

Morgan's Bibles

Splendor in Scripture

OCTOBER 20, 2023 TO JANUARY 21, 2024

LARGE PRINT LABELS

The
Morgan
Library &
Museum

***Biblia polyglotta*, vol. 1**

Alcalá de Henares: Arnao Guillén de Brocar, 1517

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1896; PML 812

Morgan bought this monumental polyglot Bible in London at Sotheran's, an elegantly appointed bookstore that just happened to be on his way to work. He also picked up a Gutenberg Bible and a complete set of Shakespeare, the essential four folios, on the same day. A scholarly and typographic triumph, the first of its kind, this grand multilingual edition contains Latin, Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic ("Chaldean") texts, here shown at the end of Genesis and the beginning of Exodus. It is commonly called the Complutensian Polyglot after the Latin name of the Spanish university town where it was printed between 1514 and 1517.

The Holy Bible, Containing the Old Testament and the New
Oxford: printed by John Baskett, 1717

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan, 1906; PML 2901**

J. Pierpont Morgan collected extra-illustrated books—extravagant, custom-made, specially bound concoctions fashionable in his day. Shakespeare, Washington Irving, and Robert Burns were among the authors whose works he owned in multivolume sets with thousands of prints and autograph letters inserted next to corresponding passages in the text. By 1883 Morgan already owned at least one extra-illustrated Bible, and he obtained another one with the Irwin Collection in 1900. He acquired this one because of its royal provenance, a recurring theme in this exhibition. One volume extended to eight, it was produced by or for Princess Mary, Duchess of Gloucester (1776–1857), an amateur artist and the last surviving child of George III.

The Temptation and the Expulsion from Eden

Engravings after Pompeo Batoni (1708–1787), Abraham Bloemaert (1564–1651), Richard Corbould (1757–1831), Maarten de Vos (1532–1602), Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528), and others, inserted in:

The Holy Bible, Containing the Old Testament and the New

Oxford: printed by John Baskett, 1717

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1906; PML 2901

Pach Brothers, New York

J. Pierpont Morgan, 1902

Gelatin silver print

The Morgan Library & Museum Archives

The Pach Brothers photographer posed Morgan for several portraits at this session, but this one was the family favorite. Morgan's son gave a copy to Elbert Gary, founding president of United States Steel: "I consider this one of the best photographs of my father." Gary might well have cherished this memento because Morgan picked him to lead the firm and organized its \$1.4 billion capitalization in 1901, thereby creating the largest corporation in the world. It was one of Morgan's greatest financial triumphs and instantly turned a profit, \$90 million in the year this photograph was taken.

Amelia Sturges Morgan

Albumen print, hand-colored, ca. 1855–62

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased for the Dannie and Hettie Heineman Collection as the gift of the Heineman Foundation, 2017; ARC 3268

Daughter of a railroad magnate, Amelia Sturges was renowned for her beauty and intellect. She could converse in German and French and tried her hand in translating a French devotional tract, César Malan's *La vraie croix* (*The True Cross*, 1831). She was not sure her work was "good enough to be published," but she found in it a confirmation of her Calvinist doctrines and her belief in the primacy of the Bible. Malan's text advocated an approach to scripture that she would follow in her own day-to-day Bible-reading routine: "From now on I will read and study the Word that contains my right to eternal life and the commandments of my Father and Savior. I assure you that I rejoice to open and peruse this treasure."

The Holy Bible

**London: printed by George E. Eyre and William
Spottiswoode, 1864**

**The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Mabel S. Ingalls;
ARC 1556**

The Holy Bible

New York: American Bible Society, 1841

**The Morgan Library & Museum, Morgan Family Collection;
ARC 610**

The Morgan family used standard editions of the Bible for devotion, inspiration, and instruction. These two copies were owned by J. Pierpont Morgan and his first wife, Amelia Sturges Morgan. Both books are purely utilitarian, although Pierpont's bears his name gilt stamped on the front cover. Amelia died of tuberculosis at the age of twenty-six in 1862, four months after they were married. She had annotated her copy with the dates of her daily reading right up to the end; then her bereaved husband dated her death with a poignant epitaph: "Her end was peace."

