

EN-CHANTING:

CHORAL LEAVES FROM THE MIDDLE AGES AND
RENAISSANCE



LES ENLUMINURES

PARIS CHICAGO NEW YORK



Illuminated Choir Books were a remarkable feature of the Medieval and Renaissance Church. The Cathedral of Florence alone had thirty-three volumes, and Vasari expressed admiration of the multivolume set of the monastery Santa Maria degli Angeli. Some of the greatest artists of Renaissance Italy are known for their illumination of choral works. Damage from long use, the suppression of the monasteries, the Napoleonic invasions, and obsolescence – these are just some of the factors that resulted in the dismemberment of huge Choir Books and led to their presence, page by page, in museums, libraries, and private collections throughout the world.

This small gathering of illuminated leaves includes diverse examples from Antiphonals (books for the Divine Office) and Graduals (books for the Mass) and reveals some of the richness of the extraordinary art form. To enhance appreciation of the leaves – as much about the visual delight of the paintings as about the rich and mellow sound of the music – we have included links to the Gregorian chants introduced by the pictures ([click on the Latin below to listen](#)). As Dante wrote in the Divine Comedy:

"Through all the choir, one voice, one measure ran, that perfect seem'd the concord of their song."

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Let us all rejoice in the Lord ... (Gaudeamus omnes in Domino...)

The page contains the following text and musical notation:

c. lxxv.
c. lxxvi.
c. lxxvii.
cc. vi.
cc. lxxviii.
lxxviii.
lxxxviii.

et sociorum eius. *Intit.* Iusti epulentur. *Gr.*
 Iustorum anime. *Alla.* V. Iusti epulentur.
 offi. Anima nra. *co.* Dico aut uobis
 amicis. In iug. assumptionis bte marie. V.
 Intit. Dulcis tuus. *Gr.* Benedicta et uene
 rabilis. off. Sta es mana q. *co.* Sta in.

lxxxv. **G** In assumpti
 one bte
 Au. *Gr.* Intit.
 decimus omis
 unido mi no dies fe


1. Jacopo da Balsemo, The Assumption of the Virgin, in an initial 'G' on a leaf from a Gradual (MIN 18-21) ←click this reference number



Jacopo da Balsemo (c. 1425-c. 1503) and Workshop
The Assumption of the Virgin, leaf with initial 'G' from a Choir Book
Italy, Bergamo, c. 1480-1490
(leaf 495 x 360 mm.; miniature 152 x 136 mm.)

This large and highly colorful miniature prefacing the feast of the Assumption (August 15) is in a style distinctive of Jacopo da Balsemo and his workshop, known for a substantial group of Choir Books made in Bergamo in the second half of the fifteenth century. Jacopo is recorded as working on Choir Books for the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo between 1449 and 1468. The present leaf can be added to a group of seven others all of which come from a series of Choir Books.

\$17,500

 I am risen and I am always with you. Alleluia (Resurrexi et adhuc tecum sum. Alleluia)

Psalm 138: 18



2. Don Simone Camaldolese, The Empty Tomb, initial 'R' on a leaf from a Gradual (MIN-50286) ←click this reference number



Don Simone Camaldolese (active 1379-1405) and Workshop
The Empty Tomb, leaf with initial 'R' from a Gradual
Italy, Florence, c. 1390-1400
(leaf 488 x 368 mm.)

This unusual leaf in perfect condition with a large initial 'R' depicts the Empty Tomb following Christ's Resurrection. It is newly attributed to Don Simone Camaldolese and workshop, one of the most famous illuminators of late fourteenth-century Florence of the generation of artists that includes Lorenzo Monaco. Here the painter has cleverly and skillfully conveyed the moment: Christ is truly absent – resurrected – and even Three Marys – usually present – have departed. Indeed, he is “with you” as the chant for Easter Sunday confirms.

