



Treasures

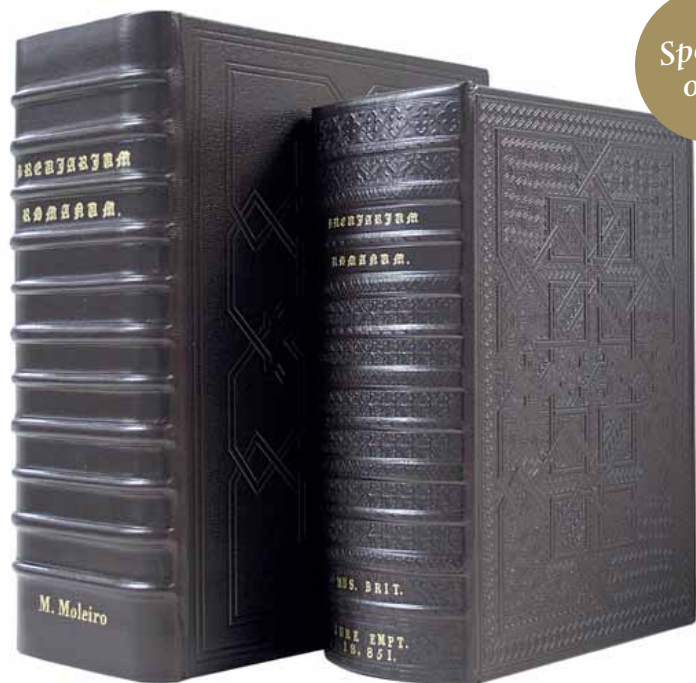
of Manuscript Illumination



THE ISABELLA BREVIARY

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"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



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Conceived of as **the most luxurious Flemish breviary**, with each page masterfully illuminated by the finest Flemish painters: the Master of the Dresden Prayerbook, 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 (Professor of Diplomacy and Palaeography, Universidad Complutense de Madrid), Nigel Morgan (Professor of the History of Art, University of Cambridge) and Scot McKendrick (Head of Western Manuscripts at the British Library).**



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f. 436v, Coats of arms of the Catholic Monarchs and their children and children-in-law

f. 437r, The crowning of Our Lady

COATS OF ARMS OF THE CATHOLIC MONARCHS AND THEIR CHILDREN AND CHILDREN-IN-LAW, f. 436v

This impressive miniature features the coat of arms of the Catholic Monarchs upon a mauve ground. The imposing eagle of St John, the tetramorph eagle of the Apocalypse, is present not only because Isabella was crowned on this saint's feast day but also because of her great devotion to St John the Evangelist. Whilst still an adolescent, Isabella said she wanted this eagle to be the support for her own coat of arms, as revealed by a drawing of hers dated May 15th 1473 (Madrid, RAH, Co. Salazar y Castro, K-37, f. 112v).



The fact that she called her only son John and her second daughter Joanna (the female version of John in Spanish) is also due to this devotion. In this miniature, the eagle's head is flanked by two phylacteries inscribed with the words *sub umbra alarum tuarum protege nos* (in the shadow of your wings protect us). Undulating beneath the coat of arms are another

three phylacteries with quotations from two psalms:

• *Pro patribus tuis nati sunt tibi filii. Constituisti eos principes super omnem terram* (Ps. 44: 17)

(In the stead of your parents shall your children be born unto you, and you shall make them the princes of all the earth)

• *Potens in terra erit semen eius: generatio rectorum benedicetur* (Ps. 111: 2)

(Powerful is the lineage of this seed on the earth: blessed be the generation of the righteous)

Both quotations are particularly eloquent taking into account **the Breviary's enormous political significance**. By marrying the children of Maximilian of Austria and Marie of Burgundy – at a time when America had just been discovered – these two children of the Catholic Monarchs did indeed become virtually “princes of all the earth”. In particular, this image of the coat of arms is a splendid tribute to the culmination of an extremely important political strategy achieved thanks to that double marriage.

The counterquartered coats of arms underneath are those of the two pairs of spouses. The arms of the children of the Spanish monarchs are the same as those of their parents, and those of the Hapsburg dynasty are quartered with in-escutcheon.



THE CROWNING OF OUR LADY, f. 437r

The image is the work of Gérard Horenbout. The most important aspect of this miniature is its symbolism because in addition to its appropriateness amongst the images of a breviary, **Our Lady's crowning is important as confirmation of the coronation of Isabella herself**. When Isabella's brother, Henry IV of Castile, died on December 11th 1474, she proclaimed herself queen that very day, setting her at loggerheads with her niece, Joanna the Beltraneja, in a civil war that was to last four years.

The painting shows the Holy Trinity crowning Our Lady. The Father and the Son, sharing the same throne and both with a sceptre, hold the crown. Between them, above the throne, is the Holy Ghost shown as a dove.

