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11th-
14th c.

Le concordanze di Eusebio.

[Brescia, Biblioteca Civica Queriniana, cod. F.II.1]

Torino, 2006. 25.5 x 34.5 cm, 2 vols, 84, 131 pp.



This rare MS, from the second quarter of the 11th century, is attributed to the “Reichenau School” and is considered one of the finest examples ever created by artists of the Ottonian period. The codex is introduced by 19 leaves, portraying 19 architectural, artfully executed canon arches that frame the Gospel Harmony created by Eusebius, Court Bishop of Constantine and Bishop of Caesarea in Palestine in the 4th century. All folios are ornate with a variety of luxurious decorations with none of the colorful columns being identical; architectural gables and arches, inspired by the classical style, alternate to form a perfectly harmonious composition. This first section is followed by the Gospel Pericopes and includes 11 full-page miniatures as well as 12 luxury initials facing each other and introducing the different feast day readings. The solemn character of the book is further underlined by a number of initials set on purple ground and preceding the individual readings. The vivid orange fillings further enhance the colorfulness so typical of Ottonian illumination from Reichenau. Limited edition of 444 copies.

Libro d'ore di Vrelant: Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis secundum usum romanum.

[Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ms. Acquisti e Doni 147]

Torino, 2005. 17.5 x 26.5 cm, 384 pp + commentary.



This MS, with its miniatures executed by the Flemish artist Willelm Vrelant, is a particularly beautiful Book of Hours from the second half of the 15th century. The voluminous codex stands out in the panorama of illuminated MSS on account of its splendid and refined cornices, all of them different and enriched with gold which makes every page a very precious one. The spectacular beauty of this work is further enhanced with 23 full-page miniatures. The Book of Hours of Vrelant was commissioned for a wedding, a custom of the time; in one of its pages we find a splendid portrait of a feminine figure praying. The commissioner of the book, and in the same place the coat of arms of the sponsor appears. Historians believe it belongs to the families of Roberto Villetaneuve and Feydeau de Brou. The MS was donated in 1806 by the Regent Maria Luiva of Spain to the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana where it is conserved. The facsimile is executed in 8 to 11 colors plus gold and metallic colors. Limited edition of 530 copies bound in leather with wooden case.

1460-
1465

San Francesco d'Assisi. La vita e le opere.

[Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ms. Gaddi 112]
Castelvetro di Modena, 2010. 21.5 x 28.4 cm. 370 pp + commentary.



Ms. Gaddiano 112 contains an extraordinary recounting of Franciscan works, among them the Legend and Life of St. Francesco in two versions: "I Fioretti di San Francesco (fol. 1-43 & 137-142) and "Il Suo Testamento (fol. 164-166). The decoration of the ms which has 30 filigree initials of 39 narrated stories displays a technique in water color and ink which was not common at that time. In the Middle Ages it was a technique considered poor compared with the rich colors applied with paint brush. The design with ink and water color of the Trecento and Quattrocento is linked to a revival in and renewed interest of the old classic culture and a desire to use a technique devoid of pomp and instead one having an utilitarian character which was a testimony to the unknown miniaturists of the Franciscan codex. Limited edition of 999 copies bound in full leather.

€ 4900 <http://www.omifacsimiles.com/brochures/francesco2.html>

c.1550

Francesco Petrarca, I trionfi.

[Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Ms. Strozzi 174]
Castelvetro di Modena, 2010.



Petrarch wrote Trionfi between 1350 and 1374 and in the mid 15th century and versions of the text appeared in sumptuous manuscripts with illustrations. MS Stozzi 174, preserved in the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana is one such example, believed to be decorated by the Florentine artist Apollonio di Giovanni (c.1415-1465), an illuminator and painter specializing in the decoration of bridal chest, spalliere and devotional painting. The manuscript is written in calligraphic mercantesca script with humanistic features. Limited edition of 999 copies.

€ 5700

14th c. ***Regia Carmina de Convenvole du Prato.***
 [Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Banco Rari 38]
 Torino, 2004. 24 x 37 cm, 70 pp + commentary.