\$45,000



The Three Marys at the Sepulchre
Southern Germany, c. 1470-1490
(leaf 573 x 382 mm.; miniature 140 x 98 mm.)

Painted on a glowing field of gold with delicate tooling, this charming scene of the three Marys begins the Easter Sunday antiphon announcing the risen Christ. Completed with playful border decorations of flowers, acanthus, and a delightful peacock, the leaf includes music in the so-called Hufnagel form (alluding to the shape of the notes like "horseshoe nails"). It was originally in the Rosenbaum Collection.

\$15,000

♫ If we have received good things from the hand of God ... ([Si bona suscepimus de manu Domini ...](#)) Job 2:10

Auremus dominum
Qui fecit nos. p. Venite. R.
In bona suscepimus de
manu domini in mala au


4. Secondo Maestro del Breviario Strozzi, Job in Bed Visited by his Wife, in an initial 'S' on a leaf from an Antiphonal (MIN-50350) ←click this reference number



Secondo Maestro del Breviario Strozzi 11 (active Tuscany, c. 1340-1350)
Job in Bed Visited by his Wife, initial 'S' on leaf from an Antiphonal
Italy, Tuscany, Florence or Pisa, c. 1340-1350
(leaf 622 x 450 mm.; miniature 165 x 150 mm.)

This giant Antiphonal leaf from the church of San Francesco in Pisa, was painted by an artist from the circle of Francesco Traini, known as the "Second Master" of the famous Strozzi Breviary. Fantastic human-hybrid figures with bearded faces inhabit the margins, including a musician playing two kettle drums slung around the hips, which evokes the secular music of Italian courts and city streets in bold counterpoint to the sacred music sung aloud from the Choir Book.

\$85,000

 I know him in whom I have believed ... (Scio cui credidi ...) 2
Timothy 1:12



31

1275

grā hedi ficabo eccle siam me az.

Sicōmne
sā pauli
Introitus.