Francisco de Rojas gives the queen the codex with the following words inscribed in gold upon the brown ground of the decorative border:

*Diue Elisabeth,
Hispaniarum et
Siscilie (sic) Regine, etc.
christianissime, potentissime, semper
auguste, supreme domine
sue clementissime
Franciscus de Roias,
eiusdem maiestatis
humilimus seruus ac
creatura, optime de se merens
breuiarium hoc ex
obsequio obtulit.*

To Isabella the divine,
Queen of the Spains
and of Sicily, your
most Christian, powerful,
ever august and most clement
supreme lady,
I, Francisco de Rojas,
your humble servant
and creature of your majesty herself,
deserving of the very most,
do give you this breviary.

The breviary was undeniably a splendid gift, the best possible, not only because of the first-rate technique and artistry of its images but also **because of its political significance and because it is the best symbol of the culmination of a political project on a world scale**. Miniatures like this one of the coronation demonstrate not only how important the events following the death of Henry IV were to Isabella (her efforts to obtain the crown and her yearning to be acknowledged by her subjects), but also the determined desire to unify the Iberian Peninsula that characterised her reign.



APOLOGY OF THE CONQUEST OF GRANADA IN 1492, f. 173r

Abraham saves Lot and is rewarded by Melchizedek

This painting of Psalm 109 may be interpreted as the protection of God and a prefiguration of the Messiah as a king and priest. The Holy Trinity is shown overhead in a rather unusual form: God the Father, on the right with a papal tiara, holds the orb, whilst God the Son, on the left in a warrior's garb, wears the imperial crown of the Holy Roman German Empire. Between the two are the Holy Scriptures instead of the usual dove of the Holy Ghost.

The battle scene underneath, as told in Genesis 14: 14-16, shows Abraham in the centre with a golden helmet and breastplate striking down one of the kings and followers of Chodorlahomor who were holding Abraham's nephew, Lot, captive. A downcast, bearded Lot can be seen on the right of the scene with his hands tied and the inscription "lod" upon his helmet. Abraham's followers fight the other three kings and their armies. The continuation of the previous tale can be seen in the background: Abraham

