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Picturing Texts

e-Catalogue Five
Exploring Text Manuscripts
TEXTMANUSCRIPTS

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PICTURING TEXTS

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e-Catalogue Five
Exploring Text Manuscripts

This new series of e-Catalogues focuses on select themes of text manuscripts available in our inventory on www.textmanuscripts.com. We begin with "Women and the Book" a topic of considerable interest and well represented among our holdings. These catalogues follow two earlier series of text manuscript catalogues, including the Primers. These remain available in digital form on our website and in print by order.

Look for our e-Catalogues the first Tuesday of every month. Forthcoming titles include "Cover to Cover," and "Manuscripts $15,000 or less."

Picturing Texts

Text manuscripts are not only interesting for their texts—indeed, some of them include pictures. Pictures we can all enjoy, marvelling at the glowing colors and the skill of the artists who made them. But the function of painted decoration in medieval and Renaissance manuscripts was never only aesthetic. Here we present ten manuscripts and books with figurative decoration. Each example invites the question of why (to help readers find their place, provide images for private devotion, or entice potential patrons, to name a few possibilities) and how (painted by hand, printed and then hand-illuminated, and even woven). The pictures in these examples are as unique and intrinsically interesting as their texts.

Sandra Hindman and Laura Light
1. Vulgate Bible

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Northern France (Paris?), c. 1230-1250
77 illuminated foliate initials and 5 historiated initials by a Parisian atelier

**PICTURES AS SIGNPOSTS (IS THIS ISAIAH?)**

**DESCRIPTION:** 512 folios, lacking at least three folios at the end, otherwise complete, penwork initials, 77 painted and 5 historiated initials, significant damage from damp especially at beginning, 19th-century binding of brown leather over pasteboard. Dimensions 113 x 72 mm.

This is among the smallest examples known of the Paris “pocket” Bible. One tiny volume contains the entire biblical text, copied in a minute script on tissue-thin parchment and adorned with small painted initials, including five that are historiated. Its text belongs to the recension known as the Paris Bible, the direct ancestor of the sixteenth-century Clementine Vulgate. Bibles like this revolutionized the way Bibles were used in medieval Europe and influence the physical appearance of Bibles down to the present; every collection of medieval manuscripts needs an example. [TM 941]

$95,000

2. Psalter

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Southern Germany (diocese of Constance or Augsburg), c. 1240-1260

**PICTURES AS PRAYER (TOUCHING AND KISSING)**

**DESCRIPTION:** 188 folios on paper, watermarks 1472-1475, missing three leaves, 8 illuminated initials, a few marginal tears and dampstaining, recased using original brown leather binding over wooden boards. Dimensions 328-332 x 230 mm.

Almost certainly copied for lay use, this German illuminated Psalter includes historiated initials depicting both Saint Francis and Saint Dominic, canonized only decades before the manuscript was produced. Artistically, it is related to important illuminated south German Psalters now in Liverpool and Schaffhausen. It is still bound in an early binding (with some restoration), and there are numerous signs of use throughout, including evidence that it was used to teach children to read. Damage to the initials of Francis and Dominic suggests their images were touched or kissed during prayer. [TM 789]

$150,000

Full description and images available online
PICTURES AS PRAYER (TOUCHING AND KISSING)

Full description and images available online
3.
NICHOLAS OF GORRAN, Sermones de Tempore et de Quadragesima [Sermons for the Temporale and for Lent]; sermons excerpted from the Sermones de Sanctis [Sermons for the Feasts of Saints]

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Northern France (Paris?), c. 1275-1300

THE AUTHOR’S PICTURE (PRESENTATION COPY?)

DESCRIPTION: 136 folios on parchment, complete, penwork initials, one historiated initial, slight water staining, parchment cut from lower margins of a few folios (no loss of text), 19th- or 20th-century brown leather binding over wooden boards. Dimensions 203 x 139 mm.

