

TREASURES OF MANUSCRIPT ILLUMINATION

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THE ISABELLA BRIVIARY

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Protective bookcase and binding in embossed brown Morocco leather.

"The Isabella Breviary is one of the gems of the British Library's vast collection of illuminated manuscripts, reflecting both the artistic and political history of its day. (...) this transaction ranks as one of the most significant purchases of illuminated books in the entire history of the British Museum and Library."

Janet Backhouse (†), Former curator of illuminated manuscripts in the British Library



Conceived of as the most luxurious Flemish breviary, with each page masterfully illuminated by the finest Flemish painters: the Master of the Dresden Prayer-book, Gerard Horenbout, Gerard David, etc. An outstandingly magnificent manuscript of peerless beauty.



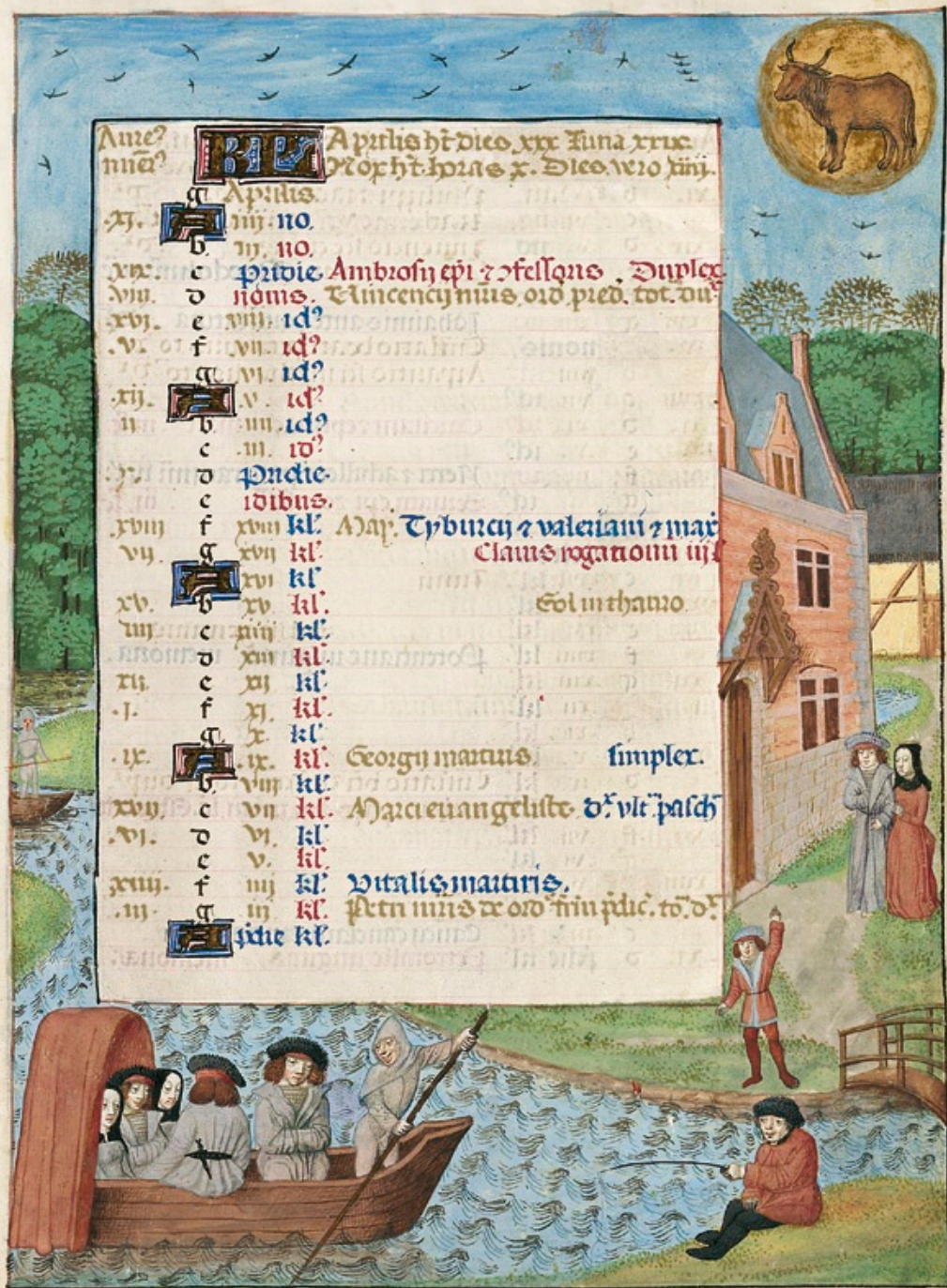
Having more texts than a book of hours, the breviary allows illuminators more artistic license, resulting in a greater variety of images.

