

Le Louvre des Antiquaires
2 Place du Palais-Royal
75001 Paris (France)
tel. +33 (0)1 42 60 15 58 • fax. +33 (0)1 40 15 00 25
info@lesenluminures.com

2970 North Lake Shore Drive
Chicago, IL 60657 (USA)
tel. +773 929 5986
fax. +773 528 3976
chicago@lesenluminures.com

Herbal

In Italian and Latin, illustrated manuscript on paper

Italy, likely Veneto, c. 1500-1520

90 paintings of plants (text added later)

i (paper) + i (modern paper) + 92 + i folios on paper, modern foliation in pencil, top, outer corner, recto, remains of earlier foliation in pen which is now out of order, illustrations numbered, no longer consecutively, Tavola (or tabula) 1-53, 53bis, 54-62, 66-80, 82, 82bis, 83-84, 81,86-91, 85, watermarks, letter A, similar to Briquet 7919, Venice 1503, and Chapeau, similar to Briquet 3461, Udine 1512, var. id. Venice 1505, 3457, Ferrara 1504, var. id. Venice 1505, 3404, Venice and Udine, 1503, and 3402, Venice, 1499 (collation, i¹ ii⁸ iii-v⁶ vi-x⁸ xi⁶ xii⁸ xiii⁶ [+4, f. 88, modern addition; + 8, singleton, f. 92]) 90 full-page watercolor plates of plants, some with a label in a sixteenth-century cursive script, or in a later eighteenth (?) century script, added nineteenth-century text, usually on facing pages. In excellent condition, with some retouching, and staining, usually in the upper margin, without damage to the illustrations. Bound in Italy in the nineteenth century in a vellum binding; "Herbarius," on spine, in excellent condition. Dimensions 238 x 173 mm.

An exceptional collection of illustrations from the Veneto, the very region where the most important fifteenth-century manuscript herbals were created. Compiled from a number of sources, the images vary in their degree of naturalism, but certainly present a sensitive portrayal of plants predating the printed manuals by Brunfel (1530-6) and Fuchs (1542), which are often heralded as turning points in the history of botanical illustration. Illustrated manuscript herbals are uncommon; the Schoenberg Database only lists nine (six listed as Herbals, and three copies of the herbal by Apuleius Platonicus).

PROVENANCE

1. Compiled c. 1500-1520 in Northern Italy, probably in or around Venice as indicated by the watermarks, perhaps for the use of an herbalist or student of medicine.
2. A note added to the manuscript on the front flyleaf, f. ii, in the nineteenth century records that it belonged in the late eighteenth-century to Giuseppe Verdina, a doctor from Lonato in Northern Italy, near Brescia; after Giuseppe's death at a young age of a contagious disease, it was acquired by the father of the author of the note, from whom he ultimately acquired the manuscript. This nineteenth-century owner made many changes to the manuscript, including tracing the images of many of the plants on the verso, retouching the coloring of the images, and adding extensive notes commenting on the plants he found growing around Lonato, usually on the verso facing the illustration, and supplying the name

of the plant according to the Linnaean system; he also had the volume bound in Brescia in 1855.

3. Inside front cover, "12948," in pencil

ILLUSTRATIONS

The description of each illustration includes the plate number as they occur in the manuscript in a nineteenth-century hand, followed by the name of the plant, if there is one, and finally the name as listed in the nineteenth-century notes (usually in this case the Linnaean name); some descriptions include the common name of the plant.

f. 1, Tabula 1, Orchid with a bird: *Orchis insectiva*, at the bottom *Palma Christi*, with later notes, front flyleaf, f. ii verso, and f. 1v, *Orchis maculata* [the Spotted Orchid, also known as the Hand Orchid or *Palma Christi*]; f. 2, blank;

f. 3, Tav 2, *Saxifragio*, bushy tree-like plant; later note, f. 2v, *Saxifraga* (?);

f. 4, Tab 3, Orchid with rabbits, *Testiculus canis seu Satirion*; later notes, f. 4v, *Orchis morio* [green-winged orchid?];

f. 5, Tavola 4, *Sempervivum magnum* [hens and chicks, or house-leek?];

f. 6, Tab. 5, Orchid with rabbit, *Testiculus Oulpii* [?]; later notes, ff. 5v, 6v, *Orchis bifolia* [Butterfly orchid?];

f. 7, Tav. 6, *Branca orsina*; f. 7v, later hand, *Branca orsina*, *Achanthus mollis* [label only];

f. 8, Tav. 7, flowering plant, *Cucula*;

f. 9, Tav. 8, spiky plant with bulbous flower or fruit, growing out of a fish or turtle [possibly an Amber tree?];

f. 10, Tav. 9, stylized, symmetrical, leafless plant, *Lunaria*;

f. 11, Tav. 10, stylized plant with yellow flowers, *Miracole*;

f. 12, Tav. 11, stylized plant with yellow flowers, *Cacalias*;

f. 13, Tav. 12, vine, *Aristolochia longa*; later note, f. 12v [Birthwort; see below, f. 34, tav. 33];

f. 14, Tav. 13, feathery tree with birds, *Tamarisco*; later note, f. 13v [Salt cedar?];

f. 15, Tav. 14, *Calendula*; later note, f. 14v, *Calendula officinalis* [Pot marigold];

f. 16, Tav. 15, *Sempervivum minore*;

