

BOOK CULTURE IN THE MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN:  
Selections from Special Collections and Rare Books, McGill University

**Exhibition Catalogue**



Initial "A", Bologna, late 13th- early 14th century (MS 47). Photo: Klaus Fiedler

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# BOOK CULTURE IN THE MEDIEVAL MEDITERRANEAN: EXHIBITION CATALOGUE

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## INTRODUCTION

This exhibition highlights the rich and diverse cultures surrounding book production throughout the medieval Mediterranean. Drawing on the considerable holdings of McGill's Rare Books and Special Collections, it includes many items that have never before been exhibited. Visitors will encounter complete copies of the Qur'an, the gospels, and books of hours in addition to a wide array of single leaves in Greek, Arabic, Latin, and Persian.

The exhibition is arranged thematically highlighting cross-cultural connections. The scientific and cosmological works, for example, feature an anonymous Latin treatise on logic and a vernacular illustrated herbal leaf exhibited alongside the celebrated Farrukh nāmāh and the 'Ajā'ib al-makhlūqāt wa gharā'ib al-mawjūdāt. Similarly, under the rubric of power and storytelling, an exquisitely detailed genealogical scroll adumbrating the kings of England is juxtaposed with lavishly illustrated leaves of the Persian royal epic, the Shahnameh, in order to illuminate distinct modes for visualizing sovereignty. Together these materials evoke the varied conceptions of the natural, political, and cosmic world, while also attesting to dynamic traditions of script, ornamentation, and illumination across the many cultures of the medieval Mediterranean.

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## CASE I: BOOK MAKERS AND MATTERS—SCRIPTS, SCRIBES, AND THEIR AFTERLIVES

### Introduction to Book Culture: Books, Scripts, and Ornamentation

*By Flora Dunster*

Unlike a literary career today, bookmaking in the medieval Mediterranean was an inherently religious process. The majority of books produced were religious texts, and the work of the scribe was conceived of as a spiritual act. The Bible and the Qur'an, the holy books of Christianity and Islam respectively, are the codified words of the prophets of these religions, and the writing of these words was a way to demonstrate devotion to God.

Throughout the medieval Mediterranean, scriptoria were often located in centers of religious study, which also housed extensive libraries of both religious and secular texts: monasteries in Western Europe and Byzantium and mosque complexes throughout the Islamicate. In Islamic culture, calligraphy was considered a superior art form, second only to poetry. Scripts such as *kufic* and *naskh* were developed by court secretaries and scribes, whose followers imitated their style and helped to popularize certain variations. Elaborate scripts also developed in Europe, as seen in the various Gothic hands found in books across the continent.

Ornamentation is also a key feature of luxury medieval manuscripts cross-culturally. Christian texts are known for their illuminated letters depicting both narrative scenes and flowers and animals in rich detail, such as the letters "P" and "A" on view. Islamic texts, equally rich in execution, colour, and gold leafing, elevates to the highest artistic levels non-narrative patterns and abstract elements.

By juxtaposing varied book traditions from throughout the medieval Mediterranean, this exhibition reveals unexpected points of intersection in terms of materiality and form across confessional lines. The cross-cultural arrangement of this material evokes the diverse conceptions of the natural, political, and cosmic world, while also attesting to dynamic traditions of script, ornamentation, and illumination across the many interrelated cultures of the medieval Mediterranean.

## WHOLE BOOKS

### **QUR'AN, HYDERABAD, BETWEEN 1282/1865-6 AND 1289/1872-3 (RBD A20)**

*28.6 cm × 16.7 cm/28.6 cm × 15 cm. 409 pages of ink on paper. Lacquer cover.*

The Nizam of Hyderabad, a former monarchy in the Hyderabad region of India lasting from 1720-1948, was known for its vast wealth and adherence to artistic traditions. India was settled by Muslims in the 8th century, and Hyderabad in particular was home to a large population of Urdu speaking Muslims until the end of the monarchy (Ettinghausen, 8).

This Qur'an was written and illuminated in Hyderabad between 1282/1865-6 and 1289/1872-3. The manuscript is written on 409 pages of fine, glossy, cream coloured non-European paper. The text is laid on thick and consistent lines, in a fully vocalized Western Indian Naskh hand with interlinear Persian translation in Nasta'liq. While the main Qur'anic text is black, the translation - which is situated directly below each line of naskh - is in red ink. These main pages of text are bordered by a golden frame which is surrounded by lines of deep blue ink. Outside of this border is a marginal area for additional decoration (primarily abstract or vegetal), and comments. Surah headings, which demarcate sections or chapters of the text, are enclosed in rectangular headpieces, and written in deep blue ink on a gold background. The manuscript opens with a double frontispiece in the Kashmiri style, which is intricately illuminated in blue, red, and green ink, as well as gold leafing. The decoration is patterned with small flowers and leaves of different styles, many of which are occupy the outer area of the page, and are gold. Towards the centre of the frontispiece is a small area of text, and surrounding this is a border decorated with small red and pink flowers, interspersed with a leaf pattern.

The text's lacquer cover is perhaps its most striking feature. Lacquer and varnish, techniques originating in China, came to be used in Iran, Turkey and India from the 15th to the 19th Centuries (Gacek, 138). Lacquer was spread on pasteboard - made by gluing individual leaves of paper together - painted, and then lacquered again. Lacquer is often seen as an extension of the Persian miniature tradition, as it allowed for the use of a wide array of colours, as well as for increasing experimentation in painting style and content. The use of lacquer covers allowed for the illumination of a text to be combined with its binding. Therefore, with Qur'ans we see the combination of all three book arts utilized to great effect, namely calligraphy, binding, and illumination.

The cover of this example is richly decorated with a floral motif. Large red and yellow flowers stem from one smaller, central, yellow flower, reaching into each of the four corners. This central motif is bordered by marginal decoration that mimics the larger flowers in the centre of the cover, though this decoration shows red flowers with yellow highlights. The entirety of this decoration takes place on a black background. The depiction of these flowers is naturalistic, though the cover forms a sort of imaginary garden in the sense that the assortment is improbable, and that the larger flowers all stem from the same location. The reliance on vegetal and floral motifs is typical of Qur'anic decoration, as is the heavy use of gold within the manuscript itself.

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## **NOMOCANON, CANONICAL RULES FOR CONSECRATION AND PRECEDENCY OF ECCLESIASTICAL DIGNITARIES, GREEK, 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (GREEK 4)**

*15 x 21 cm. Original stamped leather on wooden boards. 407 pages. Ink on paper.*

Produced in the 15th Century, this large leather bound book is a *nomocanon*, or collection of ecclesiastical law. Titled by McGill as "Canonical Rules for Consecration and Precedency of Ecclesiastical Dignitaries," the book contains 407 pages of writing in Greek miniscule. The book is quite stout, with the bulk of the document written on thick paper, and the cover consisting of stamped leather mounted on wooden boards. The clasp to hold the manuscript shut is missing, demarcated by metal studs on the covers front and back.

The *nomocanon* is common only to the Eastern church, and served as a legal text in this context until the 18th Century (Britannica). Two variations of the text were recognized by the Greek Church: *Nomocanon 50 titulorum* and the *Nomocanon 14 titulorum*. Slavic churches recognized a separate variation of the text. The *nomocanon* is unique in that it represents a historical alliance between church and state, containing and merging a compilation of ecclesiastical and civil law. Such texts began to disappear from use in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and were eventually replaced by manuscripts of a similar nature, but containing strictly ecclesiastical law.

This particular *nomocanon* is written in Greek miniscule text, a form of script used in Byzantine and Greek manuscripts from the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries. Given the nature of work to which Greek miniscule was applied, it can effectively be thought of as clerical writing, and was "formed with exact precision" (Thompson, 220). More specifically, the form of Greek miniscule used most commonly in the 15th Century is *codices recentiores*, a more cursive form of writing than seen in earlier Greek manuscripts (Thompson, 250). The text is illuminated simply with geometric and other abstract patterns in red and black ink, and the finesse of the decoration suggests that it was likely executed with a quill pen. It also appears that the manuscript was written with good quality ink; Edward Maunde Thompson suggests in *An Introduction to Greek and Latin Paleography* that ink in 15<sup>th</sup>-century manuscripts is usually a faded grey colour, while both the red and black inks in this instance retain vibrancy and clarity.

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**BOOK OF HOURS, FLEMISH, LATE 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY MCGILL 158**

*136 loose leaves. 11 cm x 8.2 cm. Written surface .065 cm x .044 cm. Ink on vellum.*

Book of Hours manuscripts are often thought of in relation to private, female devotion. Though often true, this is not always the case, as is seen in this particular Book of Hours originating from late-15<sup>th</sup> century Northern France or Flanders. Written in Latin, though titled "*Heure de la Vierge*," the book consists of 136 loose leaves of vellum, with text in neat cursive Gothic. In addition to standard border illuminations, consisting primarily of vegetal and floral motifs with no apparent narrative function, the book contains a number of flourished initials, and four figural illuminations in the form of historiated initials. With the exception of a recurring strawberry motif in the border illuminations, which alludes to the Virgin, purity, and martyrdom (Fisher, 114), the decoration places little emphasis on female imagery, and instead depicts a number of male saints.

The historiated illuminations are all located in a section of the book which includes 'memoriae or suffrages to various saints, two prayers to the virgin, followed by suffrages to the son.' It is typical of a Book of Hours to include a number of suffrages, or memorials, to various saints near the end of the volume. These generally recount an episode from the saint's life, or might instead focus on an aspect of their holiness. Two of the four historiated initials are unidentified, two depicting what appear to be the same figure, a saint dressed in a monk's habit with tonsured hair. Both images depict the figure standing in a room with a green and black checked floor, though in one image this room looks out onto a pastoral scene, while in the second the room opens onto a tree dotted hill that is bisected by a sort of balcony or porch. The third initial is over painted. The page shows evidence of scraping, and the titulus has been changed. This is likely a donor scene, and depicts a number of figures in red and blue robes on a gold background, standing before a kneeling figure who proffers something (perhaps the book itself) toward them.

The fourth initial is the only identifiable figure, and shows St. Bernard of Clairvaux. St. Bernard stands in the same room as the previous two figures, with a green and black checked floor, though in this instance the background depicts a fence like barrier in front of a decorated red wall. He wears a black robe and carries a staff. Underneath him is a small red devil, at whom his staff is pointed. St. Bernard was famed for his pioussness and the lengths he went to avoid temptation, and is thus often depicted with a chained devil. It is said that "the devil claimed to know seven psalm verses that would ensure salvation when recited every day but said that he would not reveal their identity to Bernard. On hearing this, the saint informed the devil that he would henceforth recite all the psalms every day in order to be sure to say the seven particular verses. The devil was so frightened at the thought of such a display of piety that he immediately revealed the identity of the verses" (Getty). The last section of the book is identified as "*les sept vers de St. Bernard*," a supplementary prayer in keeping with the illumination that falls earlier in the text. Supplementary prayers became popular in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and the Verses of St. Bernard was a common one, as were the Fifteen Joys of the Virgin and the Mass of St. Gregory (McGuire, 338).

In addition to the historiated initials, the book is also decorated with a number of flourished initials, a technique used from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Flourished initials

were painted with a quill rather than a brush, allowing for precision in articulating circular and geometric patterns around the letter itself.

### **Bibliography and further reading**

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[www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=2850](http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/artObjectDetails?artobj=2850).

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### **BREVIARIUM ROMANUM, NORTH ITALY, EARLY 15TH CENTURY (MS 159)**

*543 bound leaves, inside ornate metal case. 9.5 x 7 cm. Written surface 5 x 4 cm. Ink on vellum. Latin.*

This small book is a 15<sup>th</sup>-century North Italian breviary, a liturgical book containing the texts used in the celebration of the divine office. A breviary typically contains prayers, hymns, psalms and specific readings, and was consulted daily by the clergy of the Catholic Church. Breviaries were not usually owned by laypeople, for whom the Book of Hours, a condensed version of the breviary, was developed. The daily prayers and readings changed according to the liturgical calendar, included at the beginning of the breviary to aid its use.

This miniature breviary was probably carried in the pocket of its owner to be consulted throughout the day. Because of this type of treatment, the original binding no longer remains and has been replaced, probably in the nineteenth century in France. Stanley C. Bagg of Montreal purchased the book in Marseille in 1868, as is inscribed on the front and end paste-down endpapers, and the clasp has a fleur-de-lis decoration. We can speculate that the book was re-bound in Marseille in preparation for its sale to Mr. Bagg, hence the French decoration of this Italian book.

In 1457 Pope Calixtus III enjoined the feast of the transfiguration on August 6th for general observance. Its exclusion here suggests that this breviary was made before 1457 (Hatzopoulos), placing it in an early Renaissance context, although it was not until around this time that the Renaissance spread from Florence to northern Italy. There are no miniature illustrations, but many exquisite illuminated initials with decoration extending up and down the margins are scattered amongst the pages to add visual interest. A seven-line 'A' on folio 429 recto is a particularly good example, connected to an accompanying 'D' by a gold rod that spans the whole left margin and sprouts multi-coloured leaves and flowers.

