

Guide to Mr. Morgan's Study

Described around 1912 as “the most beautiful room in America,” the West Room served as Pierpont Morgan’s private study. As he became less involved with his Wall Street office, he was able to spend an increasing amount of time here. Surrounded by favorite objects from his collections, he received scholars, dealers, and statesmen as well as business colleagues and friends. Morgan also spent long, quiet hours sitting by the fire, smoking his cigar, and playing solitaire. In addition to the Renaissance-inspired furnishings of the room, the art displayed reveals the breadth of his interests and activity as a collector.

Ceiling

In 1905 the architect Charles McKim purchased the sixteenth-century coffered wooden ceiling, which was shipped to New York in several sections and reassembled to fit the room. It was recently discovered that the two coats of arms decorating the ceiling were painted during the library’s construction by James Wall Finn, based on examples found in a book on Renaissance bookplates owned by Morgan.

Walls

The original red silk damask wall covering was patterned after those in the Roman palace (now called the Villa Farnesina) of Agostino Chigi, the famed Renaissance banker and patron of the arts. Chigi’s coat of arms, consisting of an eight-pointed star and mountain formation, constitutes the dominant pattern. Morgan’s original wall fabric deteriorated from exposure to pollution and his cigar smoke; the present wall covering is a replica from the renowned Parisian textile house of Scalmandré.

Stained Glass Panels

The stained glass fragments were incorporated into the windows when the library was built. Like the stained glass in the East Room, they date from the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries and are from churches and monasteries in Switzerland.

Vault

The door in the southeast corner of the room leads to Morgan’s manuscript vault, where he stored his collection of more than six hundred medieval manuscripts. The vault remained in use until 2003.

Furniture

Much of the furniture in this room, including Morgan’s desk and chair, was produced in London at the time of the library’s construction and is in the Italian Renaissance style. The decorative motifs embossed in the leather on Morgan’s desktop were deliberately adopted by McKim from Renaissance sources. Additional pieces, including the

Renaissance-style carved walnut hexagonal table, were acquired by Morgan's son, J. P. Morgan, Jr.

1. Arras Reliquary, ca. 1200

Rock crystal cylinder with foot, knob, and lid in copper-gilt champlevé enamel

This transparent rock crystal reliquary belonged to the convent of the Ursuline Order at Arras and was said to have contained relics of SS. Denis and Ursula. Its original contents are uncertain; some scholars have proposed the slender tube may have contained a holy thorn or nail.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1909

2. Hans Memling (Flemish, ca. 1433/40–1494)

Kneeling Female Donor with Her Patron St. Anne, ca. 1470

Kneeling Male Donor with His Patron St. William of Maleval, ca. 1470

Tempera on panel

Among Memling's finest early works in this country, these two panels are the interior wings of a triptych. The central panel, a Crucifixion, is in the Museo Civico, Vicenza, Italy; the two exterior wing panels depicting angels are in the Groeningemuseum, Bruges. The kneeling old woman is probably the mother of the patron, Abbot Jan Crabbe.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1907

3. Kneeling Angel Reliquary, ca. 1300

Gilt bronze, embossed and incised, and rock crystal

This is a rare type of reliquary depicting an angel displaying relics (now lost) in a rock crystal cylinder (modern replacement) on a tray. The original wings of the angel are missing, and the original contents of the crystal container are unknown. It forms a pair with an angel in the Historical Museum in Basel.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1909

4. Giovanni Battista Cima da Conegliano (Italian, 1460–1517/18)

Virgin and Child with SS. Catherine and John the Baptist, ca. 1515

Oil on panel

The painting is of a type known as the *sacra conversazione*, or sacred conversation, in which the Virgin and Child are shown in the company of saints. The type became popular toward the end of Cima's career. The panel formerly belonged to Charles Fairfax Murray, the pre-Raphaelite painter and collector from whom Morgan purchased his collection of old master drawings in 1909.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1911

5. Pair of Hexagonal Saltcellars, ca. 1550–1600

Silver, some gilding, with niello and engraved decoration

Thought to be of German origin, these cellars are decorated with scenes depicting the lives of Abraham and Jacob from the Book of Genesis.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1911

6. After Sandro Botticelli (Italian, 1444/5–1510)

Madonna of the Magnificat, ca. 1500

Oil on panel

This is one of seven known contemporary replicas of Botticelli's original tondo (ca. 1481) now in the Uffizi, Florence. Its name derives from the opening words of the Virgin's song of exaltation, *Magnificat anima mea dominus* (My soul doth glorify the Lord), which she is writing in the book before her.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1911

7. Gian Giacomo d'Alladio, called Macrino d'Alba (Italian, ca. 1465–1528)

Portrait of a Knight of Malta, 1499

Tempera on panel

It has been suggested that the sitter is Benvenuto San Giorgio of Biandrate, a nobleman, papal ambassador, and knight of the Order of Malta since 1480. He may have commissioned the portrait to commemorate his election as head of the Monferrato regents' council in 1499. The inscription on the border panel reads *By the hand of Macrino I shall live after death*. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1909

8. *St. John the Baptist with a Lamb*, ca. 1450

Limestone with traces of polychrome

This statue recalls those of the four prophets placed around the foot of the Calvary in Burgundian sculptor Claus Sluter's famed Well of Moses (ca. 1400) in the Carthusian monastery of Champmol, Dijon.