Isabella the Catholic was given the manuscript in 1497 by her ambassador Francisco de Rojas on the occasion of the double marriage of her children, the Infante John of Asturias and Infanta Joanna, to the children of emperor Maximilian of Austria and duchess Mary of Burgundy, Margaret and Philip.

f. 191v, David and Goliath;
f. 174r, Pharaoh's soldiers
overwhelmed by the Red Sea;
f. 177v, Adam and Eve cast
out of Paradise (details).

- Shelf mark: Add. Ms. 18851.
- Date: last decade of the 15th c.
- Provenance: Flanders.
- Size: 230 x 160 mm.
- 1046 pages, all illuminated.
- Bound in embossed, brown Morocco leather.
- Full-colour commentary volume by Elisa Ruiz (Emeritus Professor of Palaeography, Universidad Complutense de Madrid), Nigel Morgan (Honorary Professor of the History of Art, University of Cambridge) and Scot McKendrick (Head of Western Manuscripts at the British Library).





f. 3r, Calendar: April.

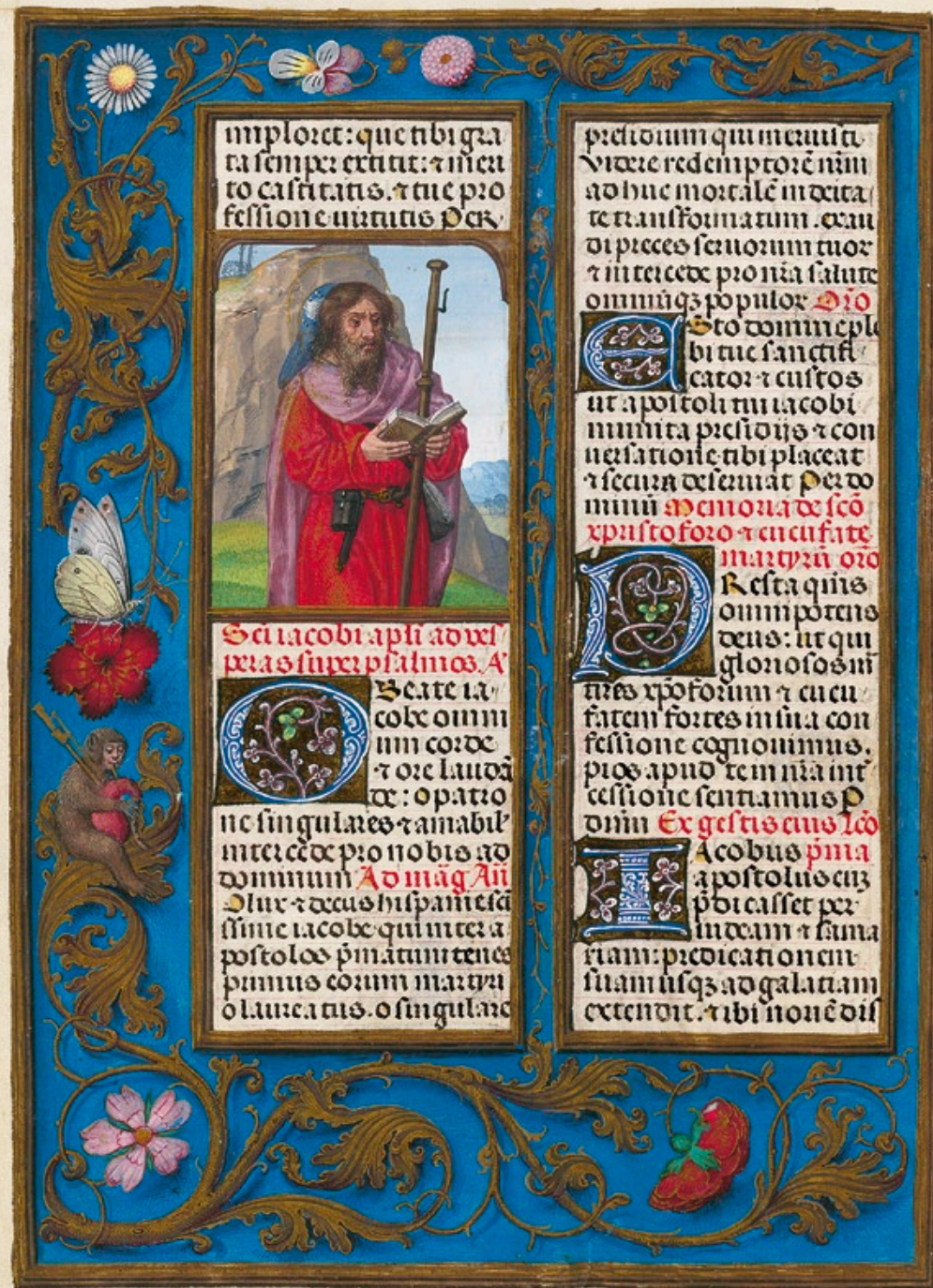
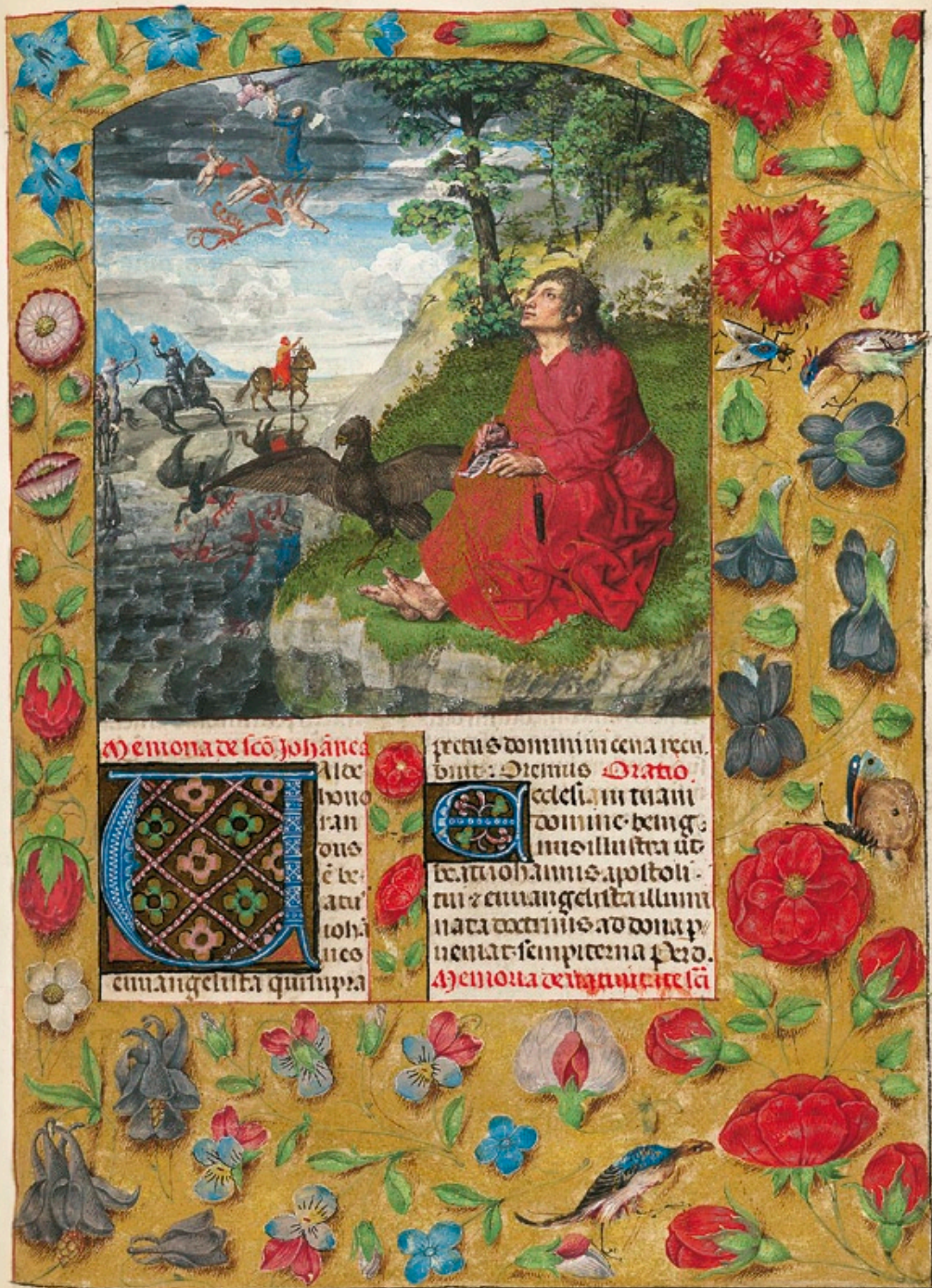
f. 173r, Abraham rescuing Lot from his enemies.