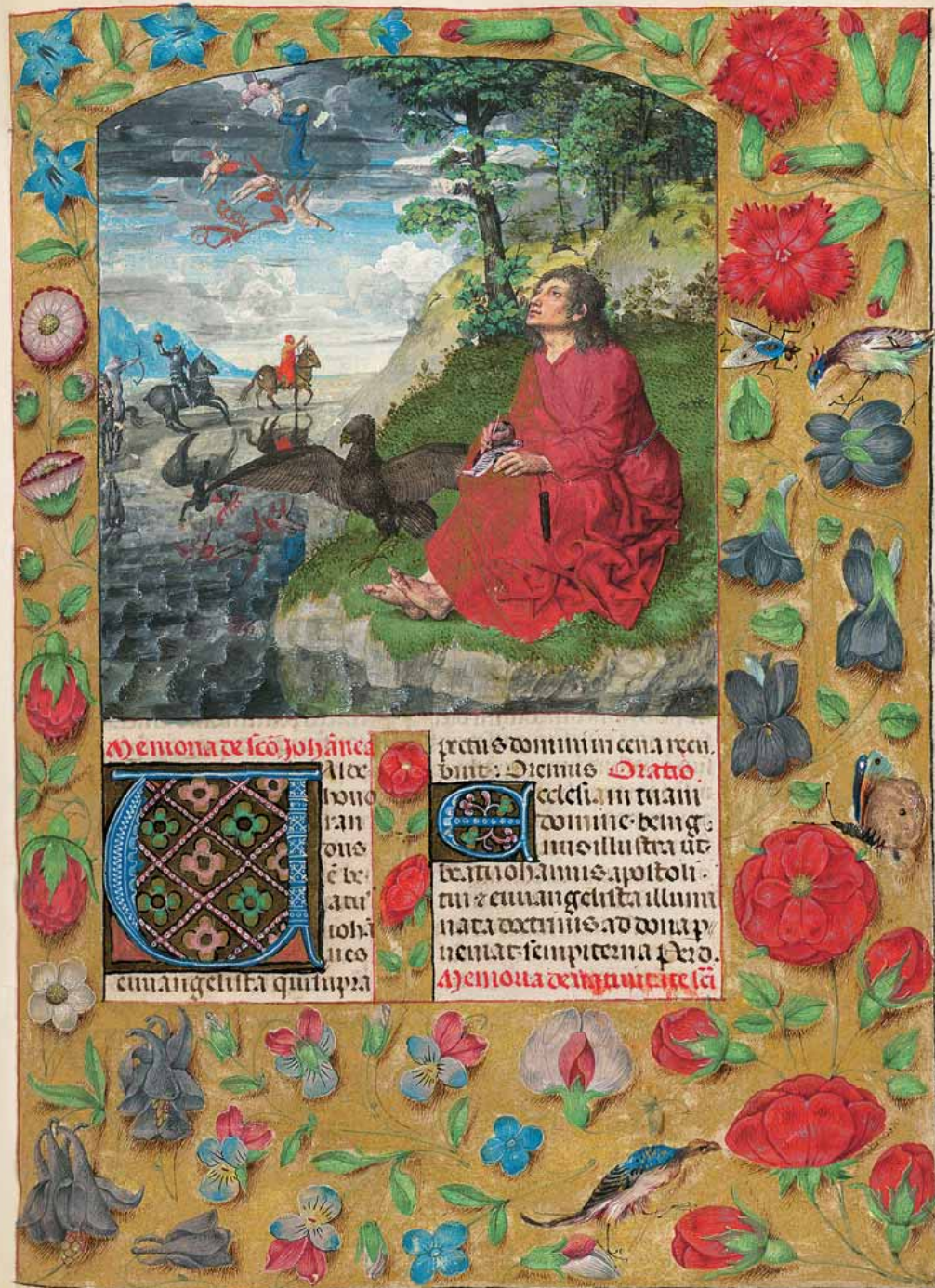
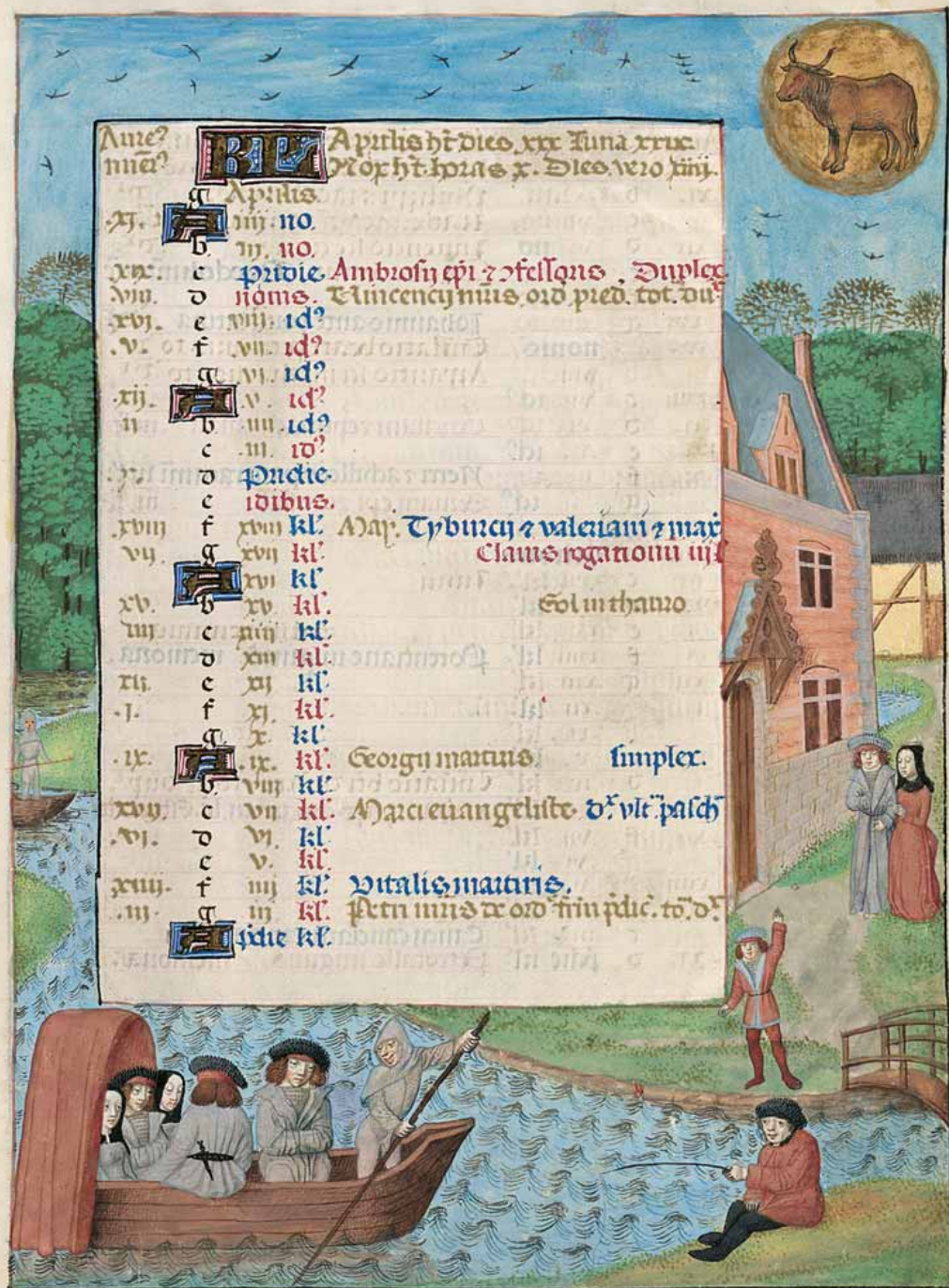
(portrayed as the first horseman in the battle beneath the word "abraham") being blessed by a tonsured Melchizedek (identified by the inscription "melchisedech"), the high priest and king of Salem with a loaf in his right hand and a container of wine in his left. The army in the background, amongst which four figures on horseback can be distinguished, shown emerging from a fortified city probably represents the four kings who captured Lot as he left Sodom.