A very early collection of the still unedited sermons of the influential Dominican preacher and royal advisor Nicholas of Gorran. Copied during the author’s lifetime, possibly even with his supervision, this manuscript is an extremely important witness to these texts. Changes made early on may reveal Nicholas’s intentions as he shaped these sermons at the Dominican convent of Saint-Jacques in Paris. Handsomely decorated, with a charming illuminated initial depicting the author receiving Christ’s blessing, this was likely a presentation copy for someone quite important. [TM 868]

$95,000

4.
On the Death, Magnificence, Miracles, and Life St. Jerome: PS.-EUSEBIUS OF CREMONA, De morte Hieronymi; PS.-AUGUSTINE, Ad Cyrillum de magnificentiis Hieronymi; PS.-CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, De miraculis Hieronymi, and PS.-EUSEBIUS OF CREMONA, Vita Sancti Hieronymi; JEROME, Vita sancti Pauli (Life of St. Paul)

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Northern Italy, c. 1440-70

A PICTURE INTRODUCING THE TEXT (JEROME IN THE WILDERNESS)

DESCRIPTION: 70 folios on parchment, penwork initials, one gold white vinestem initial, and one historiated initials with full white vinestem border, some soiling, early, likely contemporary, leather binding over wooden boards with added decoration, earlier manuscript leaf as back pastedown. Dimensions 203 x 153 mm.

A vivid witness to the importance of St. Jerome in fifteenth-century Italy, this includes the foundational texts for his cult. These texts were widely disseminated in both Latin and in vernacular translations and influenced the work of numerous writers and visual artists. Skillful script, handsome pen initials, and classic humanist white vine initials adorn the text, which begins with an historiated initial depicting an ascetic St. Jerome meditating before the Crucifixion. [TM 656]

$58,000
THE AUTHOR'S PICTURE (PRESENTATION COPY?)

Full description and images available online

WWW.TEXTMANUSCRIPTS.COM
A PICTURE INTRODUCING THE TEXT
(JEROME IN THE WILDERNESS)

Full description and images available online
5. HAIMO OF AUXERRE, *Expositio in epistolas Pauli*  
(Commentary on the Pauline Epistles)  
In Latin, manuscript on paper  
Northern Italy, 1458

**PICTURES FOR CUSTOMIZATION (SPLENDID ADDED FRONTISPIECE)**

**DESCRIPTION:** 193 folios on parchment, complete, 21 large decorated initials on colored or gold grounds, large two-compartment miniature with full frame including coat of arms, late 18th-century gold-tooled red morocco binding. *Dimensions 278 x 193 mm.*

This manuscript contains a copy of the most notable of the exegetical commentaries by Haimo of Auxerre, a key figure of the Carolingian Renaissance, texts that are still in need of a revised critical edition. Beautifully illuminated, it boasts an illustrious provenance having belonged to (or even perhaps was commissioned by) Jean II Budé, father to the famous humanist-bibliophile Guillaume Budé. The miniature added at a slightly later date (some 20 or 30 years after) must have been painted in Troyes, where the Budé family had strong ties. [TM 908]  

$125,000  

Full description and images available online

6. THOMAS AQUINAS, *Liber super ethicorum aristotelis*  
(Commentary on the Ethics of Aristotle)  
In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
Northeastern Italy (Venice), c. 1470

**PICTURING THE AUTHOR (AND A SWAN)**

**DESCRIPTION:** 160 folios on parchment, complete, penwork initials, 9 illuminated initials and one historiated initial with three-quarter border, 19th-century red morocco binding with silk doublures. *Dimensions, 340 x 235 mm.*

This is a deluxe, carefully written, large-format manuscript illuminated by Leonardo Bellini, the most important Venetian illuminator c. 1460-80, or a close associate. It survives in pristine condition, with broad margins, clean pages, clear and bright illuminated initials and elegant penwork decoration at almost every opening. Although the text survives in 125 manuscripts (some fragments), the Schoenberg Database lists no sales since the early nineteenth century, and there may be no copies in North American libraries. [TM 629]  

$225,000  

Full description and images available online
PICTURES FOR CUSTOMIZATION (SPLENDID ADDED FRONTISPIECE)

[5. ~ TM 908]

Full description images and video available online
PICTURING THE AUTHOR (AND A SWAN)

[6. ~ TM 629]

Full description and images available online
7. Processional (Dominican use)

In Latin and French, illuminated manuscript on parchment
France (Rouen), c. 1520-1530; c. 1525-1550; 1674
12 historiated initials in the style of the Master of Girard Acarie

PICTURES BY A PROFESSIONAL ARTIST, USED BY NUNS

DESCRIPTION: 67 folios on parchment, complete, decorated
initials on colored or gold grounds, 12 historiated initials, 2 full-
page illuminated borders, slightly trimmed and rubbed, 16th- or
17th-century leather binding. Dimensions 225 x 158 mm.