f. 111v, Nebuchadnezzar presides over the burning of books.



f. 252r, The parable of Dives and Lazarus.



SPLENDOR SOLIS

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This codex, dated 1582, is **the most beautiful treatise on alchemy ever made**. The imagination and lyricism of its truly marvellous illustrations are awe-inspiring even to those not familiar with this subject.

The secrets of kabbalah, astrology and alchemic symbolism are revealed on 22 folios bearing full-page illustrations with a wealth of colour and almost Baroque profusion of detail.

The codex has 100 pages written in a dainty, German Gothic script. The text is embellished with enormous, lavishly decorated initials that are, in themselves, a delight to behold.

- **Shelf mark:** Harley 3469.
- **Date:** Germany, 1582.
- **Size:** 230 x 330 mm.
- **100 pages, 22 full-page illuminations.**
- **Bound in crimson leather decorated with gold.**
- **Full-colour commentary volume by Jörg Völlnagel (Art historian, research associate at the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin), Thomas Hofmeier (Historian of Alchemy), Peter Kidd (former curator of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts at the Bodleian and British Libraries), Joscelyn Godwin.**



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f. 15r, *The philosophical tree.*



f. 19v, Rebis, the perfect hermaphrodite, with the philosophical egg.

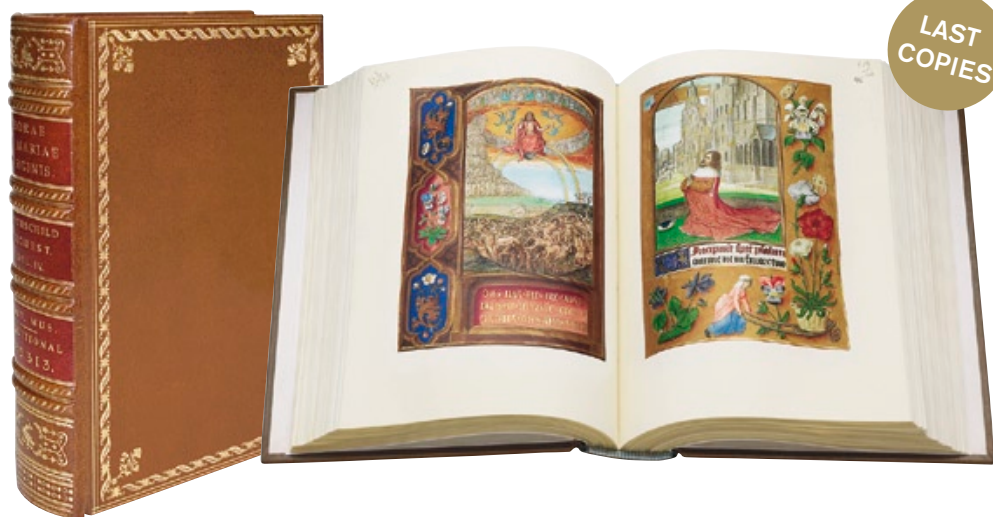


f. 26r, The sun rules in the sign of Leo.

THE BOOK OF HOURS OF JOANNA I OF CASTILE, JOANNA THE MAD

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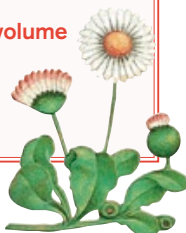
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The illuminations in this exceptional book of hours are the work of the Master of James IV of Scotland (Gerard Horenbout). Horenbout and Simon Bening are recognized as the leading Flemish illuminators of the first half of the 1500s.

The miniatures are characterised by their three-dimensional realism and great sophistication, particularly those that illustrate the cycle of the Passion. The faces, charged with emotion, along with the liveliness and realism of the illuminated scenes, make this codex **one of the most impressive works by the Flemish artist.**

- Shelf mark: Add. Ms. 35313.
- Date: c.1500.
- Provenance: Ghent.
- Size: ± 237 x 168 mm.
- 482 illuminated pages and 75 full-page illuminations.
- Bound in brown leather decorated with gold.
- Full-colour commentary volume by Carlos Miranda Garcia-Tejedor, Doctor in History (432 p.).



f. 158v, Queen Joanna in the encounter of the living and the three dead.



f. 4r, Calendar: June.



f. 34r, The building of the tower of Babel.



f. 50r, Prayer to the Virgin: "O intemerata".



f. 223v, St George.