Daniel Chester French (1850–1931)

Bust of the Reverend William Stephen Rainsford, 1902

Bronze

The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of The Reverend and Mrs. Edward O. Miller, 2017; AZ 201

Morgan recruited William Stephen Rainsford (1850–1933) to be the rector of St. George's Episcopal Church in 1882. At that time St. George's had been struggling because of its location on 16th Street between Second and Third Avenues, a troubled neighborhood near the tenements of the Lower East Side. The charismatic Rainsford succeeded in revitalizing the church with the support of his patron, who served on the vestry and donated funds for upkeep and outreach projects. Fast friends for many years, Morgan and Rainsford disagreed on doctrine, but they shared altruistic ideals and founded social services for the immigrant community.

Episcopal Church

***The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of
the Sacraments***

**New York: printed for the Committee [by the De Vinne
Press with a decorative scheme by Daniel Berkeley Updike
and Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue], 1893**

**The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Friends of
Mr. Morgan, 1894; PML 5499**

This luxurious *Book of Common Prayer* was one of Morgan's favorite projects on behalf of the Episcopal Church. He paid for the production, dictated some of the typographical design, and served on the committee that revised the text. The committee presented to him this sumptuously bound vellum copy in gratitude for his generous gifts and invited him to join them in signing it—in two places—to certify its accuracy and authority.

TO
J. Pierpont Morgan.
This copy of the Standard Prayer Book
of 1892,
whose fair setting is your gracious gift
to the American Church,
we have had put in a seemly shrine,
in loving recognition of what the Church at large
owes to your generosity;
and in still more loving acknowledgment of what we owe,
as your grateful guests
during "the Standard Prayer Book Convention"
in Baltimore,
and as your faithful friends
~always and everywhere.

Detail of inscription.

***Original Autograph Manuscripts of Papers Read at the
John Brown Memorial Meetings, 1859–1860***

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan, 1909; MA 884**

Reverend John Pierpont, Morgan's namesake grandfather, was not the only abolitionist to cite chapter and verse while speaking out against slavery. Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and other Concord Transcendentalists quoted Christian precepts in their speeches at John Brown memorial meetings, including these passages from Acts and Matthew at a town hall event on December 2, 1859. That meeting was conducted like a religious service, with music, a prayer, a dirge, "readings of pertinent passages," and John Brown's last words when he was sentenced to die on that day for his raid on Harpers Ferry.

Genesis 1:1–5, in Greek

Amherst Greek Papyrus 3, second half of third century AD

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont

Morgan, 1912; Amh. Gr. Pap. 3c

This is the earliest surviving text of the first five verses of Genesis in the Septuagint, the Hebrew Torah translated into Greek in the third century BC. Morgan bought it along with other Egyptian papyrus documents from Lord Amherst of Hackney, a pioneering English collector of Egyptian antiquities and a renowned connoisseur of printed books and manuscripts. The negligent writing seen here may indicate that it was a note jotted for private study, although it might have been a writing exercise or an amulet. Many of the Amherst papyrus documents contain biblical texts.

**Brown leather over papyrus board, tooled in blind,
originally on:**

**Miscellany in honor of the Virgin Mary, in Coptic
Egypt, Al-Fayyūm region, tenth century**

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased for J. Pierpont
Morgan, 1911; MS M.597A**

Concerned about the fragility of the Hamuli manuscripts, Morgan's staff sent them for conservation to the Vatican Library, where unfortunately the bindings were then removed. Nevertheless, many of the covers are still in good condition and provide valuable evidence about the construction of early codices. The epochal transition from the scroll to the codex, the book as we know it, is closely connected with the propagation of Christian literature, especially the Bible.

The blind-tooled St. Andrew's cross on this binding echoes the same motif in the Book of Samuel manuscript displayed nearby.