The reference to the need to resort to military force to safeguard the purity and solidity of the Christian faith is probably most noteworthy aspect of this miniature, undoubtedly intended to irrefutably justify the conquest of Granada in 1492. The historical significance of this is enormous, not only because of what it represented after eight centuries of Islamic occupation of the Iberian Peninsula but also in a Christian Europe afraid of the proximity of the powerful Islam.



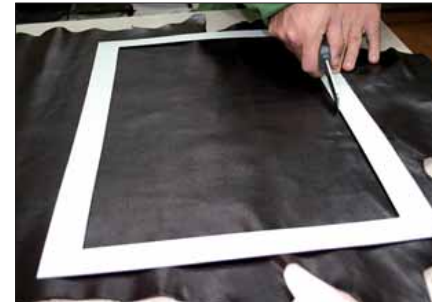
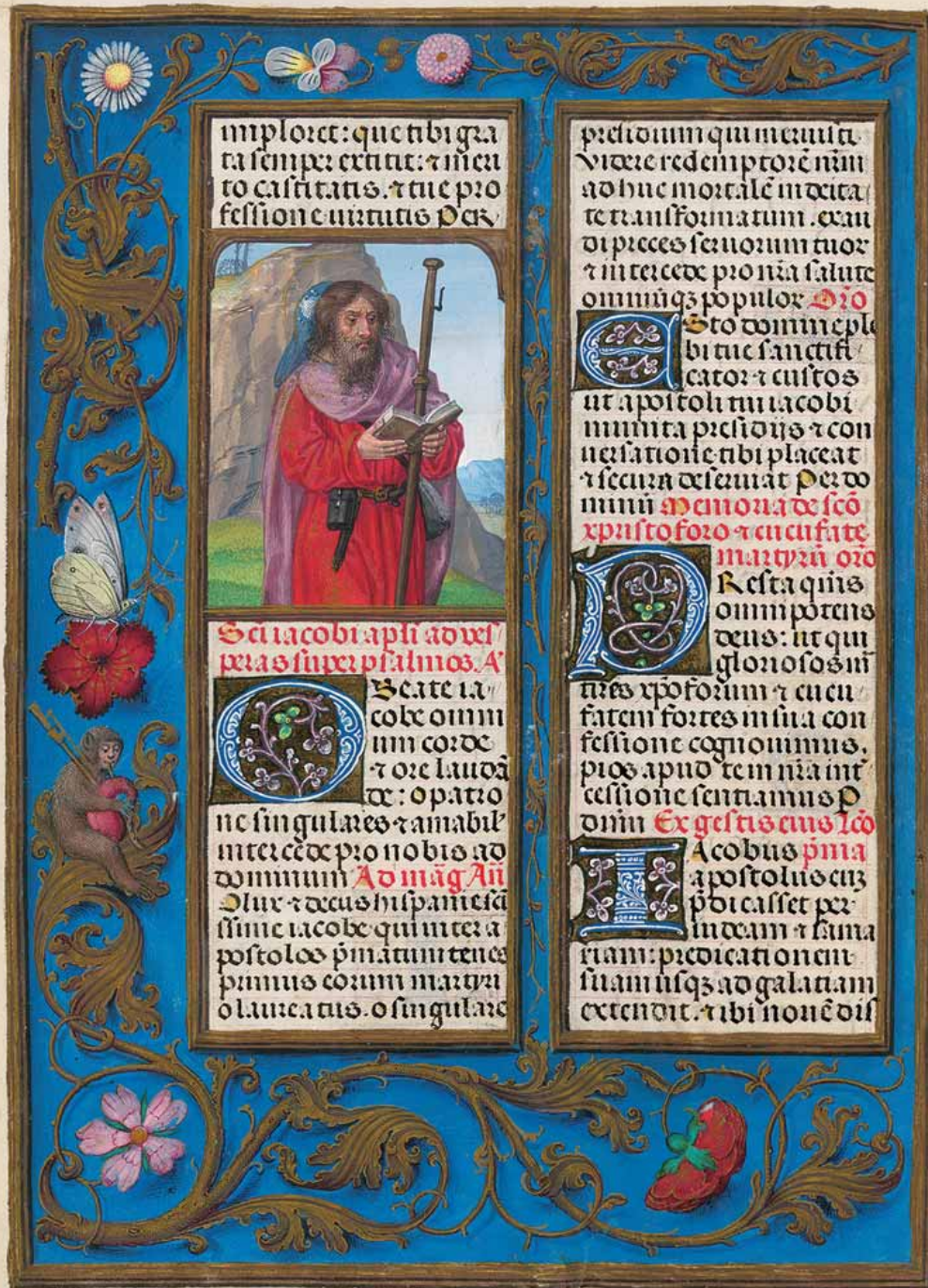
f. 173r, Abraham rescuing Lot from his enemies