The text is written by one scribe in small Gothic cursive in dark brown ink, with red ink rubrics. There are 543 leaves, and the manuscript is in good condition, although there are some holes that continue through multiple leaves. The nineteenth-century binding is in faded yellow vellum and the clasp is in brass. There are four fleurs-de-lis in a circular formation, cut out from the clasp to reveal the pages behind, and the clasp is fixed to the binding with metal pins.



The breviary was presented to the McGill library by Miss Mabel Molson on March 25, 1954.

This object's file includes the following hand-written description by Dionysios Hatzopoulos:

Page 1

Breviarum Romanum. In Latin, on vellum. First half of fifteenth century (ante 1457). Written by one scribe in small Gothic cursive, probably in Northern Italy. 543 leaves, 095 x 070 mm., writing surface 050 x 040 mm. One column, 16 lines, light brown ink, red ink rubrics. The manuscript is in good condition; one small hole on f. 457.

The non mention of the feast of the transfiguration (August 6th) enjoined for general observance by Pope Calixtus III in 1457 points to an ante 1457 date.

Page 2

**Collation**

Prose Shorthand	Leaves in Quire	Catchword	Notes
112	1-12		leaf wanting between 12-13
29	13-21	–ficetis	
310	22-31	indulgentia	
410	32-41	iste est	
510	42-51	Capitulum	
610	52-61	-plex	
710	62-71	misericordus Dominus	
89	72-80	lacum	Leaf wanting between ff.76-77
910	81-90	Exaudi	
1010	91-100	Quia ecce	
1110	101-110	Anti	Red rubric
1210	111-120	Deus meus	
1310	121-130	-pini	

1410	131-140	Exitus	
1511	141-151	-liatum	Leaf wanting between ff. 143-144
1610	152-161	hymnus	Red rubric
1710	162-171	Sideris	
1810	172-181	Manus	
1910	182-191	Tenebre	
2010	192-201	Sunt	
2110	202-211	Periculis	
2210	212-221	Secreto	
2310	222-231	Derelinquat	
2410	232-241	capitulum	Red rubric
2510	242-251	Ego Gloriam	
2610	252-261	Potuistis	
2710	262-271	-venire	
2810	272-281	Quem	
2910	282-291	Vicit	
3010	292-301	Tu eatur	
318	302-309	Illos	
3210	310-319	Suam	
3310	320-329	Imprelio	
3410	330-339	Ad B. a.	Red rubric
3510	340-349	Fidem	
3610	350-359	Crucis	
3710	360-369	Per Antonium	
3810	370-379	Dominus	

3910	380-389	In sancte	Red rubric
4010	390-399	Sentiamus	
4110	400-4009	Tu redis	
4210	410-419	Petificas	
4310	420-429	Mortis	
4410	430-439	Aporta in feri	
4518	440-457	fratres	ff. 446, 447, 448, blanks
4610	458-467	Ibi	
4710	468-473	Meus	
4810	474-483	Aol omnes ant	Red rubric
4910	484-493	Verperas	Red rubric
5010	494-503	Eius offerentur	
5110	504-513	Odisti	
5210	514-523	Secundum Lucam	Red rubric
5310	524-533	Deus	
5410	534-543		

112, 29, 3-710, 89, 9-1410, 1511, 16-3010, 318, 32-4410, 4518, 4610, 476, 48-5410(1).

#### Page 4

#### **Contents**

ff. 2r - 12v Calendar

ff. 13r - 210v Psalterium dispositum per hebdomadam. Ab Adventum usque kalendas Novembris.

ff. 210v - 331r Temporale

Ab Sabbato ante Dominicam I Adventus usque Dominica xxiv et ultima post Pentecosten

ff. 331v – 340v In nomine Dominum Jesu Christi amen. De antiphonis laudum quod ponuntur ante nativitatem Domini fiat sunt hac ordineum septem tabularum. – Follow Tabulae

ff. 340v – 343r Tabula infra scripta continet modum quem historie mensis Septembris ponuntur per hebdomadas et dies sicut in feriis declaratur.

ff. 343v – 445v Proprium sanctorum. Begins with St. George and ends with St. Catherine.

ff. 446, 447, 448 blanks.

ff. 449r – 528r Commune sanctorum. Inc. gellabunt vos et ante reges et presides ducemini propter me in testimonium illis et gentibus...

ff. 528r – 543r In festis Beatae Mariae Virginis

### Page 5

#### **Decoration**

f. 180r 3-line initial; f. 204r 4-line initial; f. 308r 5-line initial; f. 425r 5-line initial; f. 429r 7-line initial; ff. 429r, 430r 4-line initials. All resting on square grounds on gold-leaf. Initials blue or mauve. Grounds extending on hinge margins through branch and leaf decoration, in gold-leaf, mauve, red, blue and green.

Catchwords on ff. 181v, 201v, 271v, 513v resting on flowers.

Catchword on f. 419v resting on barbed quatrefoils. All drawn by pen in red or light-brown ink.

Numerous rubrics, all in red ink. Numerous capital letters in red.

#### **Binding**

Vellum, probably 19th c. with clasps. On spine: BREVIARIUM ROMANUM Ms.

#### **Provenance**

Bought at Marseille in 1868 by Stanley C. Bagg of Montreal (as per inscriptions on front and end paste-down endpapers).

Presented by Miss Mabel Molson, March 25, 1954.

#### **Bibliography and further reading**

Various Authors. *The Art of the Book: Its Place in Medieval Worship*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998.

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### BOOKS WITHIN BOOKS

#### **EVANGELIST JOHN FROM A GOSPEL BOOK, BYZANTINE, 13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (GREEK 8)**

30.48 cm x 17 cm. Ink on vellum.

St. John Theologos was a popular subject of representation in medieval art, and his portrait was often included as a prelude to the Gospel of St. John, located inside larger Gospel books. This 13th Century Byzantine example would have likely belonged to such a

manuscript, though this particular page has been cut and re-used, which is made evident by the Arabic text now on the back of the leaf. The leaf itself is ink on vellum, and the miniature depicting St. John is bordered by a simple, thin red line. The illumination rests on a gold background, and though much of the image has worn away, the ink that remains is primarily red, blue, green, pink, and dark brown in colour.

Greek characters at the top of the page indicate that this is St. John Theologos, as does the figure's beard, characteristic only of Greek illumination which depicts St. John as an older man, around the time that he wrote the Apocalypse (Didron, 356). The image is typical of representations of St. John from around the 13<sup>th</sup> century. He is depicted with a red halo, dressed in a blue robe and seated on a high backed throne. He holds a red book, and is leaning over a desk. The lower right corner of the image (where the desk would be situated) has worn off, but by comparison to similar images it can be ascertained that St. John is depicted copying text from a manuscript on the desk to the manuscript he holds on his lap.

In contrast to depictions which depict him seated at a lectern, he is often shown dictating the Gospels to Prochorus, a scribe (Spatharakis, 88). In this style of depiction, John is usually shown holding a scroll, rather than a book. Situated at the beginning of the Gospel of John, this image would have served as a precursor for readers – John is shown copying text into a book assumed to be his Gospels, which then translates into the physical manuscript from which this image likely comes, and which readers would then have been able to refer back to.

13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century depictions of St. John can be compared to those of Mark, Matthew, and Luke, whose Gospels might also have been a part of the same manuscript from which this leaf is drawn, and would thus have also appeared in its pages. Like St. John, St. Mark, St. Matthew, and St. Luke are also frequently depicted in a seated pose, copying from a book on a desk into a book held in or above their lap. These images thus reflect the saints as carriers and transcribers of holy knowledge, but also refer back to the book within which this knowledge is held, alluding to its origins and production.

#### **Bibliography and further reading**

Didron, Adolphe Napoléon, and Margaret McNair Stokes. *Christian Iconography: Or, The History of Christian Art in the Middle Ages*. Vol. 2. London: George Bell and Sons, 1886.

Spatharakis, Iohannis. *The Portrait in Byzantine Illuminated Manuscripts*. Boston: Brill, 1976.

#### **A GATHERING OF POETS FROM AN UNIDENTIFIED MANUSCRIPT, SHIRAZ, 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (MSP 27)**

*Written surface 15.8 cm × 11.5 cm; miniature 8.6 cm × 11 cm. Ink on paper.*

The city of Shiraz, in modern day Iran, became a leading centre of arts and letters from the 13th Century, producing small books, copies of the Qur'an, and poetic texts for commercial trade. The city – known as the city of gardens – flourished until 1620. This image, produced in 1520, was created during the peak of the city's artistic accomplishments, before the transitional period instigated by the disruptive move of the empire's capital in 1548. The development of miniature painting in Islamic societies was predicated on a need for representational arts to be technically challenging in form – mimicking calligraphic scripts through the use of basic modular forms, and working to

divulge information in a clear and beautiful manner. These similarities to calligraphy – a preferred and highly valued art form – allowed painting to be justified as a worthy pursuit, and elevated to the status of art (Gruber, 5).

This particular image, which was once part of a larger, unidentified manuscript, was produced during the Safavid Empire (1501-1722), but is characteristic of stylistic developments distinct to the city of Shiraz. The leaf shows a group of poets assembled in a garden-adjacent room or courtyard. The garden is framed by a gold, latticed doorway, to either side of which is depicted a leafy decorative pattern, and a series of star shaped tiles. In addition to formal features, these tiles help demarcate the leaf as originating from Shiraz, as the city was known for its mosaic work, and specifically its triangular tiles. One main figure oversees the group from a kneeling position, while four additional men kneel in a cluster opposite, each holding a book. Additional figures converse to the side. The men are dressed in red, blue, and gold robes, and wear turbans. The right side of the image is comprised of a separate visual field, delineated by the limits of the room in which the poets gather. To the top of the page, a woman in a red dress and headscarf leans out of a window, while below her a man approaches the gathering inside. These two marginal figures are separated by a wall of tiles in triangular, honeycomb, and star patterns. The entire miniature is framed by a border of ochre, gold, and blue lines. Three lines of text in nastaliq script accompany the image at the top of the page.

Shiraz style painting is characterized by a preference for “mauve, pink, yellow and other pastel colours to the richly modulated hues of Safavid court art” (Canby, 86). Furthermore, miniature painting from the workshops of Shiraz stressed “two-dimensional and decorative values rather than space and volume” (Canby, 86). These features are all evident in this particular painting, which demonstrates not only the visual style consistent with the city of Shiraz, but also its status as a centre of artistic production.

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#### **SAINT BARBARA, BOOK OF HOURS, FRANCE, LATER 15TH CENTURY (MS 149)**

*Two loose pages, each with a miniature. 18.5 x 13.3 cm. Written surface 13 x 8.2 cm. Ink on vellum.*

This object consists of two loose leaves from a 15<sup>th</sup>-century Book of Hours. The leaves have been executed by the same hand, author unknown, but are from different sections of the book. The bâtarde bourguignonne script suggests that the Book of Hours was made in the Duchy of Burgundy, where there was a lively culture of artistic patronage at this time, stimulated by the wealth of the Netherlands. Due to contemporary political alliances, Burgundy was artistically influenced by the more sober Northern style developed by Flemish artists centred around Ghent, than the Italian Renaissance style that was being adopted by other French artists (Diringer).

Many prominent manuscript illuminators were working in the Burgundian court at this time; the Master of Mary of Burgundy, for example, was credited for creating a new

innovation in illumination by dividing the illusion of the page between a recession and a plane through the use of a border and a miniature (Pacht). No such innovation can be seen in the Burgundian pages in question, however, which display only one recession through an illuminated miniature. Each page has one miniature portrait that illustrates the individual associated with the accompanying text.

The first page is from the Lives of the Saints section of the Book of Hours, not essential to the book's devotional purpose, but a favourite amongst its users. The Lives of the Saints is relatively self-explanatory, and would be consulted on the Saint's feast day or if you desired guidance from a particular Saint on an issue that was pertinent to their life or patronage. Depicted on the recto of folio I is Saint Barbara, accompanied by her textual memoria. The miniature is in the top left corner and is 10 lines in height, on the eighteen-line page, and half a line in width.

Saint Barbara stands in front of a mountainous northern landscape, next to a tower, wearing a long dark blue mantle over a rich velvet cloth. The tower to her left was the location of her imprisonment by her father, Dioscorus, who aimed to preserve her from the outside world. Barbara secretly converted to Christianity while imprisoned, and when she refused to give up the faith she was tortured and murdered by her father, who was himself killed shortly afterwards by lightning. The connection and opposition of these deaths has led to Barbara's association with the viaticum, the Eucharist given to someone close to death, and to her frequent depiction holding a chalice. In this miniature, the chalice has been replaced by an open book and a peacock feather, which symbolise her learning of the faith and her birthplace Heliopolis respectively.

Saint Barbara has waist-long red hair and a halo represented by a gold outline. Her face, neck and hands are coloured in light pink, with her features indicated by delicate brown lines. Gold leaf has been used sparingly but to good effect, highlighting particular elements to make the miniature glow. For example, there are gold outlines on the tower, mountaintops and the folds of the figure's dress. A blue sky gradually lightens in hue as it approaches the horizon to meet the dark blue mountaintops below. Saint Barbara's mantle is of the same bright blue as the sky and mountains, while her tower is a greyer blue.