Made for the Dominican nuns of the royal convent of St. Mat-
thew in Rouen, this Processional is a fine example of the skill of
the artists working during the last flowering of medieval manuscript illumination in northern France. Larger and cer-
tainly more lavishly illuminated than most surviving Processionals, it is a valuable witness to the liturgy and music at
this convent. Extensive revisions by the nuns themselves make this a multi-layered artifact that will repay further
study. [TM 1031]

$75,000

Full description and images available online

8. Printed Book of Hours (Use of Rome)

In Latin and French, illuminated imprint on parchment
Paris, Germain Hardouyn, c. 1536 (almanac for 1536-1548)
14 large metacuts and printer’s device with borders, 1 small
metacut, all skillfully illuminated likely in the Hardouyn Workshop

PRINTED PICTURES, ILLUMINATED BY HAND

DESCRIPTION: 90 folios on parchment, agenda 8vo, complete,
1 small metacut, 14 large metacuts and printer’s device set in
gold frames, all illuminated, a few stains, sig. F4-6, loose, late
16th- or 17th-century leather binding. Dimensions 140 x 65 mm.

Paris was truly the epicenter of the production of printed
books of Hours from 1485 to nearly 1550. Many of these
Imprints, like this example, consciously imitated illuminated manuscripts. In this particularly appealing volume,
fourteen metacuts are so vibrantly and expertly painted that they are indistinguishable from illuminated miniatures.
It is a tiny book, in a distinctive and unusual format, very narrow and oblong, fitting easily in a pocket to carry about
for use in private devotion. This is a very rare imprint, possibly a unicum. [TM 180BOH]

$35,000

Full description and images available online
PICTURES BY A PROFESSIONAL ARTIST, USED BY NUNS

Full description and images available online

[7. ~ TM 1031]
PRINTED PICTURES, ILLUMINATED BY HAND

[8. ~ TM 180BOH]

Full description and images available online
9.
PIERRE MIGNARD(?). Drawing of Marie Anne Christine, Dauphine of France, reproducing in microscopic letters the text of IGNATIO FRANCESCO MULGIN, Il Trionfo d’applausi, e di glorie figurato di purissime lettere di sua altezza reale Maria Anna Christina Vittoria di Baviera Delfina di Francia, nel quale si contengono li seguenti versi, da leggersi nella figura con il microscopion

In Italian, micrographic drawing and manuscript on paper France, c. 1683-84

A PICTURE IS THE TEXT (MICROGRAPHIC DRAWING)

DESCRIPTION: Drawing, one large sheet, 630 x 500 mm.; manuscript: 221 folios on paper, complete, contemporary gold-tooled red morocco binding. Dimensions 335 x 225 mm.

A complete book is concealed within this astonishing and very rare micrographic drawing made entirely from microscopic letters. The text when it is copied again in the accompanying manuscript is a lengthy book with 221 folios. This tour de force of calligraphy, likely intended as a diplomatic ploy on the part of the papal envoy to Influece the king of France, is a witness to the early impact of the microscope. Made within decades of the publication of Robert Hooke’s Micrographia (1665) and the perfection of the microscope by Anton van Leeuwenhoek (1674), this is a work that illuminates the intersection of art and optics at the end of the seventeenth century. [TM 16]

$95,000

10.

Livre de Prières Tissé d’après les enluminures des manuscrits du XIe au XVIe siècle (Book of Prayers woven after illuminations in manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth century)

In Latin and French, illustrated book on silk Lyon, R. P. J. Hervier, designer; J.A. Henry, fabricator, for A. Roux, 1886-1887

5 large illustrations, every page with a decorative border

PICTURES (AND TEXT) WOVEN IN SILK

DESCRIPTION: 58 pages, mounted silk, complete, 5 large illustrations, decorative borders on every page, contemporary morocco binding. Dimensions 175 x 138 mm.

This unorthodox Book of Prayers is entirely machine-woven of gray and black silk. Faced with coming up with a submission for the world’s fair of 1889, artisans in the textile capital of Lyons programed Jacquard looms with hundreds of punch-cards. So difficult was the project that this is the only fully illustrated woven book ever produced. Competition at the fair was unusually stiff – the main attraction was, after all, the Eiffel Tower. The woven book nevertheless won a Grand Prize. It is now renowned as a prototype for the computer. [TM 154BOH]

$55,000

Full description and images available online
A PICTURE IS THE TEXT (MICROGRAPHIC DRAWING)

Enlarge these details to see the lines of script (which are legible in the original under magnification).
PICTURES (AND TEXT) WOVEN IN SILK

Full description and images available online