Si o cui Introitus.
cre di di et cer

tus sum quia po tens est te

posi tuz me us serua re in

illuz di em. ps. **D**omine pro

basti me et cognouisti me tu cogno

5. Cristoforo Cortese, Saint Paul, in an initial 'S' on a leaf from a Gradual (MIN-19-39) ←click this reference number

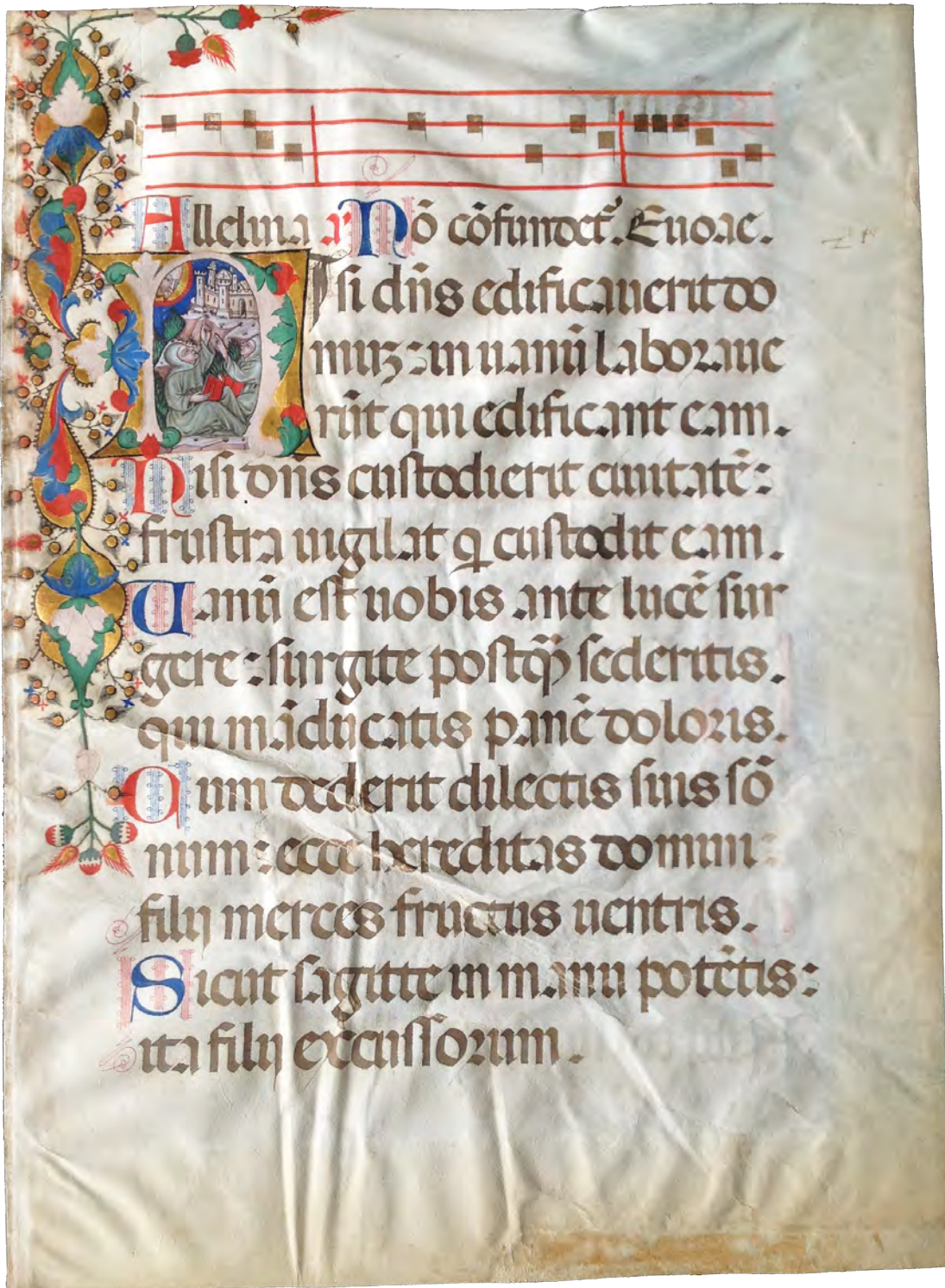


Cristoforo Cortese (active Venice, c. 1390-before 1445)
Saint Paul, initial 'S' on leaf from a Gradual
Northern Italy, Venice, c. 1426-30
(leaf 510 x 365 mm.; miniature 100 x 100 mm.)

This richly decorated miniature was painted by Cristoforo Cortese, the most accomplished Venetian illuminator of the first half of the fifteenth century. It dates toward the middle or end of his career, following a stay in Bologna, and fits securely with a series comprising ten other leaves, mostly with half-length saints, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Free Library of Philadelphia, and other museum collections.

\$35,000

Unless the Lord build the house ... (*Nisi Dominus edificaverit domum...*) Psalm 127:1



6. Workshop of Giovanni di Antonio da Bologna, Singing Franciscans, in an initial 'N' on a leaf from a Choir Psalter (MIN-19-38) ←click this reference number



Workshop of Giovanni di Antonio da Bologna (active Bologna and Ferrara first half of the 15th century)

Singing Franciscans in an historiated initial 'N' from a Choir Psalter

Italy, Bologna, c. 1445-1450

(leaf 565 x 410 mm.; initial 190 x 110 mm.)

Two Franciscan monks, dressed in grey habits and holding open books, raise their hands in chant, gesturing to God the Father before a city – the house the Lord built – in the background. The leaf, one of a large and important group recently reconstructed, was painted by Giovanni di Antonio da Bologna, a notable painter for the Este court.