To celebrate the seventh centenary of Francesco Petrarca (1304-1374) UTET published in a limited numbered edition the facsimile of *Regia Carmina*, a work of Convenvole da Prato, teacher of Petrarca. Preserved in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Florence under call number Banco Rari 38, this sumptuously illuminated codex from the 14th c. is one of the richest manuscripts of the Trecento. The poem *Regia Carmina*, begun c.1320, took many years to complete; it is especially remarkable as a historic document, a testimony of an era in crisis where the author shows himself as an interpreter of diffuse hope. He deplors the ambition and corruption of the time, the animosity and cold war among the Italian cities, the decadence of Rome—a city abandoned by the Popes who went to reside in Avignon—and sees Roberto d’Angiò (Robert d’Anjou) as the savior and unifier of Italy. Convenvole da Prato was born in Prata between 1270-1275 and is considered the most important writer of that city. He taught “il trivio”, the three disciplines: grammar, rhetoric and dialectics. Petrarca, one of this students, often mentions his teacher in his letters. *Regia Carmina* was a present for Roberto D’Angiò; in 1336 da Prato was officially appointed Professor of the “Comune di Prato”. Full-color facsimile executed in 8 to 11 colors plus gold and metallic colors. The accompanying critical commentary includes a complete transcription and translation into Italian. Limited edition of 330 copies bound in silken velvet with wooden box.

13th c. ***La leggenda di santa Margherita e sant’Agnese.***
 [Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 453]
 Castelvetro di Modena, 2008. 10.3 x 14.5 cm, 124 pp + commentary.



This codex is dedicated to a pregnant lady, a member of the ruling class, named Anna. The codex narrates the stories of two martyred saints—Margareta and Agnes, both horribly tortured after rejecting the offers of courtship of persons in high places. Margareta is counted as one of the 14 Holy Helpers and is the patron saint of farmers, virgins, wet-nurses, barren wives and is also called upon in the face of difficult births. Agnes is most often depicted as a lamb, probably because of the similarity of her name with the Latin “agnus” meaning lamb. She is patron saint of chastity, virgins, children and gardeners. The codex is the richest illustrated corpus of the legend. Its decoration is composed of filigree letters and 33 scenes depicted in full-page miniatures. Its elegant and ethereal characters are portrayed on a gold-leaf background, and move among splendid settings reminiscent of the late 13th-century Byzantine style. Attributed to an artist close to the Master of Gerona. Commentary by Giovanni Lazzi. Limited edition of 999 copies bound in blue silken velvet with gold and silver fittings and lapis lazuli stone on the cover center.
 € 4900

1460-
1465

Vergilius Publius Maro: Bucolicon, Georgicon, Aeneis. Virgilio Riccardiana, Ricc. 492.

[Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, Ricc. 492]

Collectio Maior. Castelvetro di Modena, 2003. 20 x 30.5 cm, 2 vols, 512, 172 pp.



Publius Vergilius Maro (70 BC-19 BC)—Virgil in English—is the greatest of all the Roman poets. This beautifully illuminated MS dating from the second half of the 15th century reproduces the full text of the “Bucolics”, consisting of 10 pastoral poems that relate to the Idylls of the Hellenistic Greek poet Theocritus, the “Georgics”, a didactic poem in four books on farming, and the “Aeneid”, Rome’s national epic poem. The manuscript was crafted by the famous illuminator Apollonio di Giovanni for the de Medici court. This elegant Renaissance codex transports the Aenean adventures into the Florentine world and splendor of Lorenzo I de Medici. In one of the miniatures Lorenzo is depicted as a blond youth among a group of shepherds. The extremely detailed miniatures convey an inexhaustible insight into the life and world of ideas of the time: clothing, transport, the decoration and furnishing of interiors, municipal scenes depicting the monuments of Alberti and Brunelleschi, flora and fauna, celestial bodies, etc. Important personages and venues are specifically named. In its entirety the codex is an original and fascinating union of elements of the Classical Age with those of the Renaissance. Oddly the completion of the codex was interrupted and the illustrations were never finished. The initial unfinished depictions merely lack their final coloration and the completed quill-drawn sketches had already received their most valuable colors: gold, blue, and red. Seldom in the history of the art of illumination does one have the possibility of seeing the process that went into the crafting of such a manuscript. The masters of the miniature began with a sketch, continued by applying the more valuable colors and then completed the work with the addition of the other hues. What caused the commissioner of this manuscript to interrupt this enormous task and leave so many miniatures uncompleted is unknown. Commentary by Giovanni Lazzi. Limited edition of 999 copies bound in light brown goat leather, with wooden box. € 8900

15th c.