- f. 17, Tav. 16, woody plant with red flower and bird; later note, f. 16v, *Polygonum centinodium* [*Centitnodium agrestinum*, buckwheat family?];
- f. 18, Tav. 17, depicting flower and seed-pod, *Dens leonis seu Taraxacum*; later note, f. 17v, *Leontodon taraxacoides* [Lesser hawkbit, or Dandelion];
- f. 19, Tav. 18, fern, *Polipdio*; later note, f. 18v, *Polypodium vulgare*;
- f. 20, Tav. 19, *Sclopendria*; later note, f. 19v, *Asplenium ceterach* [rustyback or scale fern];
- f. 21, Tav. 20, droopy yellow flower and bulbous red root, *Capalarias*;
- f. 22, Tav. 21, leafy plant, no text;
- f. 23, Tav. 22, delicate leaves and small purple flowers, *Cimbalaria* [toad flax];
- f. 24, Tav. 23, stylized leaves with delicate dragon at the root, *Mondaria seu Calmia* [?];
- f. 25, Tav. 24, striking thistle [?] with green globe-shaped flower, *<?>ingio*;
- f. 26, Tav. 25, tall stalk and flowers in shades of brown; later note, f. 25v, *Orobanche maior*, *Fuoco salvatico*;
- f. 27, Tav. 26, Adianto, below, earlier hand: *Adiantori vel Galiticori vel politicium*; later note, f. 26v, *Adiantum Capillus Veneris* [maidenhair fern];
- f. 28, Tav. 27, tall spiky plant, set in simple landscape (a rock? with seedlings), *Lingua Lepenlia <?>*; later note, f. 27v, *Conyza quarrosa* [*sic*, for *squarrosa*];
- f. 29, Tav. 28, *Plantago* [common plantain];
- f. 30, Tav. 29, plant with bird perched on top, *Apio cire*; later note, f. 29v, *Apium palustre* [*Apium graveolens?*, wild celery];
- f. 31, Tav. 30, *Madriselva*; later note, f. 30v, *Lonicera sempervivens* [honeysuckle?];
- f. 32, Tav. 31, *Frasinella*; later note, f. 31v, *Convallaria Polygonutum* [Solomon's seal];
- f. 33, Tav. 32, leafy plant; later note, f. 32v, *Murtha aquatica*;
- f. 34, Tav. 33, flowering vine with a bird [?]; later note, f. 33v, *Aristolochia longa* (birthwort);
- f. 35, Tav. 34, fleshy plant with white berries, with small winged animal, *Viseo quercino*; later note, f. 35v, *Viseo quercino*;

- f. 36, Tav. 35, *Viola*; later note, f. 35v, *Viola odorata* [violet];
- f. 37, Tav. 36, green mass with small roots, *Lonante* [?];
- f. 38, Tav. 37, graceful pink flowering bulb;
- f. 39, Tav. 38, stylized foliage, red stem, with squirrel [?] and stag, *Linnaria*; later note, f. 38v, *Antirrhinum linaria* [toad flax, butter and eggs, snapdragon, note illustration has no flowers];
- f. 40, Tav. 39, *Pulmonaria*, earlier hand: .. *pulmonaria vel pepencium* [lungwort];
- f. 41, Tav. 40, *Lingua cervina*; later note, f. 40v, *Asplenium scolopendrium* [Hart's tongue fern];
- f. 42, Tav. 41, plant with spiky-flowers, with dog, stag, and bird;
- f. 43, Tav. 42, graceful plant with small leaves and pink-orange flowers; later note, f. 42v, *Stachis erecta*;
- f. 44, Tav. 43, realistically depicted ginger, retouched; later note, f. 43v, *Asarum Europeum*;
- f. 45, Tav. 44, *Lilium convallium*; later note, f. 44v, *Convallaria majalis*, Ciglio della Valli [Lily of the Valley];
- f. 46, Tav. 45, leafy plant with bird; later note, f. 45v, *Eirgeron Vulgare* [fleabane];
- f. 47, Tav. 46, *Valeriane rubra* [with some brown stains];
- f. 48, Tav. 47, leafy plant with greenish flowers; later note, f. 47v, *Apium puzzomolo*, *prezzemolo* [parsley?];
- f. 49, Tav. 48, *Iris Indii*; later note, f. 48v, *Iris Germanica* [Iris];
- f. 50, Tav. 49, plant with three massive leaves, *Meboro bianco* [?];
- f. 51, Tav. 50, plant with rounded leaves and long-billed bird; later note, f. 49v, *Pistacia therebintus* [turpentine tree?];
- f. 52, Tav. 51, leafy plant with small purple flowers and two birds, *Buglossa* [Bugloss];
- f. 53, Tav. 52, leafy plant and two birds, *Salvia*; later note, f. 51v, *Salvia officinalis* [sage];
- f. 54, Tav. 53, plant with crouching dog [?], *Menta*; later note, f. 53v, *Mentha cataria* [catmint];
- f. 55, Tav. 53 bis, leafy plant with dragon [?], early hand, *spinace* [spinach];