The second page is from the Office of the Dead, a selection of prayers recited by the living, for the dead, in an attempt to ease the pain of purgatory. The particular page in question is an Oration to the Virgin, and she is depicted on the verso, holding the Child, in the accompanying miniature. The Virgin has waist-length gold-red hair and is wearing a rich blue and gold mantle over a dark blue and gold cloth. The Child in her arms is dressed in a crimson and gold tunic, and his halo is further decorated with gold stripes. In all other ways, these figures resemble Saint Barbara exactly. The Virgin and Child stand on an imbricated light brown floor, crudely executed to create tiles of uneven shape and size, which suggest the illuminator became tired of the repetitive pattern. Behind the figures are three horizontal panels in crimson, dark grey and dark blue filled with gold scrolls, curlicues and circlets (Hatzopoulos). The use of different patterns on different colours creates an effect of opulence and variety through simple means.

Both illuminations are painted in thin tempera, outlined in black ink added afterwards. The script and illuminations are both well preserved, as is the creamy-white vellum that has only

a little yellowing around the edges. In addition to the miniatures, the leaves feature illuminated initials. On the verso of folio I there is a two-line gold initial (I) on blue rectangular ground, filled with gold curlicues, and on the verso of folio II is a two-line gold initial (O) inside a crimson rectangle, bordered with gold and decorated with curlicues. The recto of folio II also has five one-line initials in gold, on crimson or blue rectangular grounds, filled with gold curlicues.

In the object file is a hand-written description of the leaves by Dionysios Hatzopoulos, which I have transcribed and included below. There is also a purchase slip that describes five illuminated manuscript leaves in a leather case, the other three leaves (MS 163 and MS 153) now in separate files. These leaves were ordered on September 4th 1969 and were purchased for \$350.00 from Norman H. Friedman, a Montreal book collector who has donated many books to McGill, with money from the P.W. & J.C. Redpath fund.

Another small piece of paper, probably from an earlier exhibition of the objects, presents the following typewritten description: Two pages from the "Life of the Saints", depicting "Santa Barbara" and the Virgin Mary. French ca. 1430. Pergament.

This object's file also includes the following hand-written description by Dionysios Hatzopoulos:

Horae. Fragment. Two leaves, on vellum, in Latin. In batarde bourguignonne characters. North eastern France, second half of 15th century.  
18.5 x 13.3 cm, writing surface 13 x 8.2 mm. 18 lines. Brown ink, red rubrics, ruled in light brown ink.

### **Contents**

F. I. R. Memoria of Saint Barbara.

De sancta Barbara antiphona (in red). Gaude Barbara beata summe pollens in doctrina...ad gloriam finito exilo.

F. I. V. ora pro nobis beata Barbara...Qui vivis

De sancta Margareta (in red) – announced.

F. II. R. From the office of the dead

De corpore mortis huius gratia Dei. V. requiem eternam... px et lux perpetua... a. ego sum Benedictus... a. ego sum... v. de tradas bestiis... px et animus pauperum... v. domine... px Opera... de profundis... fidelium.

F. II. V. Oration to the Virgin

Obsecro te domina sancta Maria... fons pietatis et leti(cie).

### **Decoration**

F.I. R contains a ten-line miniature of saint Barbara. She stands in a hilly northern landscape, with a dark blue sky, next to the tower where she was held by her father. She wears a long dark-blue mantle over a rich velvet cloth. She holds an open book and a peacock's feather, in gold leaf, which refers to Heliopolis, the city of her birth. She has



waist long red hair. A two line gold initial (I) on blue rectangular ground filled with gold curlicues appears on verso.

F. II. R. Has five one-line initials in gold, on crimson or blue rectangular grounds filled with gold curlicues. On the verso appears a ten-line miniature of the Virgin with the Child. She is shown standing wearing a rich blue and gold long mantle over a dark blue and gold cloth. The child in her bosom is dressed in a crimson and gold tunic. Her gold-red hair is waist long and she stands on an imbricated light brown floor. Behind her stand three horizontal panels in crimson, dark grey, and dark blue all filled with gold scrolls, curlicues and circlets.

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### SCRIPTS AND ORNAMENTATION

#### **MS 12, UNIDENTIFIED GREEK FRAGMENT, BYZANTINE (CONSTANTINOPLE?), 11<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (MS 12)**

*Author unknown. Written on parchment in a very good miniscule hand, perlschrift script. 35 × 11.5 cm. Double-sided, 29 lines to the column (recto), 28 lines to the column (verso). Greek marginalia are of 17th century origin.*

This column from a double-sided single sheet of a Greek manuscript was produced in the 11<sup>th</sup> century in Constantinople. Unfortunately, much about this object remains a mystery as there has not yet been an in-depth study of its textual content. However, one can remark on its formal features. The manuscript is inscribed with brown ink in an excellent miniscule script that is often referred to as pearl script, or perlschrift. The fragment is parchment and while the body of the text was written in the eleventh century the marginal annotations were added in the seventeenth century, perhaps as a means of explaining the long out-dated perlschrift to later readers. Perlschrift can be identified by its circular, bubble-like letters (Brill), and this can be seen with particular clarity in looking at the letter w's near the top of the page, where the character is rendered like two side-by-side circles.

From the existing pinpricks on the outer edges of the page one can see that this section has been carefully detached from a larger work, which is confirmed by the presence of creases that indicate where the edge of this parchment would have been sewn to the next piece. The overlapping and stitching of the pages would have served to make the manuscript more durable for perusal, as the join of the pieces would be firmly attached and thicker than the rest of the work. Inscribed on both sides, we can see from the damage and fading

of the text that practical use of the manuscript tended towards the bottom of the page rather than the top.

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#### **AC 166, QUR'AN, EGYPT, LATE 9TH CENTURY (AC 166)**

*Author unknown. Parchment, written in brown ink. Full page 10.5 x 15.5 cm. Writing section 6.5 x 10 cm. 13 lines. From the collection of H. Khan Monif.*

The object is a single small leaf, in good condition, from a Kufic Qur'anic manuscript. The text is written in delicate calligraphy in monochrome brown ink, and there is most likely only one hand involved. It is pointed by means of short oblique strokes, and is vocalized with red dots. The few green dots were probably used for orthoepic (pronunciation) and orthographic signs, as was the custom in early Qur'anic fragments. The text is decorated with small golden rosettes that were used for verse division. Other verse divisions include the letter *hâ'* to mark the end of v.68 and a golden medallion with the inscription *sittûn* to mark the end of v.63.

This fragment is written in what François Déroche calls the "New Abbasid Style," referring to scripts which represent a "dressed up" or stylized version of the Abbasid or Kufic calligraphy. Kufic is an angular style of calligraphy with elongated horizontals. It originated from the city of Kufah, Iraq. It is normally understood as a generic term for a great variety of old scripts used mainly for the copying of the Qur'an in the late Umayyad and Early Abbasid periods. The term was used originally by Arab authors, as well as Persian and Turkish sources, and later in Western literature.

The New Abbasid Style, also known as "Eastern Kufic," "Persian Kufic," or "broken Kufic," began to be used in the 3rd/9th century and was also used, mostly but not exclusively, for the copying of the Qur'an from the 4th/10th century until the 6th/12th and even in the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century. Manuscripts written in these scripts came in vertical formats. One of the main characteristics of these scripts was a marked difference between thick and thin strokes.

Purchased from A. Khan Monif in 1938.

\*There is currently no file for this object.

#### **Bibliography and further reading**

Gacek, Adam. "Early Qur'anic Fragments." *Fontanns* 3 (1990), 45-64.

Gacek, Adam. *Arabic Manuscripts, A Vademecum for Readers*. Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009.

# **QUR'AN, PERSIA, 9-10<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (AC 181)**

*Samanid period. Single leaf. 30.5 x 20.3 cm. Written surface 24 x 14.3 cm. Ink on vellum. Late Abbasid kufic script.*

This leaf is a typical example of an early Qur'an, written in Late Abbasid script, a type of kufic. Although the term *kufic* originally described a specific script from the city of Kufah, it is now understood as a generic term for the angular style used in early Islamic times to transcribe monuments and the Qur'an (Gacek).

The script on this leaf is written in dark brown ink, with red superscript and orange subscript vocalization marks. Vocalization by means of coloured dots was introduced early on, in the first 100 years of Islam, and used mostly in Qur'ans (Gacek). A trained vocaliser, as a second stage in the process of writing the text, often added the vocalization (Gacek). The script is large, as was typical, varying from 1-5 cm in height between ascender and descender line, with three rows of script per page. On the top row of the verso of the leaf is a *khamisah*, indicating the fifth verse of the Qur'an. The *khamisah* is a gold pyramid of six dots, surrounded by a red and gold striped cloud-shaped outline.

The parchment is creamy-white with some yellowing around the edges, with a ripped edge on the left side of the recto. It is more yellowed and worn down on the opposite side, suggesting the page remained in its original book for some time. The quality of the ink on the verso is much worse than the recto, worn away and faded. However it is still legible, aided by the large size of the script. The ink on both sides is visible through the parchment, as are the impressions of different script, transferred from the pages either side of this one when it was part of a bound book. In the bottom right-hand corner of the recto and bottom left of the verso is a two-line script, much smaller and in a different hand, a later addition.

This page is cited in Adam Gacek's *Vademecum* for readers of Arabic manuscripts as an example of a text using red dots for vocalization and slanted strokes for diacritical pointing.

An image of the recto of the leaf is included, with the flowing caption: Parchment leaf of an early Abbasid qur'an with the text using red dots for vocalisation and slanted strokes for diacritical pointing. (RBD AC181 ch. 12: 74-75: kuntum k<a>dhībina qalu jaza //<'> uhu man wujida fī rahlihi fa-huwa // jaza<'> uhu kadhalika najzi)

Accompanying note card: A very rare parchment page from an eastern Persian Koran written in large cufic script, with touches of gold and red (From the collection of Kirkor Minassian). McGill University Library. Friends of the Library, 1938.

Received May 9, 1938 and purchased for \$100.00 with the Friends of the Library fund.

## **Bibliography and further reading**

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### **QUR'AN LEAF, PERSIAN, 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (AC 170)**

*Persian scribe, identity unknown. Written in Arabic. 13.5 x 9.5 cm. Fine naskhi script with delicate ornamentation and illuminations.*

This double-sided miniature leaf from a Persian manuscript of the Qur'an was produced in a naskhi script by an unknown Persian calligrapher around 1700 AD. The script here is incredibly fine and delicate, coinciding with the illuminated decorations that surround it. Tiny gold-framed rosettes dot the page, coinciding with the end of each verse or a *sajdah* (prostration to god), while vegetal ornamentation and gold adornment frame the text. On the recto of the page one can see a multilobed star-like medallion motif that is painted in shimmering gold, red and lapis lazuli blue. Furthermore, there is an iridescent decorative gold vignette that separates the text into surahs, or chapters.

This is a clear example of scribal excellence and skill as the text and its ornamentation are both rendered with the utmost clarity despite their miniscule size. The naskhi script, characterized by its more flexible and rounded appearance when compared to more angular scripts such as the kufi, was a favourite of the post-Umayyad period, and became the bookhand par excellence of the Islamic east (Brill). Furthermore, the naskhi script became the preferred calligraphy for productions of the Qur'an (Encyclopaedia Britannica). Originating in popularity at the end of the 10th century by way of the famed calligrapher Ibn Muqla, the naskhi script spawned several regional variants and persisted until the end of the 18th century (Museum of Anthropology).

### **Bibliography and further reading**

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"naskhi script." *Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition*. Encyclopædia Britannica Inc., 2012. <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/403972/naskhi-script>.

Museum of Anthropology at UBC Exhibit: The Spirit of Islam--Experiencing Islam Through Calligraphy. <http://www.moa.ubc.ca/spiritofislam/unity/naskhi.html>.

### **QUR'AN, EGYPT, 12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (AC 174)**

*Four leaves, decorated with unwans. 17.5 x 11 cm. Written surface 12.1 x 7 cm. Ink on antique brown paper. Muhaqqaq script.*

This object consists of four Qur'anic leaves written in black ink on paper with decoration in blue, gold and red. The leaves date to the 12th century, when Islam was under the rule of the Fatimid Caliphate. The Fatimid rulers traced their descent from Muhammad's daughter Fatima, and their dynasty lasted from the 10th to the 12th centuries, centred around the city of Cairo (Yalman). Captured in 969 and established as capital four years later, Cairo became arguably the most important cultural centre in the Islamic world during the Fatimid

period, its newfound prosperity primarily due to its intermediary role in the lucrative trade between the Mediterranean and India (Yalman). We can safely assume that these Egyptian leaves were written in this cosmopolitan Cairo, on the eve of the fall of the Fatimid dynasty.

Kufic was the first Arabic script and remained widely used until the 13th and 14th centuries. In the 10th century, proportional reforms were introduced by the calligrapher Ibn Muqlah to regularize the broken cursive of the New Abbasid style (Gacek). The reforms were not intended for Qur'anic scripts, but for a wider range of more mundane scribal practices such as administrative work in the chancery (Gacek). Rather than a gradual softening of angular Qur'anic kufic, it was supplemented over time by these new proportional scripts (Gacek). The Muhaqqaq script, used here, emerged at this time and was established as the principal rectilinear script in which a small proportion of the pen strokes (approximately 1/3) are curved or curvilinear.