La flora: Horae beatae mariae virginis.

[Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, Ms. I.B.51]

Torino, 2008. 13.5 x 21.5 cm, 736 pp + commentary.



This splendid Book of Hours from the 15th century was dedicated to Charles VIII, king of France (1483-1498) who probably had it among his possessions. The MS is richly ornamented, with a marvelous variety of decorative elements, flowers for the major part. The facsimile, a very high quality one, displays faithfully all the variety of colors and perfection of the designs. “La Flora” shows 28 miniatures, in large format, the work of a French master but the codex, in its global and organic context, belongs to the Flemish School of Ghent and Bruges, by which, together with the famous Breviario Grimani, are part of its major works. The name “Flora” (original title: Horae beatae mariae virginis) has been attributed to scholars of this MS for the outstanding richness and variety of the floral elements. The original is preserved in the Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli and the facsimile has been made possible by the sponsorship of the Minister of Cultural Treasures. Limited edition of 664 copies bound in leather, in wooden box.

16th c. ***Libro d'ore di Maria Stuarda.***

[Ravenna, Biblioteca Classense, ms. 62]

Castelvetro di Modena, 2009. 7 x 11 cm, 358 pp + commentary.



This beautiful little book of hours, which is conserved as ms. 62 at the Biblioteca Classense of Ravenna (Emilia-Romagna), dates from the beginning of the 16th century. Almost certainly used by Mary, Queen of Scots herself, the Queen's name on the first flyleaf would seem to identify the little codex as a very personal possession of one of the most fascinating, enigmatic and tragic figures of Europe of the 16th c. The manuscript text, in Latin and copied in Italian Gothic script, is preceded by seven leaves which illustrate the scenes of the months of the year and the corresponding signs of the zodiac, an iconographic tradition in Anglo-Saxon illuminated codices which dates from the Middle Ages. The very fine illuminated miniatures, rich in flowers, fruit, insects, birds and acanthus leaves and with red initial letters finely worked in gold-leaf, are Flemish in style and very probably originated in the cities of Bruges and Ghent. They include 18 superb full-page illuminations, 12 of which depicting the months of the year and 6 introducing the various Offices. The incisive way of representing the sacred figures, the unusually strong and expressive colors, the abundant use of gold leaf, the use of perspective and spatial illusion which simulate architectural backgrounds or wide landscape views bring to mind the contemporary paintings of Hugo van der Goes and Roger van der Weyden, of Hans Memling and Jan van Eyck. The little volume is issued in a box with a facsimile of the death sentence of Mary, Queen of Scots dated February 1, 1587 which bears the signature of Elizabeth I. Commentary edited by Claudia Giuliani. Limited edition of 999 copies bound in red silken velvet, with a jade stone set in the central gilded ornament and pearl settings on the corner elements.

€ 5700

14th c. ***Il pontificale di Bonifacio IX.***

[Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, lat. 3747]

Collectio Vaticana. Castelvetro di Modena, 2006. 21 x 31 cm, 2 vols, 104, 159 pp.



Pope Boniface IX (1389-1404), born Pietro Tomacelli and scion of a noble Neapolitan family, ruled in Rome during the Western Schism (1378-1415) as counterpart to Clement VIII in Avignon. Boniface showed little interest in ending the Schism, preferring to concentrate his efforts and creativity on the enhancement of his fortune. He sold indulgences and divided the Papal State into vicarages which he leased to solvent families, who in turn bled them dry. This splendid codex must be viewed and understood as part of the historical background which includes the Schism and the strengthening of papal power in Rome. It sparkles with the enchanting gleam of pure gold and vivid colors: the exceptionally rich iconographic display consists of illuminated initials and elegant framing, embellished with gold and adorned with anthropomorphous figures in deep colors. Originally created as a "Praeparatio ad Missam" for personal use by the Pontiff, it has 11 splendid full-page miniatures ablaze with gold that meticulously illustrate the ceremonies of the pope and his vestments. Commentary by Ambrogio M. Piazzoni. Limited edition of 500 copies bound in full leather, bearing the coat of arms of Pope Boniface engraved in gold.

€ 9900