). I can’t fathom the price. The soiled and slightly incomplete manuscript has four full-page miniatures, a dozen calendar illustrations and nine large historiated initials. It survives in a medieval binding. The poem “**Mundi Vanitas**” inscribed below the Nativity miniature suggests that the manuscript was owned by an Englishman in the fourteenth century. In such a case as this, one can only conclude that two motivated bidders wanted it badly for reasons unknown.

The second sleeper, **lot 31**, comprised a single leaf from a fifteenth-century English antiphonal or choir breviary of the utmost luxury (£22,860). Over two feet high, the page depicts a **Tree of Jesse** sprouting tendrils filling the margins. These are interspersed with more than a dozen small miniatures, all highlighted in gold. The center is occupied by the Virgin and Child, while the initial B of “*Beatus Vir*” shows David enthroned and surrounded by courtiers. One wonders, given the abundant gold, lavish ornamentation and scenes of royal pomp, whether this manuscript had been commissioned by an English king for a major foundation.

Scott Gwara's Auction Round-Up (continued)

A few other lots deserve mention. A fine historiated initial by a Ferrarese or Mantuan artist of the late fifteenth century features an enchanting scene of St. Francis preaching to the birds (**lot 30**; £20,320) [**fig. 8**]. A serene but gaunt and rather serious Francis addresses birds colored like parrots, all of which are paying close attention. Rapt raptors? Two leaves from a Bohemian Gradual, probably from Prague, ca. 1500, achieved strong results (**lot 33**, £10,160; **lot 34**, £16,510). **Sotheby's** implies that both come from the **Esztergom Gradual** (Esztergom, Metropolitan Library MS I.3), which has a similar format and decoration and which is missing seven leaves. Making a further appearance in this sale is an early eighth-century Northumbrian bifolium of the "Sacramentary of St. Boniface" (**lot 6**, unsold; est. £120k–£180k). Having been conveyed by Sotheby's in 2007 for £300,500 (**lot 44**, with premium), it was offered again in 2024 at an estimate of £250–£350k (2 July 2024, **lot 2**). The manuscript should be highly desirable but remains discolored and has the feel of greasy leather, as if it had been rubbed with tallow.



Fig. 8.
St. Francis preaching to birds



Fig. 9. Abbey church



Fig. 10. Snuff box

The smaller auction houses had a few offerings, **Reiss und Sohn** selling a handful of affordable manuscripts with rather rare texts (7 May; no results provided). Notable were a prayerbook from the Rhineland, possibly Cologne, dated ca. 1460 (**lot 625**). The initials and penwork look very Dutch to me. Though a mere sixty-two folios, an anthology of works by **Henry of Hessa**, **Conrad of Saxony** and an anonymous author seemed very desirable in terms of its contents and early fifteenth-century date. The Reiss sale featured two other **Conrads**. *Sermons for the Sanctorale* by **Conrad of Brundesheim** circulated in a massive copy on paper (338 folios), **lot 641**. The scribe **Johannes de Blaubeuren** (near Ulm) finished his portion of the transcript in 1456. The Carthusian **Conrad of Hainburg** (15 miles east of Frankfurt) authored a "Laus Mariae" with pious readings in honor of the Virgin. Reiss offered a copy of ca. 1400, once housed at the **Dominicans of Krems an der Donau** (**lot 642**). Their church currently serves as the city museum, having once been "a button factory, granary, theatre, cinema and fire station," according to one website. A fourth **Conrad** owned **lot 650**, a mammoth *Sammelband* of theological texts (378 leaves) focused on preaching. By 1552 it came into the possession of the Benedictine **Conrad Lieb**. His abbey in Neustadt (Bavaria) had been founded in the eighth century, and its early twelfth-century church still stands [**fig. 9**].



Fig. 11. Magus



Fig. 12. Massacre

Severely damaged by water infiltration, a late fourteenth-century Book of Hours with eight large miniatures bore a French inscription—"Don't Forget Me!"—signed "**Marie de bourg'ne**" (**lot 632**). Reiss identified her either as Mary of Burgundy, duchess of Savoy, or Mary, duchess of Burgundy. As a gift to a courtier or prominent guest, it recalls the custom of Tsar Nicholas II of giving out Fabergé snuff boxes in recognition of special service. **Sotheby's** sold one of these in 2021 for £277,200 (2–9 June, **lot 5**) [**fig. 10**]. A Bolognese Book of Hours said to be ca. 1420 but much later to my eye had the usual historiated initials, including an implausible skull and ribcage illustration for the Office of the Dead (**lot 633**). Unlike **Leonardo**, these artists never studied human anatomy. By contrast, a Flemish Hours boasted fourteen large miniatures with individualized and rather realistic faces (**lot 634**). This **Magus**, for example, regards the Virgin with shy admiration [**fig. 11**]. A second Flemish Hours with characteristic *trompe l'oeil* borders had pedestrian artwork, but a gruesome depiction of the Massacre of the Innocents (**lot 635**) [**fig. 12**]. One encounters a range of macabre scenarios. Sometimes the infants are impaled, sometimes they are about to be. Two late Italian Psalters were included in the sale, the most interesting in terms of format (tall and narrow) was produced in Florence around 1525 (**lot 649**).