TRACTATUS DE HERBIS

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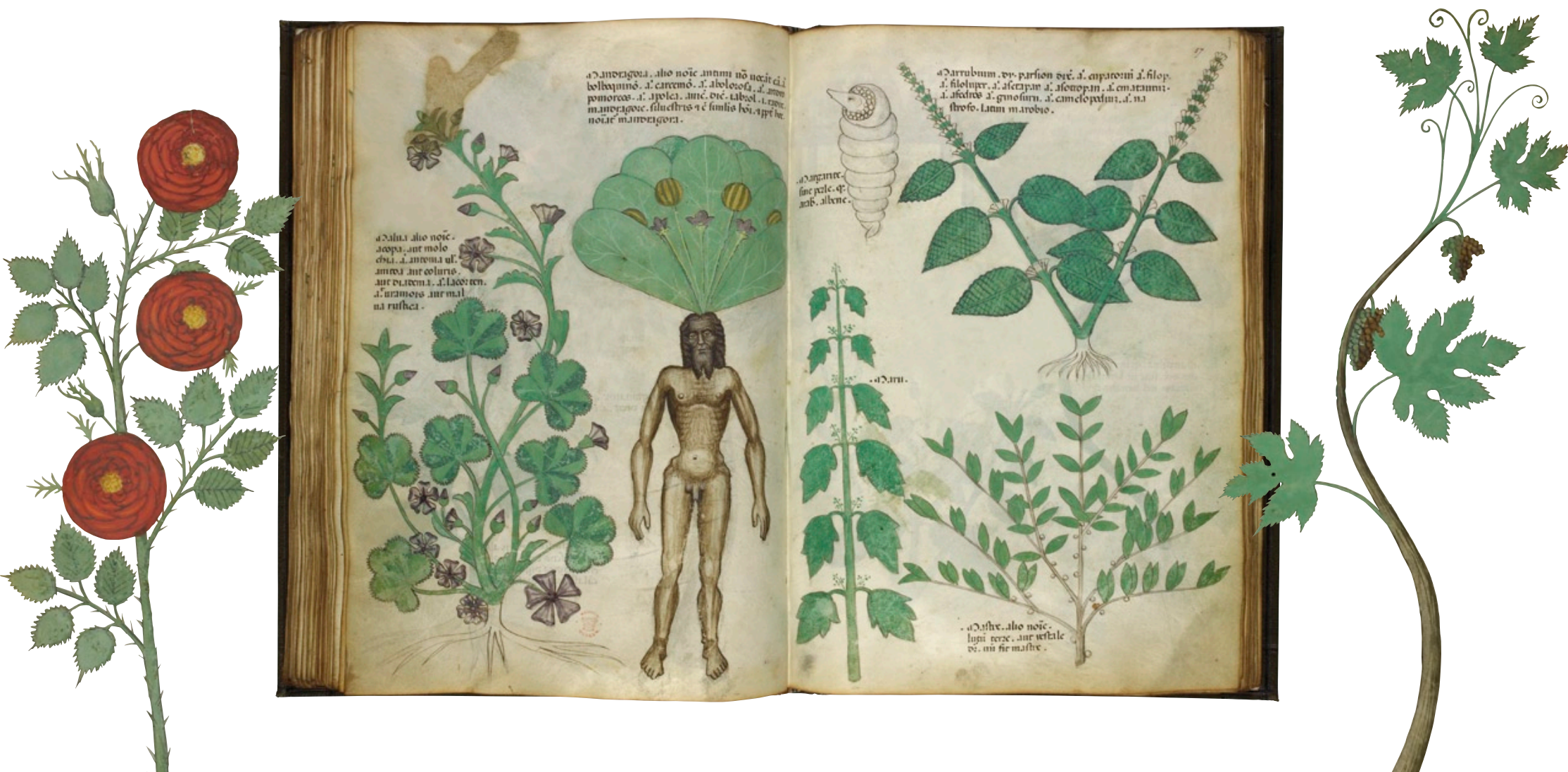
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- Shelf mark: Sloane Ms. 4016.
- Date: 1440.
- Provenance: Italy.
- Size: 380 x 260 mm.
- 218 pages, all illuminated.
- Bound in embossed, dark green leather.
- Full-colour commentary volume.

Herbal manuscripts preserve ancient Greek and Arabic writings describing the medical uses of plants. The major texts were translated into Latin in the Middle Ages and often illustrated.

