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**THE MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM TO EXHIBIT NEWLY
ACQUIRED PRAYER BOOK MADE FOR QUEEN CLAUDE DE FRANCE**

**TINY BOOK—JUST 2 ¾ BY 2 INCHES—IS AN EXTREMELY
RARE MASTERWORK OF RENAISSANCE ILLUMINATION**

Manuscript to Go on View May 20

New York, NY, May 9, 2008—The Morgan Library & Museum will put on special exhibition beginning May 20 an extremely rare Renaissance illuminated manuscript, the Prayer Book of Queen Claude de France (1499–1524), created around the time of her coronation in 1517. It is the most important single illuminated manuscript acquired by the Morgan in the last twenty-five years and will go on view in the East Room of the historic McKim building.

The tiny, jewel-like book, measuring just 2 ¾ by 2 inches, is richly illustrated with 132 scenes from the lives of Christ, the Virgin Mary, the apostles, and numerous saints. The work was created by an artist known as the Master of Claude de France and can be characterized as the pinnacle of delicacy in Renaissance illumination. The artist, named after this prayer book and a companion manuscript, was active in Tours during the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Barely a dozen of his works survive.

The prayer book was given to the Morgan by Mrs. Alexandre P. Rosenberg, a long time generous supporter of the Museum. The gift is in memory of her husband Alexandre Paul Rosenberg, who died in 1987. Mr. Rosenberg was founding president in 1962 of the Art Dealers Association of America and was for many years a prominent art dealer in New York.



Virgin and Child with St. John the Baptist, with the coat of arms of Queen Claude de France in the lower border, illuminated by the Master of Claude de France, Prayer Book of Queen Claude de France: France, Tours, ca. 1517, The Morgan Library & Museum: MS M.1166 (fol. 15v), Gift of Mrs. Alexandre P. Rosenberg, in memory of her husband Alexandre Paul Rosenberg. Photography by Schechter Lee.

The manuscript includes a bookplate designed by Pablo Picasso, an artist whose works Mr. Rosenberg exhibited in his gallery. Mr. Rosenberg collected early printed books and illuminated manuscripts; the Prayer Book of Queen Claude is considered the crown jewel of the collection.

“The Morgan Library & Museum is deeply grateful to Mrs. Rosenberg for the generous gift of this Renaissance masterpiece,” said Morgan director William M. Griswold. “It is a tremendously important addition to the Morgan's renowned collection of illuminated manuscripts. We are especially pleased to be able to put the work on view so soon after acquiring it, allowing visitors to see first-hand its beauty and delicacy.”

The book's miniature scenes are painted in a range of soft purples, mauves, and roses in tiny, sometimes almost invisible brushstrokes. Especially delicate is the artist's handling of atmospheric perspective, which he used to both lighten and multiply the soft colors in the landscapes and cities that fill many backgrounds in the book.

The exhibition of the prayer book will include a second, related manuscript, the Prayer Book of Anne de Bretagne. Anne was Claude's mother and queen of France as the wife first of King Charles VIII and then King Louis XII. This manuscript, which was commissioned around 1495 by Anne for her son, was illuminated by Jean Poyer, a leading Tours illuminator in whose workshop the Claude Master is now thought to have trained. Side by side, the two juxtapose a mother's book with her daughter's and the work of one illuminator with that of his protégé.

The exhibition will also include a panel with enlargements of many of the illuminations, allowing visitors to see more closely the detail and delicacy of the Claude Master's creations. In addition, visitors can view the complete manuscript on screens in the Morgan's computer alcove on the main floor of the museum.

In 1514, at age fourteen, Princess Claude married François d'Angoulême, who became King François I of France the next year. Claude and François produced seven children in their ten years of marriage, including their second son, King Henry II of France. Queen Claude died in 1524 at age twenty-four.

This exhibition is made possible through the generosity of Gifford Combs. Christie's is the corporate sponsor.

The Morgan Library & Museum

A complex of buildings in the heart of New York City, The Morgan Library & Museum began as the private library of financier Pierpont Morgan, one of the preeminent collectors and cultural benefactors in the United States. Today it is a museum, independent research library, musical venue, architectural landmark,

and historic site. Nearly a century after its founding, the Morgan maintains a unique position in the cultural life of New York City and is considered one of its greatest treasures. With the 2006 reopening of its newly renovated campus, designed by renowned architect Renzo Piano, the Morgan reaffirmed its role as an important repository for the history, art, and literature of Western civilization from 4000 b.c. to the twenty-first century.

General Information

The Morgan Library & Museum

225 Madison Avenue, at 36th Street, New York, NY 10016-3405

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www.themorgan.org

Hours

Tuesday–Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.; extended Friday hours, 10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Sunday, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.; closed Monday, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year’s Day. The Morgan closes at 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve and New Year’s Eve.

Admission

\$12 for adults; \$8 for students, seniors (65 and over), and children (under 16); free to Members and children, 12 and under accompanied by an adult. Admission is free on Fridays from 7 to 9 p.m. Admission is not required to visit the Morgan Shop.