Gift of Mrs. Felix M. Warburg, in memory of her husband

9. Francesco Francia (Italian, ca. 1450–1517)

Virgin and Child with SS. Dominic and Barbara

Oil on panel

Among Francia's major surviving works, depictions of the Virgin and Child with saints are predominant. When he painted the present panel the artist was influenced by the luminous style of Perugino.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1907

10. Antonio Rossellino (Italian, 1427–1478)

Bust of the Christ Child

Marble, with modern metal halo

Rossellino was among one of the most talented Florentine sculptors of his generation. This bust probably was paired with one now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., of the youthful St. John the Baptist.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1906

11. *Pair of Firedogs*

Bronze

Stylistically, this pair of firedogs is related to the work of Paduan sculptors Andrea Briosco, called Il Riccio (1470–1532), and Tullio Lombardo (ca. 1455–1532).

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1904

12. *Pair of Candelabra in the Form of Kneeling Angels*

Polychromed wood

These figures show the influence of the early Renaissance Florentine sculptors Benedetto da Maiano (1442–1492) and Andrea della Robbia (1435–1525).

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1906

13. Frank Holl (British, 1845–1888)

Portrait of Pierpont Morgan (1837–1913)

Oil on canvas

This portrait is considered the finest depiction of the sitter, who was fifty-one years old when it was painted.

Commissioned by Pierpont Morgan, 1888

14. Attributed to Giovanni Francesco Rustici (Italian, 1474–1554)

St. John the Baptist

Marble

A contemporary of Michelangelo and collaborator of Leonardo, Rustici worked primarily as a sculptor but was also active as a painter. The present statue was based on Donatello's St. John from the Casa Martelli, now in the Bargello, Florence.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1909

15. Pietro Vannucci, called Perugino (Italian, 1450–1523)

Madonna and Saints Adoring the Christ Child, ca. 1500

Tempera on panel

Perugino was the leading Umbrian painter of his day and the principal master of Raphael. In this panel the Madonna and Child are flanked by St. John the Evangelist on the left and an unidentified female saint, perhaps the Magdalene, on the right. The inscription on the frame is from Psalm 45: Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee forever.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1911

16. Attributed to Desiderio da Settignano (Italian, 1428–1464)

Bust of a Florentine Woman, perhaps Marietta Strozzi

Marble

Desiderio was one of the most skillful sculptors of his age. It has been suggested that this bust depicts Marietta Strozzi, a member of the powerful Florentine banking family and daughter of Lorenzo di Palla Strozzi (ca. 1373–1462). Marietta was the subject of other busts by the artist, most notably one executed about 1460, now in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin. Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1908

17. Follower of Donatello (Italian, 1386/87–1466)

Standing Virgin and Child, ca. 1470

Terra-cotta bas-relief with polychrome and gilding

This rare depiction of the Virgin standing, inspired by Donatello's *ultima maniera*, was probably produced by one of his workshop assistants.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1904

18. Gold Goblet of Johann Conrad von Gemmingen, 1610

Gold with enamel

On the base of this cup are the arms of Johann Conrad von Gemmingen, bishop of Eichstätt (1593–1612) and a celebrated patron of the arts.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1900

19. Frank Owen Salisbury (British, 1874–1962)

Portrait of J. P. Morgan, Jr. (1867–1943) in an Oxford Gown, 1934

Oil on canvas

The sitter, Pierpont Morgan's son, wears the robes of a doctor of civil law, an honorary degree conferred by Oxford University in 1930. The younger Morgan had made it possible for the British Museum to purchase two medieval manuscripts, the Bedford Psalter Book of Hours and the Luttrell Psalter. The honorary doctorate from Oxford was a gesture of thanks for saving the manuscripts for England.

Commissioned by J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1934

20. Pair of Saltcellars

Lead-glazed white clay, inlaid with dark clay

These elaborate saltcellars, one decorated with the salamanders of King François I (1494–1547) and the other with the interlaced crescents of Henri II's mistress Diane de Poitiers (1499–1566), are a rare example of the ceramics produced during the mid-sixteenth century at Saint-Porchaire.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1906

21. Choir Book Stand and Choir Book

This richly carved stand probably dates to the baroque period. The choir book displayed was commissioned by Carlo Pallavicino, Marquis of Cremona, Bishop of Lodi (1456–1497), who donated it to the Cathedral of Saint Bassano at Lodi in 1495. Books of this type are among the largest manuscripts because the text and music had to be big enough for all the choir members to see.