This mid-15th century manuscript contains an alphabetical list of simples: reme-

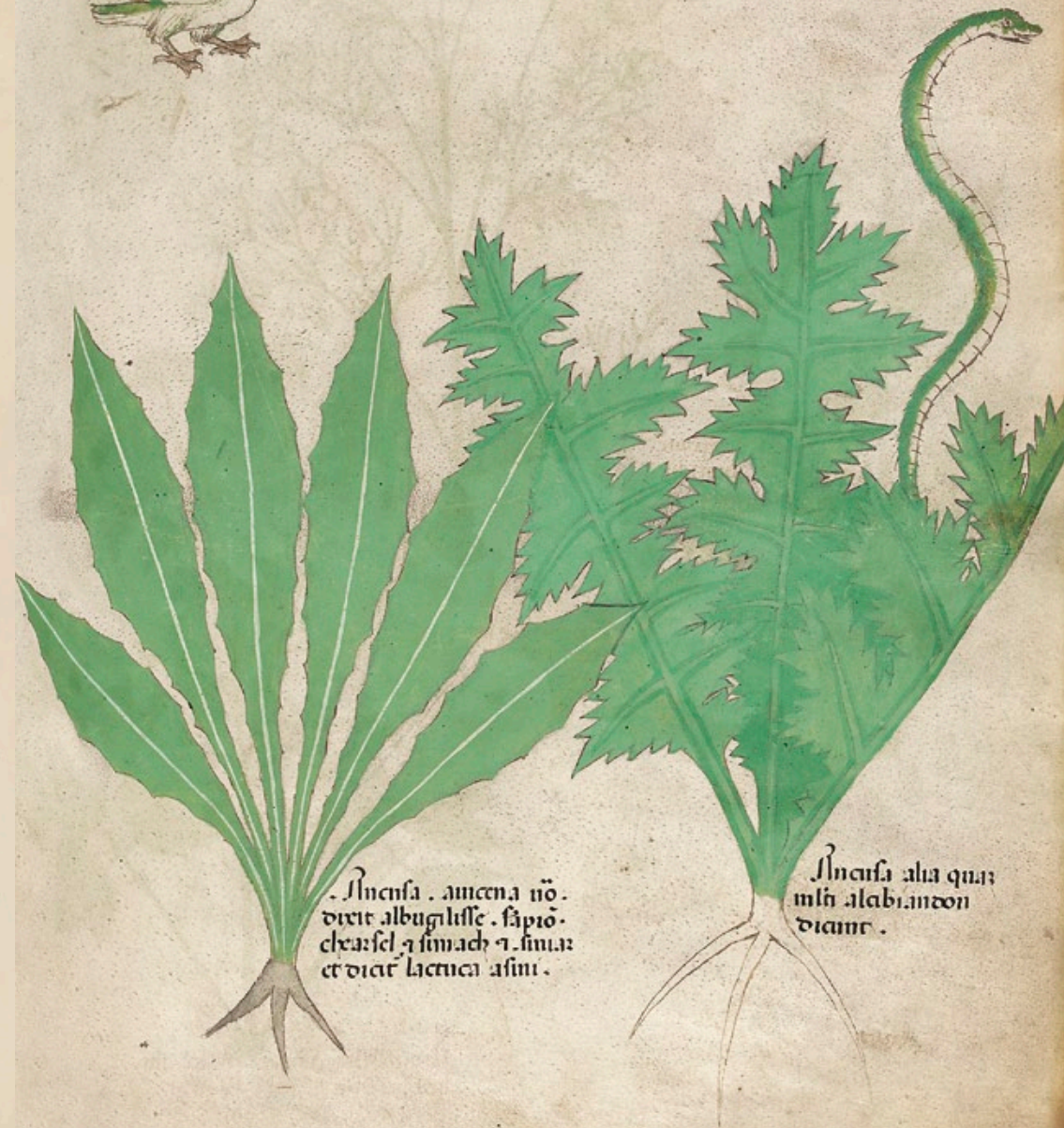
dies derived from single natural resources. Each simple is captioned with the plant's name and synonym, or a translation of its Arabic name. A richly illustrated codex with practically no text such as this one may have been made for book collectors as well as for medicinal use.



. Balsamus qđ arabice lelesem
ul' fructus qđ uerius est.



Anas.



. Anensa . amena nō .
dixit albuginisse . sapiō .
charsel ⁊ simach ⁊ simar
et dicit lactuca asini .

Incurfa alia quæ
mñ alabandon
dicunt.