**Samuel 1 and 2, in Coptic
Egypt, Al-Fayyūm region, Ptepouhar, before August 29, 893
The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased for J. Pierpont
Morgan, 1911; MS M.567**

In 1910 nearly sixty ninth- and tenth-century Coptic manuscripts, still in their original bindings, were discovered in a stone cistern at Hamuli, a village near Al-Fayyūm, Egypt. Morgan bought almost all of them a year later, the largest group of Coptic codices with a single provenance. They had belonged to the Monastery of St. Michael, one of many thriving Christian communities in that region. In addition to biblical texts, the manuscripts contain devotional readings, accounts of saints' lives, and service books documenting the liturgical practices of the monastery. Like this one, many are illuminated with crosses, headpieces, and ornamental initials.

Paolo Veronese (1528–1588)

Studies for “The Finding of Moses,” ca. 1580

Pen and brown ink and wash

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan with the Fairfax Murray Collection, 1909; IV, 81

Morgan could have easily visualized Moses in the Bulrushes: the story, from the book of Exodus, in which the baby Moses is found on the banks of the Nile, has been a recurring theme in Christian art.

Paolo Veronese and his workshop produced at least eight paintings in different formats for the thriving art market in and around Venice. This drawing shows his early ideas for one of the paintings, including the outlines of a landscape and rapidly sketched figure studies of the pharaoh’s daughter, her attendant, and a servant showing the infant to her mistress.

Luncheon in the temple

Gelatin silver print

From the album *Egypt 1912*

The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of Mabel S. Ingalls and the Van Heerden family; ARC 1495

Morgan frequently visited the Met's excavations at the Kharga Oasis, four hundred miles southwest of Cairo. The Egyptian government had given the Met the right to explore the large and well-preserved Temple of Hibis (after 500 BC), mainly constructed during the reign of the Persian king Darius the Great. Among Morgan's luncheon guests in the temple was William Lawrence, the Episcopal bishop of Massachusetts, the man in the clerical collar to the right of the column. It was Lawrence who told the story about Morgan looking at the banks of the Nile and recalling Moses in the Bulrushes.

Album of J. Pierpont Morgan's 1909 trip through Egypt and Greece

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased in 2003;
ARC 1425**

As president of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Morgan funded several of the museum's archaeological expeditions in Egypt. An entourage of family, friends, interpreters, and museum personnel traveled with him on riverboats up the Nile to the excavations. A companion claimed that Morgan, looking out on the riverbanks, once said, "There is the place where Moses was hidden in the bulrushes. It doesn't look it now; critics may say there never were any bulrushes or any Moses, but I know that there was a Moses and that he was hidden in the bulrushes, for there is the spot. It must be so."

Fragment of the *Epic of Atrahasis*

Mesopotamia

**First Dynasty of Babylon, reign of King Ammi-saduqa,
ca. 1646–26 BC**

Clay tablet

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan between 1898 and 1900; MLC 1889**

This tablet contains the earliest biblical text at the Morgan, an account of the Great Flood in Akkadian cuneiform script. Developed in the fourth millennium BC, cuneiform is an ancient writing system composed of wedge-shaped symbols inscribed on clay tablets. The text here is a fragment of the flood story recapitulated in the third-millennium-BC Epic of Gilgamesh and in Genesis. This portion of the story recounts how the god Enki (Ea) warned the wise man Atrahasis about the impending disaster and advised him to build an ark. When the tempest arrived, it “roared like a bull, like a wild ass screaming the winds. The darkness was total, there was no sun. . . . For seven days and seven nights the torrent, storm, and flood came on.”

Censer with a lioness hunting a boar
Byzantine Egypt, sixth or seventh century
Bronze

**The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1944;
44.20a,b**

In 1912 Morgan joined the Metropolitan Museum's team of archaeologists who were excavating the Monastery of Epiphanius near Thebes, Egypt. They found papyrus documents, ostraca (pieces of pottery with text), and craft objects documenting the daily life of the anchorites, but the greatest artistic treasure was this censer, strangely lacking any Christian iconography. Fuming incense streamed from the mouths and nostrils of the animals when it was swung on its chain. After the workers discovered it, Morgan excavated it with his own hands and kept it in his collection. It remained in the Morgan family until 1944.

