

Introduction

This catalogue is the work of an art history graduate seminar in medieval manuscripts held at the Lilly Library in the Spring semester of 1987. The purpose of the seminar was to acquaint students with the many facets of manuscript production, and afford them the rare and always valuable opportunity to work with the object itself.

Medieval books are more than just illuminations, and their problems generally demand good detective work as well as art historical expertise. Critical thinking and the ability to solve a puzzle is often more crucial than stylistic analysis. A facility with languages is essential and a number of disciplines, from paleography and codicology to heraldry and Church history, must be tapped. But the cardinal virtue of the manuscript student is patience—the willingness to let books speak for themselves. They do.

Selecting the manuscripts which students would work on was indeed a difficult process, since the Lilly collections are rich in representative pieces from the seventh through the seventeenth centuries. The manuscripts chosen are illuminated examples with interesting problems of localization or text content. None of these items has been previously catalogued, and only a few have had any work at all done on their texts. The manuscripts are primarily religious: liturgical or service books, Bibles, psalters, breviaries and Books of Hours—an emphasis which parallels the trend of medieval book production itself. Also included are two secular manuscripts which reflect the slightly later Italian Renaissance interest in antique writers.

Student work has brought to light some exciting and important finds which were to date unpublished, such as the association of two sets of leaves, fragments from the well-known Chertsey Abbey Breviary (ca. 1320), mainly preserved in the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Ricketts 23 and Ricketts 47, item nos. 3a & b); or the identification of a single Lilly antiphonal leaf as part of a Bohemian choirbook (ca. 1400-1405), fragments of which are now preserved in Washington, Stockholm, and Montreal (Ricketts 97, item no. 10); or the identification of the fifteenth-century Dominican nuns who were responsible for illuminating the Rule book for their cloister of St. Catherine at Nürnberg (Ricketts 198, item no. 13).

We have attempted to describe each item as completely as possible, and then focus on the most important aspects of each piece. The limitations imposed by the brief time span of one semester has resulted in some problems left unsolved. Several of the items presented here deserve further study, which we hope our research will inspire.

It has been said that the wealth of the Lilly Library is "one of the best kept secrets on campus." If that is so, it is surely not due to a lack of concern, openness, or generous hospitality on the part of the Lilly staff. The seminar is deeply indebted to William Cagle, Director of the Library; Sandra Taylor, Curator of Manuscripts; Kate Siebert Medicus and the entire staff of the Manuscripts Department; and Josiah Bennett, rare book cataloger, each of whom has contributed time and expertise in his or her own distinct way. We are grateful for their help and hope that this issue of *The Indiana University Bookman* will, to some degree, repay their efforts on our behalf.

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