It was not until the 13th century that Muhaqqaq became widely used as a book-hand, so these leaves are an early example of its Qur'anic use. The script was usually used for large scale Qur'ans, but there was a smaller variant, *khafif*, meaning 'light' or 'agile' in Arabic, which is used here. The Muhaqqaq script was used from Egypt to Iran, and a variant was also used in China. It fell out of regular use in the 16th century in favour of the *naskh* script.

On these four leaves the Muhaqqaq script is written in black ink, vocalized in red, with seven rows of script per page. Dispersed across the pages are 14 sajada in gold with red and black decoration, indicating to the reader they must say a prayer. Two of the leaves are decorated with unwans, a large ornamental superscription that precedes the text and occupies the upper part of the page. The unwan functions as a chapter heading, emphasizing and ornamenting the beginning of a text (Khazaie). The first unwan is a gold box with three blue medallions containing script, outlined in blue. This text may be the title of the chapter, as was often the case inside an unwan. To the left a finial sprouts from the unwan, also containing script. The second unwan is a gold and blue box containing thick gold script outlined twice in black, on a blue background. Again, there is a finial on the left of the unwan, here containing a blue medallion and gold script. In addition to these more common decorations, there are two small 2 x 3 cm boxes in the margins on pages 1 and 6, filled with singular figures.

The pages were received on May 9, 1938 and were purchased for \$75.00 by the Friends of the Library Fund.

Accompanying information from the object's file:

Note card: cufic manuscript, Egypt, xii century (Fatimid period). Four pages from a kuran written on antique brown paper, somewhat stained. Two unwans in colour, and touches of gold and red.

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### **BOOK OF HOURS, FLANDERS, 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (MS 153)**

*Two leaves with four-quarter borders. 11.5 × 8.5 cm. Written surface 7 × 5 cm. Ink and gold on vellum.*

This object consists of two loose leaves from a late 15<sup>th</sup>-century Book of Hours. The leaves have been executed by the same hand, author unknown, but are from different sections of the book. They are of Flemish origin, dating to approximately 1460, and bare recent pagination: 88 and 202. The first leaf, Folio I, is a Lauds or Morning Prayer, while Folio II is from the Resurrection. There are eighteen lines of text in black ink with red rubrics, written in bâtarde bourguignonne script, with numerous blue and red capital letters.

On the recto of Folio I and II there are six-line gold leaf initials (D, S) filled with brown ink and decorated with s-shaped scrolls, circlets, wavy lines and short bars in green, blue and red. The initials are contained in a red square border filled with red circlets and coloured ink. The text is surrounded by four-quarter borders, the left hand quarter, closest to the margin, being an anomaly to the other three in both cases. This quarter is decorated with brown ink on Folio I and purple ink on Folio II, and consists of circlets, short bars, wavy lines and coloured dots.

The other three quarters are much more extravagantly decorated, as had been the style since the 13th century (Diringer). Border decorations typically bore no relation to the text, were often seen within devotional texts with little or no narrative, and acted like page numbers to help one locate a particular page in a text (Wieck). The main material of these borders is a gold leaf branching scroll, decorated and thickened with many short bars and dots. Various flora and fauna hang from and sit within the scrolls, creating a rich and colourful composition.

Folio I is decorated with three mauve flowers of various sizes, two red strawberries, and two bunches of blue grapes. Dispersed amongst them are multiple green leaves, either in bunches of three or singular. A large deer sits on the bottom quarter of the border, an elegant and elongated horned creature, coloured in light yellow-brown and outlined in brown ink. Another deer crouches in the right-hand border, it has no horns and wears a red item of clothing, perhaps a chemise or shawl. The clothed creature adds to the imaginative and mystical impression these borders often emit. Folio II is decorated with one mauve flower, one red flower, two pairs of strawberries, two bunches of grapes and two thistles. Thistle-like leaves, noticeably different to the other leaves, surround the thistles in the lower quarter of Folio II. A small-bodied and long-eared deer sits on the top quarter of the border, and a green bird with a red ring around its neck perches on the lower border.

The pages are held within cases, on which is written: Original fifteenth century Dutch manuscript leaf, on vellum, from a book of devotions. CIV. 1460.

This object's file includes the following hand-written description by Dionysios Hatzopoulos:

Horae. Fragment. Two leaves on vellum, in Latin. In batarde bourguignonne characters. Flemish from the second half on fifteenth century.

11.5 x 8.5 cm, writing surface 7 x 5 cm. 18 lines.

Black ink, red rubrics, numerous blue and red capital letters. Leaves bare recent pagination: 88 and 202.

### Contents

F. I. r. from the Lauds, vespers. Dixit Dominus, Domino meo; sede a dextris...in die ire sue reges.

v. indicabit in nationibus implebit ruinas... et miserator Dominus estam –

F. II. R. from the Resurrection. Subvenite sancti Dei occurite...per Xpistum Dominum

v. introit: Miseriordia tua Domine sancte Pater... de principibus tenebrarum et locis penarum.

### Decoration

Gold leaf, inks and tempera. Four-quarters borders.

On recto of F I and II. Six- line gold-leaf initials (D,S) filled with brown ink s-shaped scrolls , circlets, wavy lines and numerous short bars. The borders contain gold leaf branching scrolls from which hang fruits (raisins, strawberries), flowers in mauve and green leaves. On I appear two brown coloured deer, while on II we have one green bird perching at the bottom and a deer at the top of the border. Spaces in the borders are filled with gold-yellow dots.

### Bibliography and further reading

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### LATIN MISSAL, MID-14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (MCGILL 211)

*Latin Missal, location unknown, mid-14<sup>th</sup> century. In Italian. 22.35 cm x 33 cm. Ink on vellum.*

This page from a church missal is written in a round gothic script (*littera rotunda*), a less angular and compressed variation of the style as it was commonly used in Northern Europe (Shailor, 30). The page has a total of six illuminated letters: five recto, and one verso. One letter on the recto is particularly elaborate, filled in old-rose, blue and gold, and

surrounded by acanthus leaves which stretch into the margin. Unlike other plant imagery in medieval illumination, the acanthus was a decorative motif carried over from classical artistic traditions, and not generally attached to a specific meaning (Fisher, 18). The five remaining are “flourished initials,” a popular technique from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, which saw the use of a quill rather than a brush. The use of a quill allowed for finesse, in this case for creating the curlicue, bar, and s-shape patterns (Shailor, 40). The page is also marked by several rubricated letters – words highlighted in red ink so as to emphasize their importance.

The missal is from a Dominican workshop in Perugia, and is an example of the Perugian school of illumination. Missals are larger in size, as they were not meant to be portable, but were rather “intended to be read either at the altar by the priest performing the Mass or by a choir singing hymns for the Mass or Divine Office” (Shailor, 72).

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Hughes, Andrew. *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office: A Guide to their Organization and Terminology*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.

Shailor, Barbara A. *The Medieval Book: Illustrated from the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1991.

### **INITIAL “A,” BOLOGNA, LATE 13<sup>TH</sup> - EARLY 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (MS 47)**

*Illuminated “A” cut out of a music book. 24.5 x 18.5 cm. Ink, tempera and gold on vellum.*

This inhabited and phytomorphic illuminated initial was made in Bologna, a northern Italian centre of artistic activity with various schools and in particular an important school of miniature. It was here in the 11<sup>th</sup> century that the Anglo-Celtic style of initial decoration was developed which featured grotesques and birds, as seen on this example. In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the Italian Gothic style was established, and the evidence of Byzantine influence makes work of this period quite different from that produced in France and England (Diringer).

The large initial has been cut from a musical book, revealed by the surrounding staves. The initial itself is a dark blue ‘A’, although the rich decorations inside and around it make the letter itself a relatively obscure part of the composition. The ‘A’ is bordered in a gold leaf square, and extends from all four corners in multi-coloured acanthus, a signature motif of ancient art. The acanthus on the left side extend up and down the page margin, while those on the right side overlap onto the staves. The acanthuses are, clockwise from top-left, red, green, blue and white and each show a part of its lobe in an opposing bright colour, emphasising their mystical and imaginative quality. The acanthuses, which make up a large part of the composition, are highlighted with white ink to create the impression of veins, and give tonal variation. Each acanthus sprouts gold beads outlined in black, as was typical in Italian border ornamentation of this period.

The inner semi-circle formed by the cross-bar of the ‘A’ and the base of the ‘A’ are framed with a light yellow border, helping to draw attention to the shape of the letter, which might otherwise be lost in the dark illustrations surrounding it. The letter itself is decorated with white scrolls, as is the dark blue background inside the letter that contains two extravagant



birds with lion's legs. The birds are coloured in brown, blue, green and white and give a menacing but powerful impression. At the top of the letter, in the centre, is a round gold-and-red circle with a woven pattern that divides the circle into three sections.

The vellum, ink and illumination are in good condition, and the page displays little loss of gold. The script on the verso has faded more.

This object's file includes the following hand-written description by Dionysios Hatzopoulos:

Initial A. Northern Italian. Late 13th – early 14th century. Vellum, with inks, tempera and gold leaf. 24.5 x 18.5 cm. musical notation on recto and verso on four-line red staves (gradual).

This is a fine example of a north Italian (Bologna?) late 13th-early 14th century illumination. The composition is characterised by rich colours. Dark blue colours predominate, being relieved by gold-leaf contours, yellow, pink, green, brown and white. The letter's left side extends along the margin and so does the upper left corner of the gold leaf bordered square, which contains the initial. The right side of the letter also extends and is drawn on the stave below the large initial. The extensions are twisted and each one is marked by a different colour: blue, pink, green and white. The extensions are leaf-shaped (acanthus) with the lobes mostly on one side. From the stems protrude gold-leafed beads. The phyllomorphic initial, painted in blue, contains two extravagantly depicted birds having lion's hind legs/paws. They are coloured in brown, blue, green and white in a dark blue background laced with white scrolls. The birds provide a zoomorphic element, thus creating an interesting combination of styles. The device of painting extravagant beasts and comic figures and shapes, can be seen in Italian borders toward the end of the 13th century and has a Northern European origin. (Herbert, J.A., *Illuminated Manuscripts*, London 1911, pp. 1717 -172; Venturi, A., *Storia della Arte Italiana*, III *L'Arte Romanica*, Milano 1904, pp. 458-461.)

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#### **INITIAL “P” WITH MUSICAL NOTATION, ITALIAN, 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (MS LATIN 38C)**

*Ink and tempera on vellum. 11.5 cm x 8.7 cm.*

Song played a major role in conducting the medieval liturgical service, and were written out in their own dedicated hymn books, as well as incorporated into missals – larger instructional books containing the texts necessary for conducting church services, and other prescriptive church texts. Music, specifically the “plainchant” typical of church

services, was not thought of as music as such, rather, “it was so strongly connected to the texts which were sung that it did not occur to them to discuss the melodies in question” (Bell, 8). Because songs were passed down orally, the act of transcribing music was primarily a means to support the notation, rather than a replacement for its dissemination through communities.

This illuminated letter “P”, an example from 14<sup>th</sup>-century Italy, is surrounded by musical notation on both sides, though it is unclear as to its original source. Painted on vellum, the letter is surrounded by a leafy composition and decorated with white scrolls. The letter itself is rose, and the interior of the ‘P’ is highlighted in yellow. The initial is wrapped in an acanthus-like pattern, which is green, red, and blue. This pattern continues into the centre of the ‘P’, where it forms a more geometric triangular pattern, while retaining its leafy motif. The initial rests on a blue background which mimics the ‘P’ in its shape.

These larger illuminated initials mark the beginning of a new Gradual or hymn within the text. The music itself, located on four line red ink drawn staves, is typical of neumatic style notation, developed by European monks in the 800s. Neumatic notation does not show the specific notes to be sung, but rather represents the music through “rising and falling dots and lines indicat[ing] the movement of the singer’s voice between higher and lower pitches, reminding them of a memory that they had already memorized” (Getty). Each of the four lines on which the notes rest represents a specific pitch.

Because the letter has been extracted from its original context, there’s no way of knowing what manuscript – or what type of manuscript – it comes from. However, the size of the letter (11.5 cm x 8.7 cm) indicates that it was likely found in a liturgical text. The size of these manuscripts varied depending on their function, though on average the missal and breviary are smaller, while graduals, antiphonies and choir books were larger in order to accommodate the number of people who would have used them, for instance in order to perform the songs written inside (Pruett, 26). The larger the choir, the larger the manuscript would need to be, and these initials helped members of the choir to keep their place by providing a quick reference point (Pruett, 27). However, the fairly simple illumination, which is lacking in superfluous decoration or any gold leafing, suggests that the manuscript from which this initial is drawn might have been in every day use, and located in a smaller, potentially middle-class community (Pruett, 27).

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## Scribal Excellence

By Daisy Charles

The medieval scribe was an elevated figure in society who required purity of mind, body and spirit to ensure the inherently religious intention of his work. The Islamic scribe would often learn from a calligraphic master by attempting to copy his hand, and would be rewarded with the permission to sign his own work with his master's name. A further scribal qualification was the *ijaza*, a diploma awarded to a scribe for his fine penmanship. In the *ijaza* within this display, the scribe is praised by two of his teachers, illustrating the conception of calligraphy as an educational and spiritual tool that confirmed one's reverence towards knowledge as well as religion.