\$40,000



May God, our God, bless us... (Benedicat nos Deus, Deus noster, benedicat nos Deus...) Psalm 66:7



7. Masters of Raphaël de Mercatellis, Throne of Mercy, in an initial 'B' on a leaf from an Antiphonal (MIN-21-06) ←click this reference number



Masters of Raphaël de Mercatellis
Throne of Mercy, leaf with initial 'B' from an Antiphonal
Southern Netherlands, Ghent or Bruges, c. 1500–1510
(leaf 459 x 340 mm., miniature 108 mm x 105 mm.)

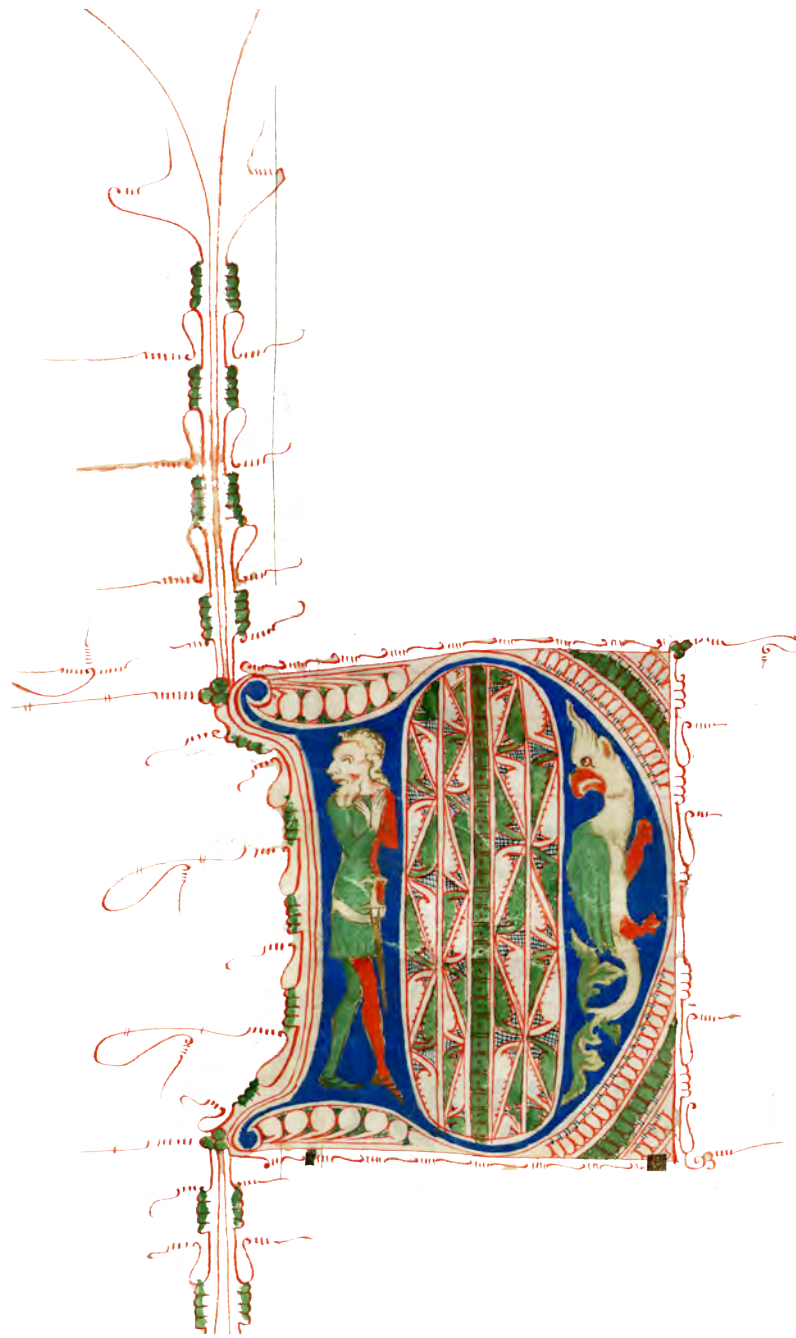
This large miniature depicting the Trinity was created by the Masters of Raphaël de Mercatellis, a prolific workshop responsible for some of the most celebrated illuminations in the Low Countries at the turn of the fifteenth century. Set in a luminous gold field, the bright blue initial 'B' frames the Holy Trinity in a composition known as the *Throne of Mercy* (*Gnadenstuhl*). God the Father sits on his heavenly throne holding upright the crucified Christ while a dove representing the Holy Spirit perches at the top of the cross, wings aloft. Appropriately, the initial opens the responsory of the first nocturn of Matins on Trinity Sunday.