- f. 56, Tav. 54, plant with dog, *Rosmerinum*; later note, f. 55v, *Rosmarinus officinalis* [rosemary];
- f. 57, Tav. 55, plant with long billed bird, *Chartame*; later note, f. 56v, *Carthamei tinctorii* [safflower?];
- f. 58, Tav. 56, plant with small flowers with dragon [?]; *Crepis foetida* [stinking hawksbeard];
- f. 59, Tav. 57, plant with bird, *Maiorana*; later note, f. 58v, *Origanum majorana* [marjoram];
- f. 60, Tav. 58, plant with bird, *Abrotano*; later note, f. 59v, *Artemisia Abrolanum* [southernwood, and many other common names];
- f. 61, Tav. 59, leafy plant with bird; later note, f. 60v, *Malva rotundifolia* [dwarf mallow];
- f. 62, Tav. 60, leafy plant and two birds, *Marcorela* [?];
- f. 63, Tav. 61, angular plant with flowers and thorns, <?>*evanio*;
- f. 64, Tav. 62, plant with scorpion, *Lunaria annua*; later note, f. 63v, *Lunaria annua* [money plant];
- f. 65, Tav. 66, plant with bird, *fragaria* [strawberry];
- f. 66, Tav. 67, plant with mouse [?] and bird; *Scrofularia*, later note, f. 65v, *Scrophularia* [figwort];
- f. 67, Tav. 68, broad-leafed bulb, with duck;
- f. 68, Tav. 69, orchid, with purple flowers, sleeping dog [?] and insect;
- f. 69, Tav. 70, bulb with two animals, early hand, *satirion*, later hand, *Colchicum autumnali*; later note, f. 68v, *Colchicum Autumnale* [autumn crocus or meadow saffron];
- f. 70, Tav. 71, plant with feathery leaves and two birds, *Absintia*; later note, f. 69v, *Artimisia Absyntium* [absinthe wormwood];
- f. 71, Tav. 72, iris with purple flowers and two animals, *Iris*; later note, f. 70v, *Iris susina* [*sic*, for *susiana*; mourning iris];
- f. 72, Tav. 73, leafy plant and two small birds; later note, f. 71v, *Alsine media* [chickweed or birdweed];
- f. 73, Tav. 74, plant with bird, *Pilosella*; later note, f. 72v, *Hieracium Pilosella* [mouse-ear hawkweed];
- f. 74, Tav. 75, plant with white flowers and bird, *Chelidonium* [celadine];
- f. 75, Tav., 76, plant with purple flowers and long-billed bird, early hand, *Basilico*, but late hand, *Eupatorium lannelinum*; later note, f. 74v, *Eupatorium lannelinum* [boneset or snakeroot];

- f. 76, Tav. 77, lily with two birds; later note, f. 75v, *Lilium Martagon* [or Turk's cap lily];
- f. 77, Tav. 78, flowering plant with hound chasing stag; later note, laid in, *Orchis ustulata* [burnt orchid];
- f. 78, Tav. 79, leafy plant with long root, with stag and hound, resting;
- f. 79, Tav. 80, plant with red flowers, bird and wild boar or pig; late note, f. 79v, *Grana communis*
- f. 80, Tav. 82, plant with pink flowers, unicorn and stag; *Pimpinella* [anise]; later note, f. 79v, *Ruta graveolens* [rue];
- f. 81, Tav. 82bis, lettuce, with two rabbits; later note, f. 80v, *Latuca sativa* [lettuce];
- f. 82, Tav. 83, plant with bird, *Persicharia* [smartweed or pinkweed];
- f. 83, Tav. 84, flowering plant with two birds, *Rabarbaro* [Rheum, or rhubarb?];
- f. 84, Tav. 81, tree [?] with hound chasing a very small animal;
- f. 85, Tav. 86, feathery plant with animal; later note, f. 84v, *pimpinella* [?];
- f. 86, Tav. 87, plant with dog eating its roots; later note, f. 85v;
- f. 87, Tav. 88, plant with bird, *Senna italica*; later note, f. 86v, *Senna italica*;
- f. 87v, extensive later note on *Cyclamen Europeum*;
- f. 88, modern sheet, with later note on verso, *Bellis perenii*;
- f. 89, Tav. 89, plant with heart-shaped leaves and red flowers;
- f. 90, Tav. 90, flowering plant, *Belide* [see above, f. 88];
- f. 91, Tav. 91, delicate plant and stag, *Angalide*; later note, f. 90v, *Veronica anagallis* [speedwell];
- f. 92, Tav. 85, leafy plant with bird [soiled and rubbed].