BINDING OF THE ISABELLA BRIVIARY



Cutting the leather



Blind-tooled back cover and end lining



Stamping the ribs



Pallet and title



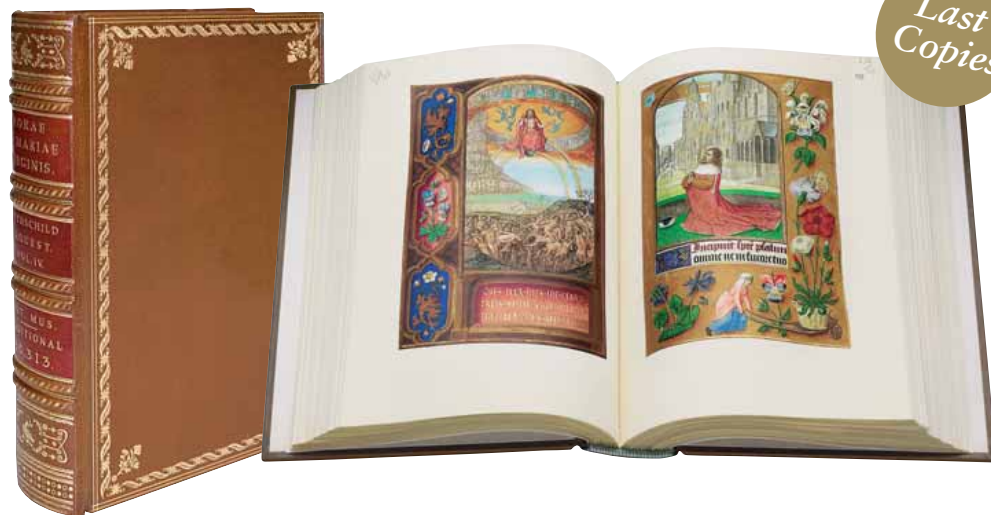
Headbanding and cut



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

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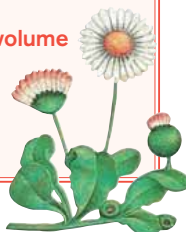


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The illuminations in this exceptional book of hours are the work of the Master of James IV of Scotland (Gerard Horenbout). Horenbout and Simon Bening are recognized as the leading Flemish illuminators of the first half of the 1500s.

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 García-Tejedor, Doctor in History (432 p.).



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f. 4r, Calendar: June



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

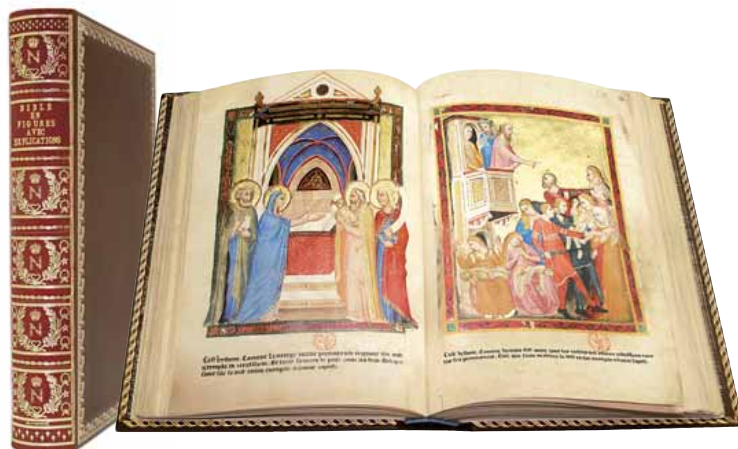


f. 34r, The building of the tower of Babel

BIBLE MORALISÉE OF NAPLES

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The *Bible moralisée* of Naples – commissioned by Robert of Naples, also known as Robert the Wise – takes us through more than a century of the dynastic history of France and Italy.