The exquisite decoration of the *ijaza* shows that the skill of the scribe was also largely defined by his artistic imagination and innovation. Some of the greatest scribes developed new scripts, showing the value of scribal creativity as well as conformity. This collection includes a page from an early Persian Qur'an written in Kufic, the first Islamic script, recognisable for its boldness and angularity. Below the Persian example is a page from a later Egyptian Qur'an written in the more proportional Muhaqqaq script, originally developed for administrative use and later adopted for codifying the Qur'an.

The scribe would perfect his proficiency in a particular script and his errorless command of the reed pen on a *kara-lamah* or practice sheet. Two *kara-lamah* included here display a repetition of specific textual motifs, highlighting the discipline needed for a life of scribal practice. The golden flowers on one *kara-lamah* show the creativity that accompanied this discipline, usually most likely to flourish in ornamental illustrations within the margins of a text. These marginal visual stimulants are often what strike us most immediately within medieval manuscripts, with the text as secondary, showing the transformation of the conception of the scribe today.

## SCRIBAL EXCELLENCE

### IJAZAT AWARDED TO CALLIGRAPHER MUHAMMAD TAWFIQ AFFANDI, 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (AC 57)

30.8 × 22.5 cm. Ink and tempera on paper.

This page is a type of Islamic diploma issued to calligraphers. It features a *qit'ah*, a single mounted and decorated piece; two *ijazat*, certificates for fine penmanship; and text from the hadith, the words of the prophet Muhammad.

Historically there are many different types of *ijazat*, awarded for various calligraphic skills such as transmission, audition, and presentation (Wikman). Since the 11<sup>th</sup> century the most common type were collation statements, certifying a correct transmission of a copied text, or simple certificates granted on request (Gacek). Since the 18<sup>th</sup> century general licenses in the form of *ijaza* were granted to individuals for a range of different skills, irrespective of subject matter (Gacek). The *ijaza* confers upon the recipient the right to transmit a text, teach, or issue legal opinions (Wikman). Because it is issued for a piece of scripture, the *ijaza* illustrates how a text functions in an educational environment (Wikman).

This particular diploma is an example of the final stage of the *ijaza*, awarded to Muhammad Tawfiq Affandi for penmanship; elaborately adorned, impressively calligraphed and elegantly worded. The page is divided into three horizontal sections containing text, and surrounded by multiple decorative borders. The largest text in the top section is the *qit'ah*, written in black ink on a green background, decorated with white and gold flowers and surrounded by an ornate blue and white curled cloudband. The text in the central section is from the hadith, the sayings of the prophet Muhammad, and is written in black ink on a creamy-white background, surrounded by cloud bands. This method of decoration is of Chinese origin; a cloud band is the cloud-shaped outline of a text, decorated with gilt in between textual sections. This section was probably written by Affandi, who wanted to show off his skilled hand on his diploma. The lower section contains the two *ijazat*, awarded by Affandi's two teachers Muhammad Rashid Shiliji zidah and Husayn al-Husni, written in their hands. The *ijazat* transcribed personally by Affandi's teachers demonstrates the changing mode of education at this time, where the teacher developed a more personal relationship with his student.

On either side of the hadith transcription are two decorative rectangular sections. A blue and black background is scattered with gold flowers, and outlined in a white border with blue flowers, while the whole central area not contained within the scripted cloud bands is gilded and inscribed with flowers and leaves, decorated with red and green. Surrounding the three sections of the diploma is a red border, decorated with flowers made up of a gold centre and white petals with green centres. Another much thicker border surrounds this one, in bright blue covered with gold floral patterns, with round floral medallions in each corner.

The diploma is in perfect condition, excellently preserved and still displaying the exquisite colours, decoration and calligraphic skill with which it was originally made. Former McGill University librarian Dr. Gerhard R. Lomer acquired it from Atkinson of London some time in the early 1920s.

The piece is cited and illustrated in Adam Gacek's 1989 survey of Arabic manuscripts at McGill.

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### SCRIBAL PRACTICE SHEET, UNKNOWN ORIGIN (AC 122)

*Kara-lamah, date unknown.*

Due to the restrictions on the creation of figural images in Islam, calligraphy was conceptualised as an art and the calligrapher's skill needed to be highly perfected. This *kara-lamah* or practice sheet was used to this end and to help avoid cacographic errors, when the word is written illegibly or smudged. The early Islamic scribe used a *calamus* or reed pen, made from a reed trimmed at an angle and slit to make a nib (Gacek).

Although there is no real sense of cohesion on this practice sheet, there appears to be two sizes of script, one about half the size of the other (1 cm / 0.5 cm), which are interspersed amongst each other. There are many rhombus shaped dots, and smaller slant-like dots corresponding to the smaller script. The scribe has made disconnected guiding lines all over the page, each for the specific letters he is writing and showing no cohesion between individual figures. There is a sense of horizontality with some script at an angle, explicitly indicated by the guiding lines. The majority of the figures cover the lower half of the page to the left side, with one section of vertical script on the upper left and some in the upper right, though the whole sheet has not been used. The practice seems to have been executed sporadically, as if the scribe, when trying a certain letter, decided to try a different letter and gave up on the first.

Muslims discovered the use of paper in 751, after their invasion of central Asia, which allowed scribes to develop more distinguished and elegant styles of writing. This antique brown paper has yellowed on the recto, while the un-transcribed verso is much paler, due to less exposure. There are some darker areas on the recto, perhaps due to ink smudging, and some Arabic notations in pencil at the top, and in ink on the verso.

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# SCRIBAL PRACTICE SHEET WRITTEN IN IMITATION OF THE HANDWRITING OF YAKUT, UNKNOWN ORIGIN (AC 24)

*Date unknown. Attributed to Sayyid Abdullah. 19.81 x 25.9 cm.*

Calligraphy was highly valued as an art form in the medieval Eastern world, and the kara-lamah (a practice sheet or rough draft) demonstrates the extent to which perfecting the medium was taken seriously. This particular kara-lamah was done in imitation of Yakut, a famous calligrapher during the Abbasid caliphate (750-1258), and secretary to the last caliph, Kalifah al-Muatasamu-llah. Yakut was renowned for codifying six basic styles of Arabic script, one of which – naskh script – was said to have been revealed to him in a dream (Sözen, 208). Yakut used “a calamus (reed pen) nibbed obliquely,” and his writing style was characterized in part by his “head-serifs (*tamwis*) [which] were longer and thinner” (Gacek, 297). Yakut had a calligraphy school in Baghdad, where he taught six famous pupils who were allowed to sign their work with his name. This has subsequently made it difficult to identify works which are authentically his.

Though a rough draft, the area of this kara-lamah which contains the writing is neatly bordered by thin lines of ochre, gold, and orange. In addition to the calligraphic script practiced therein (which overlaps significantly onto itself), the author, identified as the Sayyid Abdullah, has also drawn three small, gold-filled flowers, each of a different shape. Black marks where the ink has been rubbed while still wet denote the page’s informal character.

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## CASE II: THE NATURAL AND THE COSMIC WORLD—POWER, DEVOTION, AND STORYTELLING

### Power and Devotion in the Context of Medieval Book Culture

By *Vincent Marquis*

As important sites of authority, secular and religious spheres were very much intertwined in the Mediterranean. Indeed, not only was religious potency often ascribed to political rulers, but the overlay of power and devotional practices also took a more complicated form in the context of book culture. Although some of the objects in this section of the exhibition specifically relate to devotional practices, as is the case with our three Books of Hours, others bear witness to this juxtaposition. For one, objects were sometimes used as tools to record or memorialise a genealogy or history of power. The *Shahnameh* poem by Ferdowsi and the genealogical scroll of the Kings of England both sought to legitimate and encourage a form of devotion—towards national history and royal lineage respectively.

Other fundamentally devotional objects were directly imbued with the power to instill ritual. One of our copies of the Qur'an, for instance, establishes a clear embodied relationship between itself and its reader through *sajdas* in the text that act as devotional prompts, reminding the reader to perform prostration. The rotulus containing the prayer *al-Jawshan al-Kabir*, as it was meant to be carried as an amulet by its possessor, was similarly imbued with the power associated with its recitation. Correspondingly, the images of Mecca and Medina in a popular prayer book for pilgrims act as a reminder of the centrality of the two holiest Islamic sites in the Hajj.

Ultimately, this complex relationship between power and devotion is embodied in the Mamluk Qur'an: just as Ottoman political superiority over the Mamluks is affixed onto this particular devotional object through the re-appropriative seal of the Ottoman Sultan, so too do many of the present artefacts go beyond mere devotional or power-related purposes and express a complex, much broader intertwining of the two.

## DEVOTION

### AMULET CONTAINING AL-JAWSHAN AL-KABIR AND OTHER PRAYERS, IRAN, 13TH/19TH CENTURY (A 12)

*Scroll. 'Ali ibn Husayn Zayn al-Abidin (d.92/710). Fine, woven Oriental paper. 271.5 × 9.5 cm. Persian Naksh hand.*

This object is a rolled prayer written by a Persian Naksh hand. It was written by 'Ali ibn Husayn Zayn al-Abidin (d.92/710) at the request of Vazir A'zam al-Sultan Mu'tamad al-Shariah who was to carry this on him as an amulet, as was frequent of paper rotuli in this period. The main text is surrounded by other prayers, such as al-Jawshan al-saghir and Du'a al-mujir.

This amulet is in the form of a rotulus, a type of roll that unfolds vertically (as opposed to the volumen, which unfolds horizontally) and hence in which the text runs perpendicular to the length of the roll. Rotuli are the type of roll most commonly encountered in the Islamic context. The present rotulus is richly illuminated in gold and colors. The headpiece is decorated with a highly detailed floral-like design, in blue, red, green and gold.

Al-Jawshan Al-Kabir is a long prayer consisting of one hundred parts, written by Ali ibn Husain (d.92/710), the fourth Imam of the Emāmī Shiites. The title inscribed in the headpiece is Du'ā'-i jawshan-i kabir. As Gardet describes, "a du'ā' is a prayer of invocation, calling either for blessing, or for imprecation and cursing." To practice du'ā' is to raise one's supplications to God. "The whole prayer comprises two-hundred-and-fifty names of God and seven-hundred-and-fifty attributes and supplications," the purpose of which is "to plead salvation from misfortune during this life and from punishment in the Hereafter" (Yesilova). Shiite tradition also ascribes to Ali ibn Husain some devotional poetry and short texts, as well as a collection of prayers for various occasions known as al-Ṣaḥīfat al-kāmela.

The importance of this du'ā' is explained in the book Balad al-Amin and the Misbah of Kafa'mi, in which we are told that whoever reads this supplication with a pure intention in the beginning of the month of Ramadan, Allah will grant her sustenance on the Night of Power and will create for this person 70 000 Angels who will all praise and glorify Allah and will give this reward to the person who has read it. In addition, it is mentioned that whoever reads this supplication three times during the month of Ramadan will make the hell-fire forbidden on him and would make it obligatory for that person to go into Paradise.

\*There is currently no file for this object.

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### **QUR’AN WITH SAJDA, SUDAN, MID-13<sup>TH</sup>/19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (RBD MS A28)**

*23 x 18.5 x 7.5 cm. Writing surface 9.5 x 16 cm. 11 lines. Approximately 300 pages. Fully vocalized African hand using brown ink, on brown wove European paper.*

One particularity of this copy of the Qur’an is its Sūdānī hand, “a general term for scripts employed in sub-Saharan Africa. The history of these scripts is not well known due to the fact that there are few dated manuscripts and not enough data regarding their origin. Furthermore, they greatly differ in style; some being very coarse and heavy in appearance while others are more delicate and flowing” (Gacek 2009, 257).

In our copy, the hand is characterized by the existence of a *tarwīs* on the *alif* and *lam* projecting in most cases to the right but sometimes to the left, as well as the “tail” on the *alif* of prolongation. “The term *tarwīs*, commonly used in the Mamluk period, in its proper sense relates to the manner in which the head of a letter (*ra’s*) was executed. It takes on the specific meaning of a head-serif, that is, a protrusion (often of a triangular shape) or a stroke in the shape of a barb or hook at the head of a letter, either on its right or its left side. This stroke, in most cases, is sloping to the right or to the left of the stem of the letter” (Gacek 2003, 28).

The folios are loose and in disorder. Simple decoration can be found on the first and last folios. Textual divisions include *nisf*, *rub*, *thumm*, and *sajdah*. The margins carry a number of corrections marked with the letter *khâ* (initial form) superscript and the placet (*sabha*) situated at the end of the correction. The verses are separated by means of three dots arranged in the shape of a three-petalled floret.

The loose folios are protected by a blind-stamped, red morocco casing, which used to be supplemented by a thong attached to the extreme end of the envelope flap (an extension of the lower cover of the codex). The thong, however, is now missing (Gacek 2009, 104). “This type of binding was meant to be used as a type of portfolio holding loose leaves or quires. This appears to be one of the very early ways of ‘binding’ Arabic codices, which survived only in Africa” (Gacek 1991, 36). “The use of a string or a leather thong of this kind can also be seen on outer, usually envelope-shaped cases for extra protection of the bound codex” (Gacek 1991, 53).