\$15,000

♫ When the day of Pentecost was fully come ...
([Dum complerentur dies pentecostes...](#)) Acts 2:1



8. A Courtier (Fool?) and a Griffon in an initial 'D' on a leaf from an Antiphonal (MIN-19-31) ←click this reference number



German School

Courtier (Fool?) and Griffon in a historiated initial 'D' from an Antiphonal
Bohemia, possibly Prague, c. 1410-1420
(leaf 500 mm. x 345 mm.; miniature 152 x 140 mm.)

This large Choir Book leaf includes the first responsory at Matins on Pentecost with a historiated initial 'D' introducing the incipit *Dum complerentur dies pentecostes* ("When the day of Pentecost was fully come"). It is one of a group of leaves first recorded in the collection of the Director of the Bayerisches Nationalmuseum and dispersed in 1904. The whimsical character of this and the decoration of other sheets is noteworthy and has been localized to Bohemia, perhaps Prague.

\$8,000

♫ Bless the Lord all ye his Angels... ([Benedicite Domino, omnes angeli ejus...](#))

Psalm 102:20

E-uagliu fm math. S Iqs
uult uenire pō me. **Offk.**
Uentana. ke. cccxviii.
Co. F. Joel suus. R. c.
In uigilia sci mathi apli et euagliste. Introi-
tus. G. Ho aut sic. ke. cxii. Gk. T. Ustus
ut palma flo. ke. cccxviii. Offk. G. Gloria et
hore co. ke. cxlv. Co. P. Osi tu diefr.
ke. ccm. In festo sci mathi apli reig.
Introit. O. S uisti meditati sa. ke. cccxxii.
Gk. B. Latus uir qam. ke. cccxii.
Alia. vs. T. E gliosus aploz. k. cccxii.
Offk. P. Desuistrone. k. cxvi. Co. io
M. agna e glia. ke. cxlviii. In Scōz
cosine et damianj mīz. Introit. S. Apian
scōz narēt. ke. clvi. Gk. O. Lamauet
uisti et. ke. clxxii. Alia. vs. H. ec est
ūa fraternitas. ke. clxxx. Offk. G. Lorabi
tur in te. ke. cccviii. Co. P. Osucrit moz
talia fuoz. ke. m. c. c. c.
In dedicatione
Sci Michaelis ar
changeh. Introitus.
Enedia

9. Third Bessarion Master, Saint Michael as Weigher of Souls, in an initial 'B' from a Gradual (MIN-50419) ←click this reference number



Third Bessarion Master (active Lombardy third quarter of the 15th century)
Saint Michael as Weigher of Souls, leaf with initial 'B' from a Gradual
Ferrara, Bologna, c. 1450–1460
(leaf 565 x 495 mm.; miniature 115 x 125 mm.)

This illuminated initial of Saint Michael comes from one of the most important Graduals produced in northern Italy in the mid-fifteenth century. It was painted by the so-called "Third Bessarion Master" named for a famous commission of Choir Books originating from the Greek Cardinal Bessarion (c. 1399/1408–1472) for the Franciscan convent of Saint Anthony of Padua in Constantinople. Inhabiting an initial 'B' that forms the incipit to the Feast of Saint Michael (September 29-30), the archangel dangles a pair of scales in his left hand over a dragon, representing Satan, who he pins to the ground with a spear brandished in his right hand.

\$ 25,000