This single-volume Bible features a juxtaposition of two illustrative formulae that make this codex an exceptional item. The first 128 illuminations belong to the Bible moralisée genre: all of the paintings are divided into two registers, the upper one containing the biblical scenes and the lower, their moralisations. The 76 full-page paintings in the New Testament cycle contrast sharply with the preceding cycle, taking us into a different spiritual and figurative realm of mainly Giottesque inspiration. This manuscript is one of the rarest and most

masterful examples of truly Neapolitan painting, a paradoxical synthesis of the finest artistic trends from the time before the homogenisation of international Gothic.

Bibliothèque
nationale de
France



- Shelf mark: Français 9561.
- Date: c. 1340-1350.
- Provenance: Naples.
- Size: 310 x 210 mm.
- 384 pages, 204 illuminations with gold.
- Bound in brown leather decorated with gold.
- Full-colour commentary volume.



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C'est l'ystoire. Coment sainte marie magdalene l'ana deses lermes les pies aint
seignour ihu crist. a les effua deses cheueus. Ensi que saint luc le dist en son euan
gile. V septime capite.



f. 160v, Mary Magdalene anoints the feet of Jesus

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 marvelous 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

TRACTATUS DE HERBIS

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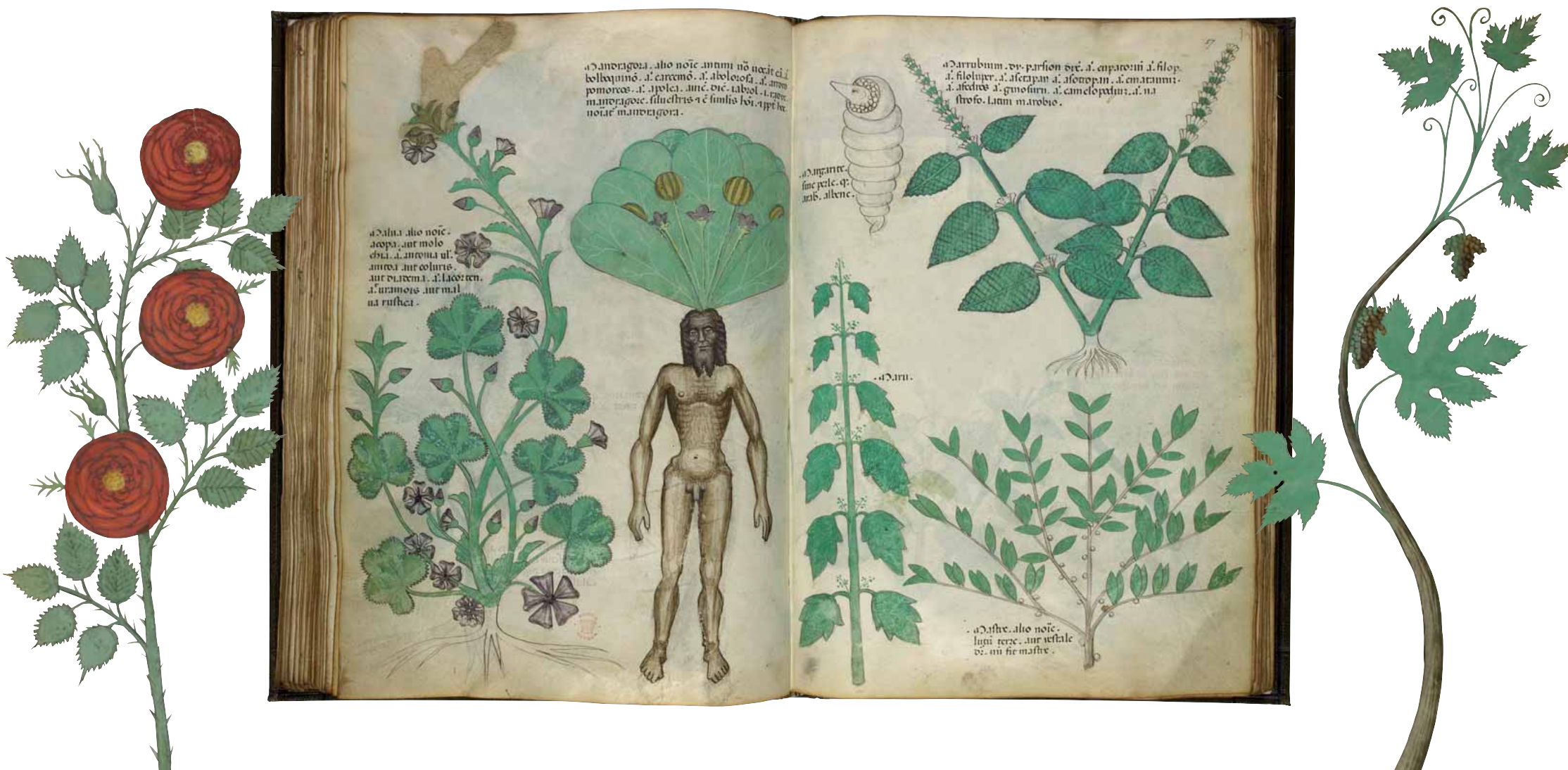
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- Shelf mark: Sloane Ms. 4016.
- Date: 1440.
- Provenance: Italy.
- Size: 380 x 260 mm.
- 218 pages, all illuminated.
- Bound in embossed, dark green leather.
- Full-colour commentary volume.