The text also contains *sajdas*, small symbols drawn at specific places in the outer margins, identifying places in the primary text when prostration is indicated – as can be seen on the pages on display. “*Sajda* is performed by forming *niyya*, “intention,” for the act, saying the *takbīr* (*allāhu akbar*) while facing the *qibla*, touching the ground while saying a formula to glorify God and then rising with another statement of the *takbīr*. After this, the reading continues” (Gade). Various verses of the Qur’an stress the importance of prostration for the believer, as well as the importance to prostrate oneself specifically at the recitation of the Qur’an.

Purchased from H. Khan Monif, 1942.

\*There is currently no file for this object.

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### MECCA AND MEDINA, FROM THE *Dala'il al-khayrat wa-shawariq al-anwar*, 18<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (RBD MS A6)

*Unknown provenance. The author of this text was Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Jazuli al-Hasani (d. 1472) and the scribe of this particular edition was Hafiz Muhammad Abu al-Hasan. Indian naskh script. 20 x 13 cm. Laid oriental paper. Illuminated in gold and polychrome. Fully vocalized.*

The *Dala'il al-khayrat wa-shawariq al-anwar* (roughly translated as "Proofs of Good Deeds and the Brilliant Burst of Sunshine in the Zikr of Blessings on the Chosen Prophet") is a famous collection of prayers for the prophet Muhammad. This text was the first notable work in Islamic history to compile the prayers of peace and blessing upon Muhammad and became a popular prayer book for pilgrims on the Hajj. Furthermore, in some Sunni branches of Islam, an order typically defined as a more orthodox interpretation of the religion, the recitation of this text is a daily practice. More specifically, the *Dala'il al-khayrat* became the central text of the Ashab al-Dala'il brotherhood (Aga Khan Museum). This work contains descriptions of the prophet's grave as well as litany of his names (Brill).

Its author, known as al-Jazuli, was a Moroccan Sufi (adherent to the inner, more mystical dimension of Islam) and an Islamic scholar who died in 1472. His biographers claimed that he was a direct descendant of the prophet, a myth that undoubtedly lent the text a sense of divine provenance. This work can be seen as a kind of love letter to Muhammad, as al-Jazuli eventually moved to Medina where he would recite the whole of this text at the site of Muhammad's grave twice daily.

Considering that one of the main functions of this work was as devotional material it is significant that the codex contains richly illustrated depictions of Mecca and Medina, seen

here. A double-paged spread of these two holiest Islamic sites can be found in every edition of the *Dala'il al-khayrat* (British Library). The image on the left is recognizable as Mecca by virtue of the prominent black Kaaba, around which Muslim pilgrims circumambulate. The image on the right is recognizable as a depiction of Medina by virtue of the prophet's pulpit and the Great Mosque (Al-Masjid an-Nabawi), said to have been built by Muhammad himself and which incorporates the prophet's final resting place (British Library). The enormous dome, here rendered in blue, and colossal minarets frame the courtyard.

There are several unique features of these illustrations that bear notice and further analysis. In contrast to other images of this type in contemporaneous *Dala'il al-khayrats*, such as that in the Abu Khan Museum catalogue, the artist here has made a pointed choice to eschew any attempts at a three-dimensional mode of representation. While the images are brightly coloured and delicately rendered, the scene is rather hard to read, as the two sites are reduced to their most basic, salient elements. Both images exhibit a distinct flattening of the buildings and their surrounding courtyards. This difficulty in conveying spatial perception and depth is furthered in the artist's attempts at naturalism, as the viewer can see several smatterings of palm trees both outside the courtyard of Medina and within. These compositional features set this copy of the *Dala'il al-khayrat* apart from its counterparts in Islamic visual culture.

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#### BOOK OF HOURS, FLANDERS, LATE 15<sup>TH</sup> - EARLY 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (MS 109)

*Latin in a gothic script, specifically litera rotunda. 9.5 x 7.5 cm. Manuscript on vellum. 29 polychrome miniatures and 172 folios of which two are missing. Modern binding.*

The book of hours, or horae, was a popular Christian devotional book in the Middle Ages. These books are condensed versions of the breviary, or Liturgy of the Hours, which is the group of prayers set out by the Roman Catholic Church for recitation by the clergy, monasteries and adherents to the Christian faith. These books were extremely popular amongst the laity and a typical example contained the following elements: the Calendar (comprehending important festivals and saint days), the Sequentiae of the Gospels (comprehending the Incarnation, the Annunciation, the Adoration of the Magi, the Last Words of Christ, and the Ascension), the Hours of the Blessed Virgin, the Hours of the Cross (outlining the events of Christ's Passion), the Hours of the Holy Ghost, Seven Penitential Psalms and Litany, the Office of the Dead, and the Memoriae or Suffrages to Saints (Backhouse, 4).

The Blessed Hours of the Virgin were frequently the most richly illuminated portion of these books, and the passage consists of eight separate texts, with one text meant to be recited at each of the eight canonical hours of the day. These were simplified adaptations of the complex group of prayers that were recited eight times daily in monasteries and integrated laypeople into the devotional practices of religious orders (Muir, 11). The miniature size of this Flemish book of hours, produced between the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, attests to the intentional portability of these objects and their integration into daily religious life. As owners would frequently bring these books with them to mass in order to follow along with the sermon this portability was essential (Reinburg, 29).

These books typically had a stamp or portrait on their inner cover that identified them with a particular owner (Reinburg, 116), a feature that this unfortunately lacking in this particular object. However, this book's richly illuminated pages indicate that it was likely owned by a person of reasonable wealth, something that is supported by the fact that it is written in Latin rather than the vernacular. Another important dimension to consider in relation to this work is the "special association [that] existed between women and books of hours" as described by Sandra Penketh (Penketh, 270). While books of hours were produced for both sexes, these books were valued by medieval elite women for their status as luxury objects and status symbols, a practice that was satirized in poems of the period. Books of hours were also frequently given from husbands to their prospective wives (Groag Bell, 754).

In light of these customs one can analyze several features of this particular book of hours and perhaps put forth conjectures with regards to its ownership and usage. While this book contains all of the standard elements of genre, it lists both Flemish and English saint days. Considering that the book was produced in Flanders (Hatzopoulos), this combination could indicate that this was a book of hours given to an English woman who was marrying into a Flemish family and wished to observe the saint days of her original culture as well as those of her new home. However, more research would need to be conducted on this particular object to confirm this hypothesis.

Within the book we find truly remarkable illuminations and miniatures of key biblical scenes such as the Crucifixion and the Nativity, among others. These scenes are rendered with exceptional naturalism, something that is particularly impressive considering their limited size. There is a great deal of dynamism in the renderings of human figures and the images are stylized and carefully arranged with great regard for the realism of the scenes. Executed in fine polychrome paint, the colours used in this work bear notice as they are light and almost pastel in tone, resembling the colours later used fresco painting. This is especially clear upon comparing this book of hours to others of this period, which are frequently painted in vibrant jewel tones.

In comparing the illuminations throughout this book of hours one can see that it was worked on by multiple hands, as some images are far sophisticated in their composition than others. A final visual feature of this book that bears further analysis can be seen in the borders surrounding the illuminated miniatures. While it was fairly typical for these miniatures to be surrounded by foliated, vegetative borders, the borders in this particular book are resplendent with realistic depictions of the natural world. Within the pages of this

book we find a veritable typology of recognizable flora, insects and birds which add a vulgar, earthly dimension to its sacred subject matter.

Included in the object file is a hand-written description by Dionysios Hatzopoulos, along with a descriptive text on the essential elements of a book of hours by M. R. James.

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### **BOOK OF HOURS, FRANCE, 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (MS 97)**

*Author unknown. On vellum. Late 16<sup>th</sup>-century dark-brown French gilt calf. In Latin, mid-15<sup>th</sup> century Gothic writing. 19.5 x 14 cm. Writing surface 12 x 8 cm. 104 unnumbered leaves. One column, 22 lines. Obtained from R. Atkinson, Oct. 1923.*

The book of hours, or horae, was a popular Christian devotional book in the Middle Ages; a compendium of psalms, Bible verses, hymns, antiphons, and prayers for private devotional use. These books are condensed versions of the breviary, or Liturgy of the Hours, which is the group of prayers set out by the Roman Catholic Church for recitation by the clergy, monasteries and adherents to the Christian faith. Our copy contains many of the sections typically included in books of hours, such as the Calendar (November and December missing), the Hours of the Virgin (Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, Compline), Seven Penitential Psalms, and the Office of the Dead.

Our copy is in reasonably good condition. The binding is simply decorated with yellowish centrepieces in the front and back and fleur-de-lis on the spine. Inside, the main text and the rubrics are written in dark-brown and red ink respectively. Many capital letters are decorated with gold leaf. It contains many miniatures depicting a number of scenes and characters, including the Betrayal (15r), the Pentecost (20r), St-Michael the Archangel (20v), St-Peter and St-Paul (21r), and the Flagellation (26r). The dimensions of this Book of

Hours are proportionately greater than many other copies (for instance, De Ricci 109 and 158). This comparison combined with the fact that the margins are rather wide and thus leave an important area of vellum untouched suggest that this Book of Hours was probably owned by an aristocrat.

The pages on display (39v – 40r) are part of a fragment from *Ad imagine Domini nostri Ihesu Christi* (39r – 40v), a devotion consisting of prayers to the wounds of Christ. They show four miniatures with thin golden frames: a heart, a right foot, a left foot, and Mary with the Child. The first three are presented before a half-blue half-green background; the last before a blue, red and gold background. Each miniature accompanies one of the rubrics: *ad vulnus lateris Christi*, *ad vulnus dextri pedis*, *ad vulnus sinistri pedis*, and *ad virginem Maria*. The text and the miniatures are surrounded by a three-quarter floral border, narrower in the left and side margins. Thin branches, buds, strawberries, flowers and leaves – mostly acanthus ones – are colored in red, light-red, blue, green, brown, and gold leaf.

This object's file includes a description by Dionysios Hatzopoulos: the file contains a description of the collation, followed by a detailed description, divided by sections, of the content of the text (p. 3-5). The author then describes in great detail a number of instances of decorations (p. 6-10). The last page indicates binding and provenance. The file also contains three captions, presumably used in previous exhibitions.

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#### POWER AND STORYTELLING

#### **JACKAL AND LION, FROM THE *Kalilah wa dimnah*, EGYPT OR SYRIA, 17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (RBD MS A1)**

*Al-Hakim Bidpay al-Faylasuf, author. Arabic in Egyptian or Syrian hand. 21 x 16 cm. Some pages inserted in the 18th century. Laid European paper. Illuminated in gold and polychrome.*

The *Kalilah wa Dimnah* is an Arabic translation of the Panchatantra, a compilation of Indian animal fables that was known popularly in the western world as *The Fables of Bidpai*, Bidpai being the narrator of the work. The Panchatantra was produced somewhere between 100 BCE and 500 AD, and was designed as a kind of guidebook for rulers as its five stories emphasize wisdom, prudence and intelligence and promote selfless behaviour (Naithani, 276). The intention of this work as a means of instructing kings (Upadhyaya, 184) is evident in the first framing tale, which tells the story of a Brahmin who made use of beast fables to educate three wayward sons of a king. The stories are thoroughly anthropomorphic as animals take on human characteristics and experiences (Naithani, 278). Originally written in Sanskrit, the work was first translated into Persian in the sixth century

before being translated into Arabic by Abdullah ibn al-Muqaffa in the eighth century (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

The Arabic *Kalilah wa Dimnah* takes its title from the names of two jackals that feature prominently in the main fable of the work (Irwin, 39). In this particular story, the jackal Dimnah plots to assassinate a faithful servant of the king and is subsequently executed. The subject matter of this story is particularly pertinent considering the book's elite audience and could have served as a warning against disrupting the natural order of kingship, while also emphasizing the virtue of humility. The Panchatantra also had a lasting influence on the narrative traditions of both the eastern and western worlds, as it is believed to have influenced Bengali folktales and Aesop's Fables alike (Upadhyaya, 181).

This edition of the *Kalilah wa Dimnah* is bound in brown leather, with the cover subtly imprinted with a multi-lobed decorative centerpiece, and would have originally had an enclosing flap. Within, one finds images of birds, animals, insects, and human figures, all executed in polychrome metallic paint with gold accents. On this particular page there is a fine illustration of a lion and a jackal flanking a tree. The depictions are fairly stylized, with the animals accented in gold to suggest three-dimensionality. Lions and jackals feature prominently in this work and with express purpose. While the jackal has historically been associated with cunning, an important feature of a ruler, the lion is impulsive, violent and ferocious. Throughout the *Kalilah wa Dimnah* the figure of the lion is made to embody greed, impetuosity and a base animalistic nature. Conversely, the jackal is sly and resourceful (Irwin, 40). In analyzing the page of the *Kalilah wa Dimnah* that we have displayed here, it is clear that the artist has attempted to render these differing physiognomies, with limited success. While the jackal appears to snarl and bark at the lion, the lion looks thoroughly crazed and alarmed, a feature that could perhaps indicate the latter creature's perceived wildness.