***Biblia pauperum*, leaf 9**

Netherlands, ca. 1460–63

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan with the Bennett collection, 1902; PML 2

Morgan's bibliographers believed that the first experiments with printing in Europe were made by taking impressions from engraved woodblocks, a technique they thought to have preceded Johann Gutenberg's introduction of movable type in the 1450s. Crudely rendered, extremely rare, blockbooks look like a product of an earlier technology. More sophisticated scientific analysis, however, has dated them later than movable type, although they are still important for understanding the medieval visualization of the Bible.

The *Biblia pauperum* blockbook was not so much a "Bible of the poor" as a means of showing typological parallels between the Old and New Testaments. Here Christ's baptism is prefigured by the pharaoh's army drowning in the Red Sea and Moses's spies crossing a river in the land of milk and honey.

BIBLE PRINTERS AT WORK

The Old Testament copy contains faint marks of one or more compositors who used parts of it to set up the text of the 1462 Bible displayed here. With some exceptions, these marks indicate page breaks in the new edition, places where the next stint of typesetting could begin. This is the earliest surviving example of marked-up printer's copy. Ordinarily, printers discarded marked-up sheets. In this instance, however, they retained them and even had them rubricated with the expectation of including them in a copy they could sell. Like the replacement settings, the compositor's marks show that the earliest products of the press were highly valued and carefully preserved at a time when every piece of text was precious.

decunt
 turba=
 eius.
 ciuita=
 culum
 medio e=
 iua=
 non=
 terra aquilonis multas regi
Deus in domibus eius cognosc
 piet eam. **Q**uoniam ecce
 congregati sunt: conuener
Tpsi videtes sic ammirati si
 bati sunt amoti sunt: tremor
 eos. **T**ibi dolores ut parturi
 ritu neherenti conteres nam

mms conuenerunt. et reliquit tu
 gitationis diem festum agent tibi.
Mouete et reddite domino deo ue=
 stro: omnes qui in circuitu eius affer=
 tis munera. **T**erribili et ei qui aufert
 spiritum principum: terribili apud o=
 mnes reges terre. *In fine p p d i t t i i . l x x i j .*
Tore mea ad dominum clama:

Printer's marks in the Old Testament copy of the Gutenberg Bible.

Biblia Latina

Mainz: Johann Gutenberg and Johann Fust, ca. 1455

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan with the Irwin collection, 1900; PML 12

The Morgan Library & Museum is the only institution in the world to possess three copies of the Gutenberg Bible, the first substantial book printed from movable type in the West. This copy is exceptional for several reasons: it contains only the Old Testament, it has twenty-two pages with unique typesettings, and it was illuminated by the publishers' house artist, the Fust Master. The compositors reset replacement pages at the end of the pressrun, perhaps in a last-minute attempt to make good use of leftover sheets (almost but not quite enough to assemble just one more copy). Counting on a high price for a large-type pulpit Bible, they could expect a handsome profit for this extra effort.

Biblia Latina

Mainz: Johann Fust and Peter Schöffer, August 14, 1462

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1911; PML 19208

The Fust Master made his living by decorating books published by Johann Fust, not just Gutenberg Bibles, such as the one at left, but also this copy of the 1462 Bible and other Fust and Schöffer imprints. An art historian first made that attribution based on these two copies, another Morgan book, and another copy of the 1462 Bible; the list of attributions has now grown to more than a dozen. The illuminator devised painting techniques suitable for mass production, an entirely new approach instigated by the invention of printing. He employed the same palette and standardized motifs in several copies of the same book—identical designs repeated so frequently as to raise questions about whether he used stencils in some of his work.

Mamusse wunneetupana-tamwe Up-Biblum God.

Naneeswe Nukkone Testament kah wonk Wusku Testament

Cambridge, MA: printed by Samuel Green and Marmaduke Johnson, 1663

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan with the Irwin collection, 1900; PML 5440

The Algonquian Bible on the left was once thought to be “the finest copy in the world.” This one, however, contains front matter deemed more desirable by bibliographers and provenance markings more meaningful to cultural historians. The translator John Eliot inscribed it to the eminent Puritan divine Thomas Shepard, an avid book collector whose “learned gluttony” was such that a contemporary church historian proposed to call him “Bibliander.”