(Transferred to Mr. Morgan's Library)

22. Antonio Rossellino (Italian, 1427–1478)

Madonna and Child with Cherubim, ca. 1450s

Marble bas-relief

Executed in “flattened relief,” a technique developed by Donatello and refined by Desiderio da Settignano, this sculpture is closely related in composition and style to Rossellino's so-called Altman Madonna, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1913

23. Jingdezhen porcelain factory, China (reign of Emperor Kangxi, 1661–1722)

Bottle-Shaped Vase, called “The Morgan Ruby,” ca. 1705–12

Porcelain with a deep red (lang yao) glaze

Among the most beautiful ceramic products of the period from the imperial kiln at Jingdezhen are monochrome vessels with a deep-red copper-oxide glaze, of which the present vase is said to be one of the finest extant examples. Purchased by

PierpontMorgan, 1907

24. Attributed to Marco Bello (Italian, ca. 1470–1523) after Giovanni Bellini

(Italian, died 1516)

Virgin and Child with Four Saints and Donor, ca. 1500

Tempera on panel, transferred to canvas

This painting has been attributed to Marco Bello, a member of Bellini's prolific workshop, and was likely based on different models developed by the master, which would account for the lack of consistency in scale among the beautifully conceived

figures. The saints depicted are (left to right) St. Paul, St. George, an unidentified female saint, and another unidentified martyr with wreath and palm.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1910

25. *Stemmed Cup with Two Handles*

Majolica

This stemmed cup, with scale ornamentation characteristic of pottery from the important Renaissance majolica center of Deruta, is set off by brilliant copper-lustre borders. At the bottom of the interior are depicted the Greek deities of fertility—Artemis, Demeter, and Triptolemus—and their serpent attendants.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1906

26. Giorgio Andreoli, called Giorgio da Gubbio (Italian, ca. 1465/70–ca. 1553)

Plate with Portrait of a Woman, 1529

Majolica

Signed and dated 1529 by the artist on the back, this plate—depicting a woman identified by the inscribed scroll simply as Giustina—is typical of those produced during the Renaissance and may have been part of a larger service that commemorated a special occasion, perhaps a wedding.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1907

27. *The Adoration of the Magi and The Dormition of the Virgin, ca. 1360*

Tempera and gold on linen-covered panels

Crafted within the dynamic atmosphere of the court of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV (r. 1347-1378) at Prague, this exquisite pair of panels probably formed a diptych commissioned by a socially prominent patron, perhaps even the Emperor himself. In the scene of the three kings adoring the Christ Child, the second magus has the features of Charles and his red cloak bears the imperial eagle. In the panel depicting the Virgin's death, St. Peter wears the three-tiered papal tiara. These details may have been intended to allude to the delicate balance between sacred and terrestrial power. The brilliant, jewel-like colors recall contemporary manuscripts produced by illuminators at the Prague court.

Purchased by J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1931

28. Giorgio Andreoli, called Giorgio da Gubbio (Italian, ca. 1465/70–ca. 1553)

Plate with Putti Dancing and Winged Putti Playing a Double Flute, 1525

Majolica

The design of this plate is loosely based, in reverse sense, on Marcantonio Raimondi's print, *Dance of the Cupids*, traditionally considered to be after a lost drawing by Raphael of around 1515.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1907

29. Antoine Syjalon (French, ca. 1524–1590)

Pilgrim Flask, ca. 1581/90

Tin-glazed earthenware, with modern metal cap

This is one of the few known examples of faïence ware from Nîmes. A Huguenot (French Protestant) deacon, Syjalon often satirized the Catholic Church in his pottery. Here, two fantastic creatures with asses' heads carry martyrs' palms while defecating and vomiting.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1906

30. Domenico Tintoretto (Italian, 1560–1635)

***Portrait of a Man*, ca. 1600**

Oil on canvas

The unidentified subject of this portrait, painted in Venice by Domenico Tintoretto, son of the more famous Jacopo, is believed to be a Moorish ambassador to the Venetian court. Purchased by J. P. Morgan, Jr., 1929

31. *Crowned Virgin*, ca. 1300–50

Marble, partly polychromed

The Virgin's left arm originally held a figure of the Christ Child. Stylistically related to sculpture decorating the cathedral in Leon, Spain, and to a Madonna in a church at L'Estany, Catalonia, this figure reflects the strong influence of the French Gothic style on Spanish sculpture.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1909

32. Hans Memling (Flemish, ca. 1433/40–1494)

***Portrait of a Man with a Pink*, ca. 1475**

Tempera on panel

This is one of the finest paintings in the Morgan collection. The sitter may have been a member of the Italian merchant colony in Bruges, where Memling was the leading painter. The pink, or carnation, in the young man's hand may be a symbol of betrothal. The painting may therefore be one of a pair of wedding portraits.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1907

33. Hans Daucher (German, 1485–1538)

***Meeting of Emperor Charles V and His Brother Ferdinand I, King of Bohemia*, 1527**

Hone stone

This exquisitely carved low-relief plaque likely commissioned by Charles V depicts the emperor on the left, identified by his imperial eagle, and his brother Ferdinand on the right, identified by the Bohemian lion. The composition is based on a section of Dürer's 1515 woodcut, *The Triumphal Arch of the Emperor Maximilian*, which depicts the meeting between Charles V's grandfather and predecessor with Henry VIII of England.

Purchased by Pierpont Morgan, 1905

Funding for the conservation treatment of selected medieval treasures in this gallery was generously provided by the David L. Klein, Jr. Foundation.