

Illuminated vellum manuscript leaf with gold borders

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1524



Title Statement

Illuminated vellum manuscript leaf with gold bordersGuide to Illuminated vellum manuscript leaf with gold borders C0536

Subtitle: Illuminated vellum manuscript leaf with gold borders

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Publication Statement

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Profile Description

Creation: This finding aid was produced using ArchivesSpace on 2025-07-18 07:03:01 -0400.

Language Usage: Description is written in: English, Latin script.

Descriptive Rules: Describing Archives: A Content Standard

Descriptive Summary

Unit ID

C0536

Unit ID

/repositories/2/resources/755

Unit Date

1524

box

1 (folder)

Language

Latin

Abstract

Single double-sided leaf from an illuminated manuscript with full brushed gold border containing colorful stylized plants and flowers.

Extent

.01 Linear Feet 1 folder

Physical Location

R 71, C 2, S 5

Repository

George Mason University. Libraries. Special Collections Research Center

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

There are no access restrictions.

Use Restrictions

Public Domain. There are no known restrictions.

Acquisition Information

Purchased by Lynn Eaton from Phillip J. Pirages Fine Books and Manuscripts in 2019.

Processing Information

Processing completed by Meghan Glasbrenner in May 2025. Finding aid completed by Meghan Glasbrenner in July 2025.

Preferred Citation

Illuminated vellum manuscript leaf with gold borders, C0536, Special Collections Research Center, George Mason University Libraries

Biographical and Historical Information

One of the old and illustrious families of Germany, the Mansfeld family took its name from Mansfeld in Saxony where it was seated from the 11th through the 18th century. Albert, Count of Mansfeld (1480-1560) was a close friend of Protestant Reformation leader Martin Luther (1483-1546) and an early supporter of the Reformation movement. The Mansfeld family line officially ended with the death of the last remaining male heir, Josef Wenzel Nepomuk, Prince of Fondi in Italy, in 1780, with the family's lands then divided between Saxony and Prussia.

Derived from the Latin words "manus" (hand) and "scriptus" (writing) the term manuscript refers to those text written by hand. The term illumination, taken from the Latin "illuminare" (lighted up), referred to decoration of manuscript text with gold leaf, or sometimes silver, giving the impression that the page had been literally illuminated. Throughout the early medieval period illuminated manuscripts were written and illuminated solely by monks and mainly centered on the creation of Latin texts used in Christian worship. By the start of the thirteenth century, the growth of literacy and universities as centers of learning led to an increased demand for books of all kinds, turning the creation of illuminated manuscripts into a city-based business, in which professional scribes and illuminators were hired to complete the work. Traditional illuminated manuscripts were written on vellum (calf skin) or parchment (sheep or goat skin), with the writing often completed before the illuminator took over to add the gold or silver gilding.

Scope and Content

Single double-sided leaf from an illuminated manuscript with full brushed gold border containing colorful stylized plants and flowers taken from a Psalter and Prayerbook in Latin, created in Northern Germany, likely in Hildesheim, for the Mansfeld family. The full manuscript contains a composite text for use at Mass and other services containing various psalms and prayers, including a Ferial Psalter, or Book of Psalms, designed for recitation during the Divine Office (also known as the Liturgy of the Hours) which distributes the 150 psalms over seven daily readings, with each psalm being recited once each week.

Additional removed leaves from the full manuscript not held in this collection include the arms for the prominent Mansfeld family of northern Germany indicating the manuscript may have been created for Albert, Count of Mansfeld (1480-1560) and a further miniature of St. Godehard, bishop of Hildesheim (d. 1038), suggests the location of the manuscript's creation in that city. The full manuscript was broken up following sale at auction in June 1987.

Related Materials

The Special Collections Research Center holds other Christian manuscripts dating from the Middle Ages, including two Gregorian chant propers and illuminated manuscript leaf.

The Cleveland Museum of Art holds The Jeanne Miles Blackburn Collection of illuminated manuscript leaves, including additional leaves from the Mansfeld manuscript.

The Rare Books Collection in Mullen Library, part of Special Collections at the Catholic University of America, holds a large collection of Christian manuscripts dating from the Middle Ages.

Keywords

Manuscripts

Manuscripts, Medieval

Illumination of books and manuscripts

Middle Ages

Bibliography

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Arrangement

This is a single item collection.