Arenberg and **Bonhams** each sold items worthy of note. Buried in a Bonhams sale of "Fine Books & Manuscripts" (16–24 June), **lot 1058** comprised a fifth-century fragment of St. John's Gospel in **Greek Uncials** (\$70,350, with premium). Its provenance reaches back to the Dutch dealer **Erik von Scherling**, who is said to have purchased it around 1935–36 in the Middle East. (He traveled there to find relief from tuberculosis.) The cutting belonged to the late **Richard Manney** (d. 2024), who led a long and rich life [obituary at <https://www.antiquesandthearts.com/richard-manney-88-ad-exec-collector-philanthropist/>].

Scott Gwara's Auction Round-Up (continued)

In its 12–14 June sale, **Arenberg** offered a very fine psalter and breviary made in 1478 for the Bridgettine nuns of Mariënwater (lot 1075; €57k hammer). On 21–22 **Marc Van de Wiele Auctions** carried five Franco-Flemish and Dutch Books of Hours, one of which was referenced above. In addition to a **Gold Scrolls** manuscript of mid-fifteenth century date (lot 803; €14k, no premium) were: 1) an Hours, Use of Rome, with 16 historiated initials and 26 small miniatures (perhaps missing some inserted illuminations), bound in 1538 by the Bruges binder, **Pauwels van Vardebeke** (lot 804; €40k); 2) the careworn **Hours of Antoine de Croÿ** (bishop of Therouanne from 1485), Use of Therouanne, late fifteenth-century, with two miniatures (lot 805; €62k); 3) **Lot 806**, a complete late fifteenth-century Hours with good illumination and *trompe l'oeil* borders, though quite diminutive (unsold); and 4) **Lot 807**, an Hours of Franciscan Use, rather plain but complete, relatively clean and in an early binding (unsold).

Finally, on 8 July **Freeman's-Hindman** (Chicago) hosted its second auction of "Western Manuscripts and Miniatures," offering 86 lots. An illuminated leaf of the **Hornby-Cockerell Bible** achieved \$4160 (lot 6). Ohio State University owns 201 folios of this manuscript, which was broken by **Bruce Ferrini** [see **Eric J. John**, "Breaking and Remaking Scripture: The Life, Death, and Afterlife of the Hornby-Cockerell Bible," *Manuscript Studies* 4 (2019), 270-333]. I rather liked a Gradual cutting of Pentecost by an anonymous "Venetian illuminator," ca. 1290–1300 (lot 14; \$5120 with premium). Generously sized and well painted in a Byzantine style, the initial **S** features the apostles in a compartment below a crooked tabernacle—quite obviously painted before the discovery of perspective. Despite some appreciable damage, a leaf of the **Ghistelles Hours** made \$6080 on the strength of its historiated initial of the "Presentation in the Temple" (lot 18). The verso featured a deer playing a bagpipe [fig. 13]. Bidding was fierce for lot 31, a cutting from one of six antiphonal volumes produced ca. 1290 for the Cistercian abbey of Sainte-Marie at Beaupré (dioc. Cambrai) [fig. 14a]. The cutting came from a volume burned in a fire at Sotheby's in 1865, and a sister miniature can be found in one of the complete Beaupré antiphonals at the **Walters Museum of Art**, MS W.760, fol. 113v [fig. 14b].



Fig. 13.
Ghistelles Hours



Fig. 14a.
Freemans-Hindman lot



Fig. 14b.
Walters MS

Freeman's-Hindman also presented desirable codices, many from the collection of **Scott Schwartz**, the New York psychiatrist. **Dr. Schwartz** has published on the utility of early manuscripts in psychotherapy [e.g., "Medieval Antecedents of the Therapeutic Alliance," *Journal of the American Academy of Psychoanalysis* 27 (1999), pp. 275–84]. \$14,080 was paid for a curious Book of Hours, ca. 1470–1480, by a follower of **Leonardo Bellini**, active in the Veneto at this time (lot 77). It had eight large initials that included two historiations. Another Italian Hours, this one attributed to the "circle of **Attavante degli Attavanti**" was christened the "Carafa Hours" on the basis of its ownership by **Vincenzo Maria Carlo Carafa della Stadera**, duke of Maddaloni (d. 1765) (lot 79, \$11,520). It had a richly decorated opening for Matins, but what I found curious was the historiated initial for Vespers: a rocky arch set on a hillock before a body of water, with a landscape in the distance [fig. 15]. A shallow grassy pit appears in front of the arch. The catalogue does not mention this initial. What could it possibly mean?



Fig. 15.
Rocky arch

One of the most interesting consignments in the sale was a complete Sarum psalter produced in London ca. 1425–1435 by a follower of the Dutch or German artist **Herman Scheere** (lot 80; \$12,800). Extensive water damage explains the low price for a manuscript bearing the heraldry of its commissioner (as yet unidentified) and ten fine historiated initials. Rather impressive was the so-called "von Wolkenstein Breviary" painted by a follower of **Taddeo Crivelli** and dated 1499 (lot 82; \$11,520). It is now for sale on **Ebay** for \$43,717, rather a large markup. The name derives from its ownership by **Baron Christopher von Wolkenstein**, whose bookplate dated 1594 remains in situ. His picturesque **Tyrolean castle** stands near Bressanone (Brixen) [fig. 16].



Fig. 16.
Rodenegg castle

Rounding out the sale was a fifteenth-century vellum manuscript of **Petrarch's Canzoniere** missing its opening leaf (lot 83; \$24,320). Apparently unrecorded, the manuscript first appeared at **Forum Auctions** in 2021 (30 September, lot 223; £14k hammer) but went unsold at **Christie's** the following year (13 July, lot 28; est. £30k–£40k). For such a desirable book the price struck me as a bargain. **Clearly, the success of this sale bodes well for the future of manuscript auctions in America.**