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-

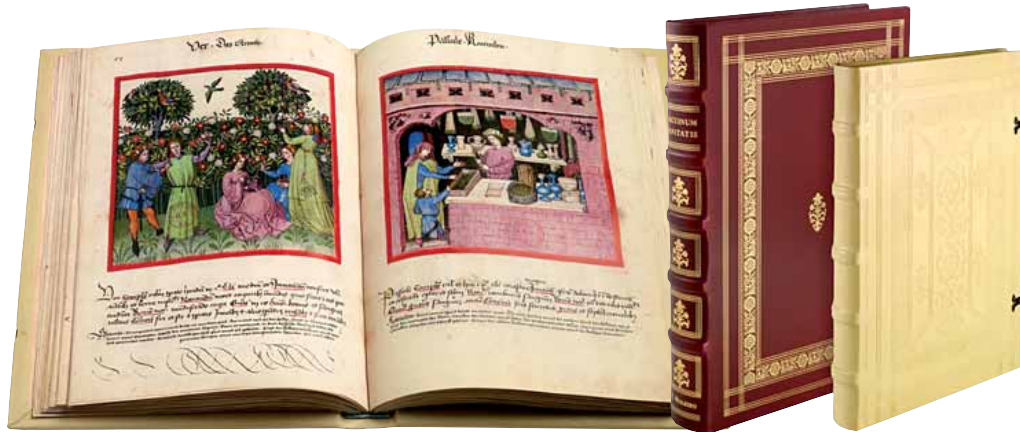
dies derived from single natural resources. Each simple is captioned with the plant's name and synonym, or a translation of its Arabic name. A richly illustrated codex with practically no text such as this one may have been made for book collectors as well as for medicinal use.



TACUINUM SANITATIS

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- Shelf mark: Ms. Lat 9333
- Date: mid- 15th century.
- Provenance: Rhineland.
- Size: 355 x 225 mm.
- 216 pages, all illuminated
- Bound in embossed ivory colour leather.
- Full-colour commentary volume by Alain Touwaide (Smithsonian Institution), Eberhard König (Freie Universität Berlin) and Carlos Miranda Garcia-Tejedor (Doctor in History), (320 p.).

Princes and powerful figures learned the rules of hygiene of the rational medicine of the late Middle Ages on the *Tacuinum Sanitatis*.

It concerns the six elements necessary for maintaining one's daily health: food and drink, air, movement and rest, sleep and wakefulness, secretions and excretions, changes and states of mind.

Each page features a miniature and a legend stating its nature, characteristics of what is deemed to be better or preferable for human health, the benefit it offers, any adverse effects it may have and the remedy for such adverse effects.

This codex is not only a source of interesting health information but also an iconographical source for the study of Medieval daily life.



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Venatio terrestris Das Jagen zu Lande.



Venatio terrestris Comple infirmitat et epicit. Et que e facile venatione. Inu. subtilis. hunc. Non. debilitat corpus et epicit. hunc. non. ai. unctione facta in balneo. Conet. mag. tpe. et talis. hunc. omib. exceptis. pua. tpe. tpe. omib. rationib.

Das Jagen zu Lande. hant. mind. trüch. net. das. ring. ist. das. best. Es. mach. die. feist. laiten. subtil. Es. sehw. den. leib. und. trüch. net. dar. um. soll. den. leib. im. bad. simpt. mer. den. tempe. rierten. den. warmen. den. feisten. all. in. v. l. genommen. den. jüngen. temperierten. zu. allen. seiten. mind. in. allen. landen.

f. 93r, Hunting

VALLARD ATLAS

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- Shelf mark: HM 29.
- Date: 1547.
- Size: $\pm 280 \times 390$ mm.
- 68 pages, 15 double-page nautical charts.
- Red leather binding with gold decoration.
- Full-colour commentary volume by Luís Filipe F. R. Thomaz (Director of the Institute for Oriental Studies of the Portuguese Catholic University), Dennis Reinhartz (Emeritus professor at the University of Texas in Arlington) and Carlos Miranda García-Tejedor (Doctor in History).