This Algonquian Bible has risen steadily in the esteem of experts, two of them rating it first among surviving copies. Morgan did not hesitate to retain duplicates like this if they displayed distinctive features in the bindings, inscriptions, and annotations.

Mamusse wunneetupana-tamwe Up-Biblum God.

Naneeswe Nukkone Testament kah wonk Wusku Testament

Cambridge, MA: printed by Samuel Green and Marmaduke Johnson, 1663

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1879; PML 5441

“A Thousand-Dollar Bible” was the *New York Times* headline when this copy sold at auction in 1879. Morgan paid that handsome sum for the first Bible printed in America, translated by the missionary John Eliot into Natick dialect of the Algonquian language. Eliot had it printed in a huge edition for distribution to converted Native Americans, an ambitious project funded by the Society for Promoting and Propagating the Gospel of Jesus Christ in New England. Eliot was assisted in his translation by two converts, Job Nesutan and John Sassamon, and in the presswork by a third, James Wowaus. Proselytizing efforts like this have made the Bible the most translated book in the world, currently available in more than seven hundred languages.

“Lindau Gospels,” in Latin

Switzerland, St. Gall, ca. 880 (manuscript)

Eastern France, ca. 870 (front cover)

Austria, Salzburg region, ca. 780–800 (back cover)

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont

Morgan, 1901; MS M.1

The Lindau Gospels is a cornerstone of the Morgan Library & Museum, item number one in its list of manuscript accessions. The gold repoussé upper cover was probably not made for the manuscript, nor was the lower cover, equally magnificent but produced at an earlier date and in a different place. When and why the covers were brought together is a mystery, but it should be noted that other treasure bindings are on manuscripts dated before and after the artwork on the covers. According to recent scholarship, scribes at St. Gall may have produced the manuscript to match the two disparate covers, prized possessions of the abbey, possibly donations, but the Gospels assemblage was somehow allowed to leave and then went to the Lindau nunnery nearby.

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–1669)

***Christ Preaching* (“The Hundred Guilder Print”), ca. 1648**

Etching, engraving, and drypoint

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont

Morgan with the George W. Vanderbilt collection, 1905;

RvR 115

The most famous of Rembrandt’s prints, “The Hundred Guilder Print” may have received its name from the price a dealer paid for it in exchange for other prints valued at that amount. It consolidates several incidents in Matthew 19:1–15 using brilliant effects of light and shade to organize a complex composition: Christ’s healing of the sick, his debate with the pharisees, and his admonition to his disciples, “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” This superb impression marks a highpoint in the artist’s printmaking career.

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–1669)

***Christ Crucified between the Two Thieves* (“The Three Crosses”), 1653**

Drypoint

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan with the Irwin collection, 1900; RvR 122

Morgan owned around four hundred Rembrandt prints, many of which came from the collection of Theodore Irwin, an agribusiness millionaire in Oswego, New York. The Rembrandts exemplify Morgan’s practice of making sweeping en bloc acquisitions of art as well as books. Irwin had owned other items on view in this exhibition: a Gutenberg Bible, an Algonquian Bible, and the Golden Gospels of Henry VIII.

This is the first state of “The Three Crosses.” The Morgan also has the dramatically different fourth state, in which Rembrandt used dense shading to quote Luke 23:44—“There was a darkness over all the earth.”

Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–1669)

***Christ Presented to the People* (“Ecce Homo”), 1655**

Drypoint

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont

Morgan with the George W. Vanderbilt collection, 1905;

RvR 119

Like “The Three Crosses,” “Ecce Homo” was an ambitious printmaking project, a virtuoso drypoint etching frequently reprinted and radically revised in the last states. In this seventh state of “Ecce Homo,” Rembrandt reconceived the theatricality of the scene, replacing the crowd in front of the podium with the mysterious dark arches, a sinister architectural detail in contrast with the statues of Justice and Fortitude. He redrew the figure of Christ to make a more imposing physical presence, more engaged in the proceedings. As if validating this version of the print, the artist signed and dated it beneath the window on the right.