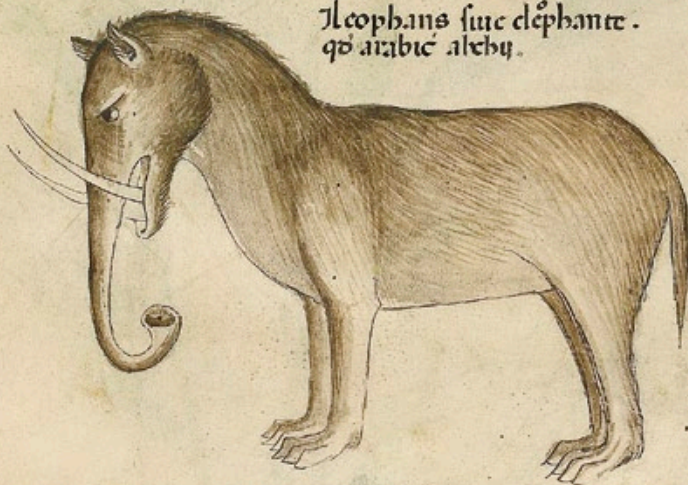
Leo. animal. quod arab.
lesar dicitur.



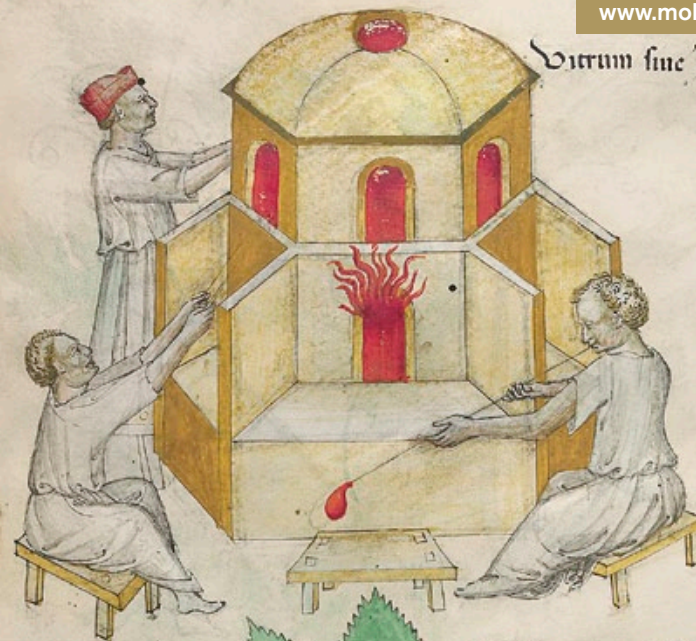
Leop. natus quod arabia.
humeinet.



Lepus silvestris.



Elephas sive elephante.
quod arabia. alchy.



Vitrum sine gage.



Alnus quod sap.
duday dicitur. et lreac.

Angula cabalina.
alio nomine apolaris
gr. vocat ei dicca. a.
strigino mamei. a. do
rigion. a. cechalis. a. lba.
bacana. a. benco. a. fufar.
ul. fufarelum.

LAST
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THE GREAT CANTERBURY PSALTER

BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE • PARIS

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- Shelf mark: Lat. 8846.
- Date: 13th c. and 14th c.
- Size: ± 480 x 325 mm.
- 356 pages, more than 140 miniatures illuminated with gold and 190 decorated initials painted on gold ground.
- Bound in brown leather decorated with gold.
- Full-colour commentary volume by Nigel Morgan (Honorary Professor of the History of Art, University of Cambridge), Rosa Alcoy (Barcelona University) and Klaus Reinhardt (Trier University), (296 p.).

The codex was executed in two different periods: Canterbury, c. 1200 and Catalonia, c. 1340. The part finished in the fourteenth-century was executed by Ferrer Bassa and his atelier.

The text, set in three columns, contains the Hebraic, Roman and Gallican version of the Psalms.

Numerous historiated initials (generally a king, a person in prayer, Christ or the Virgin with the Child) decorated with gold filigrees.

The manuscript belonged to the libraries of Jean de Berry, Margaret of Austria, Mary of Hungary and Napoleon I.

An outstanding masterpiece of English Gothic illumination and Italo-Gothic style.



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f. 1r, Creation



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