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**WILLIAM THE CONQUEROR (R. 1066-1087), WILLIAM II (R. 1087-1100), AND HENRY I (R. 1100-1135), FROM A GENEALOGICAL SCROLL OF THE KINGS OF ENGLAND, ENGLAND, 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (MS 148)**

*Latin. 15th century gothic cursive hand. On vellum, four membranes stitched together. 250 x 11.6 cm. Written in brown and red ink.*

Genealogical scrolls were commissioned and prized by aristocratic families for their function as visual manifestations of illustrious bloodlines (Kennedy & Radulescu, Brill). These objects gained popularity in England with the Norman Conquest at the hands of William the Conqueror in the eleventh century and remained prevalent up until the late fifteenth century (Laborderie, Brill). This particular genealogical scroll depicts the ancestry of the Kings of England, spanning from the reign of Egbert (d. 839) to that of Henry VI (d. 1471). It is written in brown and red ink on four membranes of vellum stitched together to form the rotulus, which is approximately two and a half meters in length. Its cumbersome size could indicate that this object served a symbolic rather than practical function.

The work is structured as a series of medallions, each containing the bibliographical notices of their respective ruler, which then branch off in curved lines to smaller medallions depicting the king's descendants and offspring. The exhibited portion of this scroll shows the ancestry of three Kings of England: William the Conqueror (r. 1066-1087), William II (r. 1087-1100), and Henry I (r. 1100-1135). William the Conqueror was an incredibly important figure in the history of England as he led the Norman Conquest of England and won the throne from King Harold II, who is referred to in the scroll as the "usurpator" (Hatzopoulos).

While genealogical scrolls were typically worked on over time, with consecutive rulers being added as they came into power, it is clear that this particular scroll was only worked on by one scribe/illustrator. Thus, it would seem that the scroll was created during the reign of King Henry VI (House of Lancaster) and is designed to provide a window into the past while affirming the king's right to rule. This can be seen in the manner with which the scribe has attempted to cluster the text around the diagram. The end of the scroll, written contemporaneously with Henry VI's rule, is replete with marginalia and annotations. By contrast, the beginning of the scroll that is devoted to King Egbert is comparatively bare, a feature which confirms the scribe's limited knowledge of such a distant past. The scroll serves to both commemorate and legitimize the lineage of Henry VI, with whom the scroll ends, and it is possible to infer a degree of intentionality in this choice upon consideration of the political circumstances under which King Henry VI came to power.

Henry VI succeeded to the throne as an infant of nine months, following the death of his father King Henry V in 1422 (Craig, 187). This was a supremely contentious time in England, as Henry V had nearly conquered France following his military success in the Hundred Years War. Having died on the cusp of this transition, the task of consolidating British rule in France was left to the young king's administrators (McKenna, 145). Efforts to retain control of their French territory continued until the mid fifteenth century, at which point it became clear that this would be an impossible task (Craig, 188). Henry VI formally ascended to the throne in 1437 and he proved to be an ineffectual and incompetent monarch. Prone to frequent bouts of insanity, which increased in the mid-



fifteenth century, the king's weakness in matters of policy and personality (Craig, 189) led to the War of the Roses and the fall of the House of Lancaster.

In 1461 King Henry VI was removed from the throne and imprisoned by his cousin Edward of York, who went on to become King Edward IV. Queen Margaret, Henry's wife, tried valiantly to restore her husband to the throne and succeeded for a brief period in 1470 but this was ultimately followed by Henry's imprisonment and death in 1471 (Craig, 188). When considered in light of Henry VI's failures as a ruler and the king's reputation for weakness (Craig, 187), this genealogical scroll takes on increased importance. For a king such as Henry, his ancestry was of the utmost importance as a means of legitimizing his reign at a moment in time when his actions failed to do so. A scroll such as this serves to link Henry VI to his valiant predecessors and mythologize his heritage, something that was undoubtedly important at a time when a faction was developing around his rivals, the House of York.

The object file contains a detailed written description of the scroll by Dionysios Hatzopoulos and several negatives of photographs of the scroll as it would appear unrolled in its entirety.

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#### **QUR'AN, EGYPT, 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY(?) (RBD MS A22)**

*Leather-bound copy of the Qur'an with dedication to vizier within and the stamp of the Ottoman Sultan. Binding is extensively decorated and blindstamped with patterns. Written in Arabic, muhaqqaq script. 21.5 x 16.5 cm. Scribe unknown. Laid Mamluk paper. Fully vocalized.*

This copy of the Qur'an is bound in blind-stamped heavily decorated leather. The exterior of the codex is embossed with geometric patterns and a central ten-pointed star medallion, which is surrounded by an ornamental spiral border. While there is no paint extant on the binding it is possible that the book was originally painted. Within, the text of the Qur'an is fully vocalized and executed in muhaqqaq script, with the verses evenly spaced. Such a large muhaqqaq script is characteristic of Qur'ans produced under the Mamluks (1250-1517 CE) (Aga Khan Museum). Small gold-framed rosettes mark the end of each verse, while other embellishments indicate the beginning of a sura, or chapter (Gacek, 49). The body of

the work is littered with finely painted medallions and embellishments in lapis-lazuli blue and gold. The first inner page of the book shows an elaborate decorative plaque that is divided into a cartouche and a medallion. Replete with vegetal and floral motifs, gold leaf and geometric borders this page marks the codex as the sixteenth volume of the Qur'an out of a series of thirty volumes (Gacek, 49). These stylistic features are consistent with other Qur'ans produced under the Mamluks, something that is at odds with the stamp of the Ottoman Sultan on the last page of the book which is paired with a dedication to the vizier.

The Ottoman Empire and the Mamluk Sultanate clashed in the Ottoman-Mamluk War of 1516-1517, a war that resulted in the downfall of the Mamluks and the increased dominance of the Ottomans. In light of this, the obvious opposition between a Mamluk text and an Ottoman stamp could serve as evidence of this Qur'an being taken by the Ottomans as a spoil of war, reappropriated and rebound in Ottoman clothes to serve the devotional purposes of the new empire. This intentional reappropriation is evident as the final page also includes an inscription, now faded, that refers to al-Khanaqah al-Barquqiyah, an institution built for the Mamluk Sultan Barquq (reigned 1382-1399) by his son Faraj (d. 1412) where this copy was originally deposited (Gacek, 49). This work would undoubtedly be classified as a luxury devotional object, not dissimilar to the western medieval tradition of the Book of Hours. Here we see concerns of both power and devotion made manifest, as the sultan's religious piety was key to his post.

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#### **SAM GOES TO FIGHT MIHRAB, FROM THE *SHAHNAMEH* OF FERDOWSI, ISFAHAN, IRAN, 15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (RBD MS P10)**

*Copied by Ali Pakir of Ashtrajan and Zain of Isfahan. Persian, nastaliq script. 27.3 × 20.3 cm. Written surface 23.1 × 17.7 cm. Miniature 10 × 11.6 cm. 6 columns, 21 lines.*

The Persian poet Hakīm Abu'l-Qāsim Firdowsī Tūsī, or simply Ferdowsi, is believed to have been born in Bazh, a village near Tūs in modern day Iran ca. 329-30 AH /940-41 AD. Much about his life is unknown as surviving documentation is sparse. However, we do know that he was a Muslim, was acquainted with Arabic and came from the nobility having independent wealth from the revenues from his lands. His love for Persia and all things Persian persuaded him to write the epic poem, *Shahnameh*, which means 'Book of Kings.'

The *Shahnameh* was completed in 400 AH /1010 AD. It took Ferdowsi 35 years to compose his masterpiece finishing it at the age of 81 shortly before his death. The poem contains 52,000 couplets making it the longest poem ever written. It was written in Persian with some Arabic, though Ferdowsi was careful not to include much Arabic. In so doing,

Ferdowsi was able to revive the Persian language as a cultural medium thus preserving the language even after the Arab invasion of the 7th century and the coming of Islam, hitherto a religion foreign to the Persians. This epic poem stresses Persian (literary) history, culture, language and the arts. As McGill's digital exhibition of the *Shahnameh* describes, the text has numerous tales and ethical stories for which artists and artisans would come to exploit in illustrations for manuscripts, miniatures, and portraiture.

The page at hand shows light water damage, especially in the upper part. It is divided into six columns of text and includes a small box in the upper part in which what seems to be a heading is written in red ink. An image is drawn in the center of the page, where two kneeling figures frame a central figure (Zal?) sitting before a red interior background. A figure is stepping into the scene on the left, perhaps indicating continuity with a previous scene. The image illustrates the scene in which Zal, ruler of Zabol and father of Rustam, is getting ready to fight Mihrab Kabuli, ruler of Kabul and father of Rudabeh, first wife of Zal and mother of Rustam.

Content of object file: A single sheet gives basic information about the manuscript and how the work came to be attributed to this specific copy of the *Shahnameh*. "The simplified forms, subdued colors, use of red coloring on the cheeks, and the white line that marks the highlights along the noses set this painting apart from other work of the period and closely relate it to the *Anthology* of 838-840 H. (A.D. 1435-1436) copied by Ali Pakir of Ashtrajan (a city near Isfahan) and Zain of Isfahan, now in the Chester Beatty Library. Because of the *Anthology's* peculiar style and the fact that both of its scribes were from Isfahan it has been attributed to that city" (Hatzopoulos).

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**Iskandar kills the Abyssinian Monster, from the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi, India, 16<sup>th</sup> century (RBD MS P51)**

*Persian, nastaliq script. 27.5 x 16.2 cm. Written surface 20.1 x 11.2 cm.*

The Persian poet Hakīm Abu'l-Qāsim Firdowsī Tūsī, or simply Ferdowsi, is believed to have been born in Bazh, a village near Tūs in modern day Iran ca. 329-30 AH /940-41 AD. Much about his life is unknown as surviving documentation is sparse. However, we do know that he was a Muslim, was acquainted with Arabic and came from the nobility having independent wealth from the revenues from his lands. His love for Persia and all things Persian persuaded him to write the epic poem, *Shahnameh*, which means 'Book of Kings.'

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The scene is part of the chapter on the reign of Iskandar (or *Sekandar*). In the *Shahnameh*, Iskandar eventually reaches Abyssinia (modern-day Ethiopia), the land of the Habash, a country "crowded with men whose skin was as black as a raven's feather" (Firdawsi 2006, 506). When the Habash saw Iskandar's army approaching, "their war cries ascended to the clouds" (Firdawsi 2006, 506). Both armies fought until the last Habash to survive fled away from the battlefield and the corpses of their fellow soldiers. That same night, a monster in the form of a rhinoceros appeared to them (maybe the Persian mythical monster *Karkadann*, although it is not named), but more massive than an elephant, with a dark horn on his head. He killed a number of soldiers, but was finally killed the Iskandar's soldiers.

It is interesting to note that although the object was named by McGill "Iskandar kills the Abyssinian monster," the image most probably does not represent the killing of the monster, but represents rather the previous scene of fighting between Iskandar's army and the Habash, since the subjects of the attack are not monsters but black men.

\*There is currently no file for this object.

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## Science, Cosmology, and the Natural World: Medieval Structures of Knowledge

By Alexandra Zakreski

While the content of these works spans many fields, from astronomy to folklore, they all participate in the production and dissemination of knowledge in the medieval Mediterranean. Without being overly reductionist, we can group these objects into two categories, those that continue to rely on received knowledge of the past, and those that serve to construct knowledge based on emerging practices of scientific inquiry.

At first glance, this section of the exhibit seems to be composed of incongruous elements. Upon further examination, however, it becomes clear that they all participate in dialogues of science, cosmology, and the natural world. Works such as the fragment of a treatise on logic, the herbal leaf, and the folio from the *Tractatus Quadrante* could be categorized as actively producing scientific knowledge in the medieval period. In the image of the quadrans vetus and the text on logic, one can see medieval thinkers making use of mathematical diagrams as a means of knowing their world, the movement of the planets, and one's place in the universe more generally. The herbal leaf, meanwhile, oscillates between traditional painted imagery and diagrammatic representation in order to aid in the identification of plants for the preparation of herbal remedies. Like the herbal leaf, the Persian *Book of Plants and Animals* exhibits a medicinal theme as the names of organs leap out from the page in red ink, along with suggestions regarding their treatment.

The *Book of Plants and Animals* includes a veritable catalogue of medieval Persian superstitions, a folkloric emphasis that is echoed in our copy of the *Kalilah wa Dimnah*, an Arabic translation of the ancient Sanskrit *Panchatantra*. This collection of anthropomorphic fables was meant to instruct rulers on the appropriate virtues of kingship, and thus builds on an established tradition. The Persian *Wonders of Creation* similarly deals with monstrous creatures that are half-human and half-animal in an attempt to reconcile anomalies in the natural world with established stories of divine creation.

Taken together, these diverse works question inherited structures of knowledge and point to the intersection of several categories of science, cosmology and the natural world.

## SCIENCE AND COSMOLOGY

### FRAGMENT OF ANNOTATED TEXT ON LOGIC, LATER 13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (MS 132)

*Unknown provenance. On vellum. In Latin, Gothic characters. Between 3.8 and 14.3 × between 12 and 24.3 cm. Writing surface approximately 6.8 × 9.2 cm. One column, between 12 and 25 lines. Obtained from E. von Scherling.*

This object is a damaged fragment of a small size bifolium from an unknown annotated text on logic on vellum. (De Ricci evoked the possibility of it being a fragment of a text on *Aristotle's* logic, but the author of the object file does not do any mention of Aristotle.) The primary text is written in dark-brown ink and includes divisions marked by red ink. The *scolia* – the meta-text or the annotations – are from a different hand and written in a lighter brown ink. The fragment carries heavy damage, acid perforation and traces of glue. The upper part of leaves, including text, as well as part of the sides, are missing (Hatzopoulos).