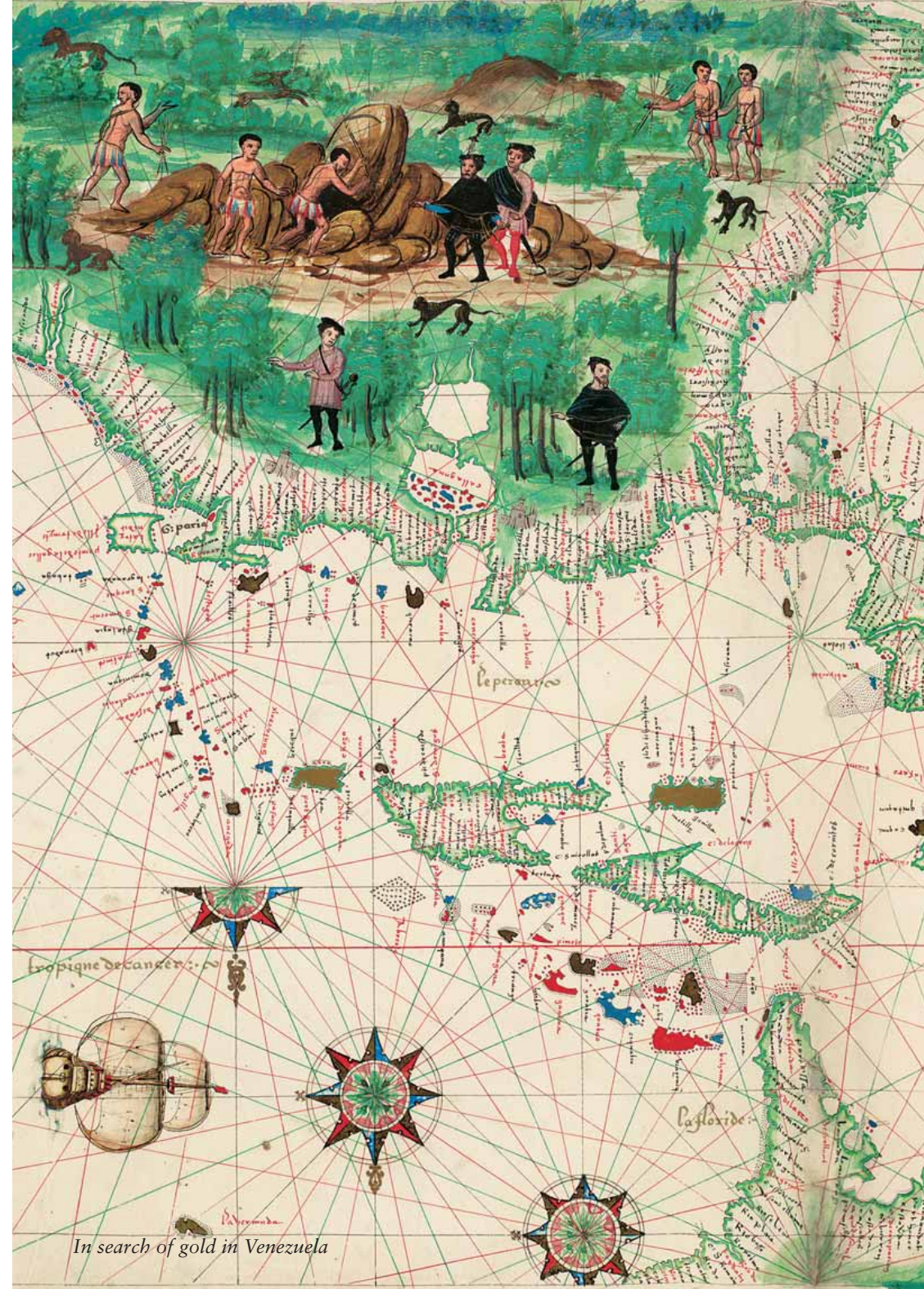
Probably made in Dieppe (France), this world atlas contains 15 nautical charts lavishly illustrated, as well as nautical information, tables of declinations, etc. Its first known owner was Nicolas Vallard of Dieppe.

In addition to the Portuguese plans and geographical content, this work also passed through the hands of a professional illuminator who created fabulous images that are the equal of those in the *Atlas Miller*.

This anonymous atlas also includes beautiful images depicting exotic non-European peoples, episodes from the colonisation process, etc. One example of the latter is an image of the French colonists of Roberval in 1542-1543, in Canada, which had recently been discovered by Jacques Cartier (1534-36 and 1541).



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- 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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YO, JOSÉ ANTONIO CANEDA GOYANES,
Notario de Barcelona, Colegio de Cataluña

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M. MOLEIRO EDITOR, S.A.

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Todo ello según el acta autorizada por mí, el dieciséis de julio del dos mil cuatro, número 564 de mi protocolo.

The foregoing is pursuant to document number 564 in my records which I authenticated on July 16th of the year two thousand and four.

Barcelona, 20 de julio del 2004.

Barcelona, July 20th 2004.



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