Northern Italy, and in particular the Veneto, had a very strong tradition of copying illustrated herbals. Three of the most famous fifteenth-century herbals were copied there: the Carrara Herbal, British Library, Egerton 2020, made between 1390 and 1404 for Francesco Carrara the Younger; St. Mark's, Venice, Cod. Lat. VI.59, a copy of the *Liber de simplicibus*, which includes 500 full page paintings of plants by the Venetian Andrea Amadio c. 1445-8; and London, British Library, Add MS 41623, copied in Belluno in the Venetian Alps in the early fifteenth century (see M. Collins,

2000, pp. 279-281, and p. 297, note 168, listing other fifteenth-century Herbals from the Veneto; and Blunt and Raphael, 1999, pp. 68-81).

The illustrations in these manuscripts were the start of a new illustrative tradition, based on observing and drawing plants from life, rather than copying existing images in other manuscripts. They prefigure the revolutionary printed herbals, Otto Brunfel's, *Herbarium vivae eicones* (Strasburg, 1530-36) and Leonhart Fuch's *De historia stiprium* (Basel, 1542), which are often discussed as the first examples of modern botanical illustrations.

The illustrations in the Herbal described here are certainly far humbler than the famous examples just mentioned. Nonetheless, these manuscripts are part of the tradition that the illustrator of our Herbal drew upon. Some of the plants depicted are very finely drawn, and carefully colored, and clearly represent an attempt at a naturalistic depiction. The orchids on ff. 1 and 4 (tav. 1 and 3) the Dandelion, f. 18 (tav. 17), and the Lily of the Valley, f. 45 (tav. 44) are examples of realistic plants that are immediately recognizable. These contrast strongly with the carefully symmetrical and stylized drawings on ff. 7-12 (tav. 6-11), which show the influence of an earlier tradition found in many manuscript Herbals, and indeed, in the earliest printed Herbals.

The wide variety of styles in the Herbal described here might suggest that the illustrations are by a number of different artists. It seems more likely, however, that the differences reflect the source of the image. Some plants are shown with animals, probably decorative (i.e. unlike earlier herbals where snakes were shown with herbs used to treat snakebite, etc.); most plants are shown with their roots, and in a few plates the herb is set into a green lawn (ff. 3, 8 and 9).

Most of the plants have been labeled in an early-modern hand, and some have traces of labels in an earlier sixteenth-century cursive script (for example, f. 62, tav. 60). It is possible that all of the illustrations were originally identified at the very bottom of each page, and these annotations are now lost; it seems equally possible that the illustrations were originally without text of any kind. At least two later writers added the names of plants, and the nineteenth-century owner of the manuscript, mentioned above, added notes with the Linnaean botanical name, usually on the verso facing the illustration.

The lack of any text to accompany the illustrations is a departure from the norm, but certainly not unprecedented, and there are other medieval Herbals without text (for example, London, BL Sloane MS 4016, Lombardy, 1440s). The Herbal described here seems best seen as a text poised between the medieval tradition of texts depicting useful plants, especially those used medicinally, and the seventeenth century Florilegia, which recorded the plants, both decorative and useful, found in a particular garden

LITERATURE

Baumann, Felix Andreas, *Das Erbario Carrarese und die Bildtradition des Tractatus de herbis*, Berner Schriften zur Kunst, 12, Bern, Benteli, 1974.

Blunt, Wilfrid, and Sandra Raphael, *The Illustrated Herbal*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1999.

Collins, Minta, *Medieval Herbals: The Illustrative Traditions*, London, The British Library, 2000.

Saunders, Gill, *Picturing Plants: An Analytical History of Botanical Illustration*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1995.

Tomasi, Lucia Tongiorgi, "Toward the scientific naturalism: aspects of botanical and zoological iconography in manuscripts and printed books in the second half of XV century," in *Die Kunst und das Studium der Natur vom 14. zum 16. Jahrhundert*, eds. Wolfram Prinz and Adreas Beyer, Weinheim, Acta humaniora, pp. 91-101.

ONLINE RESOURCES

"Plants and Gardens Portrayed: Rare and Illustrated Books from the LuEsther T. Mertz Library, Online Exhibit, New York Botanical Garden:

<http://sciweb.nybg.org/Science2/Onlinexhibits/exhbtcata.html>

TM 510