One of the pages shows a diagram contained within the primary text, a two-dimensional representation of some logical relationships. The use of diagrams in treatises on logic gained wide currency only in the nineteenth century, so this instance is a very early use of logical diagrams.

The 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries are often considered to be a period of revival of logic in Europe, putting an end to a long period of philosophical inactivity following the death of the logician Boethius (Dipert). In the 13<sup>th</sup> century in particular, several authors produced works that surveyed the whole field of logic. The fragment at hand, if composed by a thirteenth century author, is probably part of the new developments made in this period in the *Logica moderna*, a school of medieval logic focusing on the properties of terms and investigating fallacies in theology, physics, and logic.

Content of object file: The file consists of a single sheet containing a paragraph of basic description, and a section on content transcribing four short passages. It also identifies provenance.

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### HERBAL LEAF DEPICTING *FUMASIA OFFICINALIS*, POSSIBLY GERMAN, 14<sup>TH</sup>/15<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (MS 160)

*Folio from a medieval herbal, double-sided, depicting 2 drawings of plants. On this side fumitory (*fumasia officinalis*) and its various medicinal uses. Written in Latin. 29 × 20.5 cm. Hand-painted, likely with tempera. Previously exhibited in "Leaves from the Physick Garden: Historic Herbals from the Osler Library and the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections."*

This folio, depicting fumitory (*fumasia officinalis*) on the verso and an unknown plant on the recto, was likely part of a larger codex of herbal leaves upon its inception. The herbal treatise of the Middle Ages developed from its corresponding ancient literary tradition, a tradition that can be "traced back to the middle of the second millennium BC" (Collins, 25). The

most popular illustrated herbals throughout the medieval period were that of Dioskurides and the *Herbarius* of Apuleius Platonicus (Collins, 25). In this particular leaf we can see the typical format of an herbal treatise made manifest, as it includes a large hand-painted illustration of the plant in question that is framed by extensive marginalia (Stannard, 354). Written in Latin, this marginalia would outline the distribution and habitat of the plant in question, its medical properties, how the plant might be prepared for administration, and the medicines that were based upon it (Collins, 61).

Fumitory, as this manuscript explains, was effective for the treatment of melancholy, stomach aches, scabies, postules, and the purging of “corrupt humours” (Hatzopoulos). This account is supported by the author’s citation of various contemporary medical authorities. While medical practitioners used manuscripts of this type, they were also made for purchase by laypeople so that the latter could source the plants and prepare their corresponding remedies without the need of a doctor as intermediary (Hatzopoulos). In looking at this folio it is clear that it was heavily used, something which suggests that it was not meant as a *teaching* manuscript but rather as one meant to be handled and used by its owner. Medieval herbals are among the rarest of medieval secular manuscripts to survive, purely because they were so often in use and in close proximity to liquids (Sotheby’s), something that undoubtedly has caused them to deteriorate quite rapidly.

While the rendering of the fumitory specimen here is quite stylized and flat, with only one angle of the plant shown, the artist has clearly taken great pains to enunciate the shape of the plant’s flowers, its colouring, and the shape of its leaves which seem to pop off of the page. This attention to detail supports the conjecture that these books would have been taken out into the natural world to help their owners identify the plants they needed (Hatzopoulos). This naturalized depiction and the consummate trend towards medieval laypeople foraging in the wild to furnish medical remedies is an important dimension of a larger movement in the early modern period towards a firsthand observation of the natural world, a movement which eventually resulted in the emergence of natural typologies and botanical science (Ogilvie).

A final feature of this manuscript that is rather interesting and which could be a subject of further study lies in one of the marginal illustrations. Near the bottom of the page on display there is a small roughly drawn smiling face, something that could allude to fumitory’s effectiveness in treating melancholy. Regardless of its intention, this illustration does confirm that the manuscript was in practical use.

The object file contains a handwritten description and analysis of the manuscript by Dionysios Hatzopoulos, a description of “Leaves from the Physick Garden”, and an extract from the Sotheby’s Western Manuscripts and Miniatures catalogue (July 6 2006). The Sotheby’s catalogue includes a contemporary *Italian* fifteenth century herbal for the purpose of comparison.

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### **COSMOS, FROM THE *TRACTATUS DE QUADRANTE*, LATE 13<sup>TH</sup>- EARLY 14<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (MS 134)**

*Originally written by Johannes Sacro Bosco (d. 1256). Author of this edition unknown. Written in Latin on vellum in dark brown ink with red diagrams and polychrome illuminations within. 17.5 x 11.5 cm. Gothic and cursive book-hands by two scribes. Modern, light-brown calf-leather binding.*

This volume includes two works by Johannes of Sacrobosco (d. 1256), a British monk, scholar and astronomer. The first work in this codex, the *Tractatus de Sphaera* (first published in the thirteenth century), was an extremely influential publication (Hatzopoulos) as Sacrobosco outlines his structure of the universe, agrees with contemporary claims regarding the earth being spherical, and speaks of the universe as a kind of machine of the world. This last feature foreshadows later astronomical scholarship regarding the earth's place within a larger cosmic structure and thus bears notice. The *Tractatus de Sphaera* was the essential astronomy textbook used throughout western universities from its publication in the thirteenth century up until the seventeenth century (Pedersen).

This book spawned a great deal of commentary from other scholars of the period, which were then published as annotations in successive editions of the *Sphaera*. This copy of the *Tractatus de Sphaera* follows all the standard elements of the work's structure as includes a commentary on the sphere and eclipses, a commentary on the zodiac cycle, a tract on meteorological phenomena, and four gothic arches in which one finds tables dealing with the golden number. The *Tractatus de Quadrante* is located at the end of the book and is a less popular treatise by Sacrobosco (Thorndike, 62).

The *Tractatus de Quadrante* includes a diagram of the quadrans vetus, displayed here. The quadrans vetus was an instrument that acted much like a sundial to measure time from observations of the sun, however the user could position the instrument's cursor at different latitudes to deduce the time at that place in the world (Sphaera). In this *Tractatus*, Sacrobosco outlines both the use and the means of building such an instrument. The front of the quadrans vetus would have been inscribed with the shadow square, hour lines and a mobile zodiac cursor to be positioned at the user's desired latitude. The rear of the quadrans vetus would have been inscribed with the calendar of the zodiac (Museo Galileo). This page of the codex illustrates a somewhat simplified version of the front of the quadrans vetus, as one can see the characteristically curved lines, unequal hour lines and signs of the zodiac inscribed in red ink (British Museum). The aforementioned unequal hour lines are a result of medieval practices of time-telling, whereby the day was divided into twelve hours which then corresponding to different amounts of sunlight. As such, zero corresponded to sunrise, six hours at noon, and twelve at sunset. One of the implications of this system was that the length of an hour varied throughout the year particularly if we compare the summer and winter months (Sphaera).

A work such as this obviously enters into concerns of emerging scientific debate of the period, and the ways in which renegade scientists were discovering, disseminating, and constructing knowledge of the world, astronomy, and the universe. These new treatises on astronomy and other scientific discoveries were at odds with the teachings of the church and the biblical story of Creation. This became a cause of severe persecution later in the medieval/early modern period, something that we can see in the case early modern scientists such as Galileo Galilei.

The object file contains a written description of the volume by Dionysios Hatzopoulos and an excerpt from Lynn Thorndike's "The Sphere of Sacrobosco and Its Commentators."

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### PERSIAN BOOK OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS (BWLW 58)

*Three texts (multiple authors) on the subject of plants and animals. 38 × 25.5 cm. Writing surface 30.5 × 18.5 cm. 27 lines. Lacquer binding with a traditional centrepiece and pendants, without flap, supplied later. Damaged and re-margined in place.*

This object is a three-part book collecting three different texts on the general topic of plants and animals. The different texts are detailed below:

#### **First part** (1b-62a)

This text is part of the *Nuzhat-namah i'Ala'i*, an encyclopedia, mainly of superstitions, written by Shah-mardan ibn Abi al-Khayr Razi (fl. late 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century) after 475/1082-3 for the Kakuyid ruler Abu Kalijar Garshasp (d.536/1141). It was copied here by Ali ibn Mahmud, in Rab.I 807/1404, a clear Naksh hand. The text contains numerous color illustrations of mammals, birds, snakes, fish, insects, and plants.

The original text is divided into two sections, or *qisms*, each of which containing six *maqālāt*, or discourses: the first six deal with (1) man, (2) quadrupeds, (3) birds, (4) fish, (5) plants, and (6) metals; the other six with (7) the elements, space and time, (8) arithmetic, astronomy, logic, astrology, (9) physiognomy, (10) meteors, (11) interpretation of dreams,

and (12) chemistry (Storey and de Blois, 349). The present text ends at the fourth *maqālāt* of the second *qism*, that is, at the discourse on meteors.

### **Second part** (63b-68b)

This text is a text on zoology and botany, the Risalah-i Katib al-Baghdadi, written by Ibrahim ibn Abd al-Jabbar al-Katib al-Baghdadi, and copied after 807/1404. The text is originally divided in nineteen chapters, although here the end of the third chapter, the whole of the fourth and fifth chapters and the beginning of the sixth are all missing.

### **Third part** (starting at 69b)

This text is the *Farrukh-namah-i Jamali* composed by Abu Bakr ibn al-Muzhir ibn Muhammad ibn Abi al-Qasim ibn Abi Sa'd al-Jamal, known as al-Yazdi, in Rab.II 597/1201 by a clear Naksh hand. The work, divided into six *maqālāt*, was intended by its author to be a supplement to the famous *Nuzhat-namah i'Ala'i* (the first text described above). Together, "they give an invaluable compendium of all possible superstitions [in medieval Persia, and generally in the medieval Islamic world], connected with every form of the organic and inorganic world, numbers, forms of divination, dreams and some craft" (Ivanow, 864).

Consequently, the present object is an incomplete and interrupted version of the intended compound work. Our copy, dated Muh. 899/1493, contains numerous black and white, and color illustrations of animals and plants. The pages on display are part of this third text, and show four animals – one of which is most likely mythical.

\*There is currently no file for this object.

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### **‘AJA’IB AL-MAKHLUQAT, THE WONDERS OF CREATION, 11<sup>TH</sup>/17<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY (BWLW 12)**

*Zakariya ibn Muhammad al Qazwini (d.692/1283). Unknown provenance, end of the 11<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century. 25.5 x 17.5 cm; writing section 16.5 x 9 cm. Persian, translated from Arabic (translator's name unknown). Indian nastaliq script.*

The book is a usual version of the Persian paraphrase of the famous work on cosmography, natural sciences and mineralogy, originally written in Arabic by Zakariya ibn Muhammad al Qazwini. The name of the translator and the date of completion of this version are not given. The present manuscript contains a dedication to Izzu'd-din Shapur b. Uthman, sometimes omitted in other copies.

The book has 401 pages of Oriental paper, each with thirteen lines within double jadvāls up to page 183 (no jadvāls afterwards). It contains numerous but short marginal notes and glosses, often by a modern hand, in pencil. They chiefly deal with explanations of difficult

and rare terms. The copy is in fairly good condition, although in the beginning the jadwal lines have cut through the paper. The book also contains a large number of miniature paintings illustrating the text, some of which show great detail. Some other intended miniatures, however, have not been executed and the spaces reserved for them are left blank.

The book begins with four *moqaddemāt* or prologues. “The first provides an exposition of marvels and includes a psychological explanation of their attraction to the human mind; the second describes the two subdivisions of created things, those that can exist independently by their essence, corporeal or spiritual, and those that are only accidents; the third defines the strange and remarkable; and the fourth mentions the subdivisions of existing things” (Bosworth and Afshar, 697).

Then, the work proper begins. It is divided into two *maqālāt*, or discourses, both with numerous subdivisions. The first discourse deals with supraterrrestrial or “supra-lunar” creatures and phenomena (*al-‘olūnīyāt*) – the heavenly bodies, the moon, the sun, the planets, the fixed stars, and various phenomena. It passes to the denizens of the heavens (*sokkān al-samāwāt*) such as angels and archangels, and closes by considering questions of time and chronology, as well as the different calendars of the Arabs, the Greeks, and the Persians (Bosworth and Afshar).

The second discourse (the largest part of the work) deals with terrestrial or “sub-lunar” creatures (*al-sofīyāt*). It first describes “the four elements, the winds, and heavenly phenomena like rainbows, thunder, and lightning. Then it goes on to the division of the earth into seven component climes and describes all the known seas and islands, followed by an examination of the three realms of nature [called *al-ka’inat* by Qazwini]: the mineral, the vegetable (trees, plants, fruits, vegetables), and the animal [which includes human beings]. This last kingdom forms the remaining half of the discourse, beginning with the human being, his anatomy and physiology, and his nervous and emotional system; the jinn and the demons; and the animals, birds, and creeping things. A *kātema* or concluding section deals with remarkable monsters and with the forms of the angels” (Bosworth and Afshar, 697).

The page on display is most likely part of the animal kingdom of the second discourse. The left page is occupied by an almost full-page image illustrating six creatures with human bodies and animal heads. The upper part of the right page is occupied with text; its lower half with an image of a human surrounded by creatures – perhaps a scene of the jinn and the demons.

\*There is currently no file for this object.

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