Galerie A. Imbert

**Invoice for the Charles Fairfax Murray collection,
November 4, 1909**

Typescript

**The Morgan Library & Museum, collections
correspondence; ARC 1310**

After buying Theodore Irwin's Rembrandt prints, Morgan proceeded to purchase the old master drawings owned by British collector Charles Fairfax Murray, the first major collection of this nature to arrive in the United States. It contained about one thousand five hundred sheets with substantial strengths in the Italian Renaissance and the Netherlandish schools of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. More than thirty Rembrandt drawings complement the prints. Biblical subjects recur throughout this collection, many directly related to book illustrations.

Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640)

***Six Scenes from the New Testament*, ca. 1613**

Pen and brown ink and wash, over faint traces of black chalk

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont

Morgan with the Fairfax Murray collection, 1909; III, 183

Artist, art connoisseur, and book collector Charles Fairfax Murray (1849–1919) understood how biblical iconography could be transmitted from one medium to another. He owned early illustrated Bibles, several now at the Morgan. Rubens, for example, copied woodcuts from a picture Bible while learning to draw as a teenager. Here, he sketched ideas for a decorative border of nativity scenes for use in liturgical books published in Antwerp by his friend Balthasar Moretus. Engraved by Theodoor Galle, the border framed a page including Hebrews 1:1–5, a text suitable for the celebration of the third Mass on Christmas Day.

School of Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528)

***Virgin and Child with Angels*, sixteenth century**

Pen and brown ink, over metalpoint, on paper

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan with the Fairfax Murray collection, 1909; I, 264**

Rich in symbolism, the Virgin on the Crescent motif can be traced to sources as far back as pagan antiquity. Manuscript illuminations often associate the Virgin with the Apocalyptic Woman, “clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet” (Revelation 12:1). Some even quote this passage. Dürer used the crescent motif in at least three engravings made between 1499 and 1516 and in a woodcut title-page vignette in 1511. This rendition was formerly attributed to his student Hans von Kulmbach, a prolific painter of Marian subjects.

Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617–1682)

***Virgin of the Immaculate Conception*, ca. 1665–70**

Pen and brown ink and wash, over black chalk

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan with the Fairfax Murray collection, 1909; I, 111**

It has been calculated that the Spanish artist Murillo painted around two dozen *Immaculate Conceptions* scenes. By dint of repetition, he perfected an iconographic approach that simplified the composition but retained the same Apocalyptic Woman imagery used by the school of Dürer artist. None of Murillo's surviving paintings seem to have been derived from this drawing. The design was in demand, however, because it recurs in at least two other drawings, both copied by his followers for reasons yet to be explained.

Two Riddles of the Queen of Sheba

Upper Rhenish, ca. 1490–1500

Linen warp; wool, linen, and metallic wefts

**The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Cloisters Collection,
1971; 1971.43**

Morgan bought the *Two Riddles* tapestry sometime before 1906 and then loaned it to the Burlington Fine Arts Club, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, where it was on display between 1912 and 1916. It was later sold off but eventually returned to the Met in 1971. The speech banderoles contain riddles and replies, the “hard questions” Sheba posed to Solomon in 1 Kings 10:1–13. An interchange of Jewish and Islamic folklore specifies what those questions were. Can you tell the difference between a real flower and a false one? Which child is a boy, which one is a girl?

**J. Pierpont Morgan and his dog Shun in Egypt,
ca. 1900–1913**

Reproduction of a gelatin silver print

Morgan sought out biblical sites during a visit to the Holy Land with his parents in 1881/82. But his “beloved Egypt” was his preferred destination, a rich repository of Christian antiquities. He made his first trip during the winter of 1871/72 and returned regularly until just before his death in 1913. Often he would start with a tour of the antiquities shops in Cairo and then proceed up the Nile in a houseboat with an entourage of friends and family. He also brought his favorite Pekingese, Shun, a travel companion almost always at his side.

Malmesbury Ciborium

England, Wiltshire, Malmesbury, ca. 1160–70

Champlevé enamel on gilded copper

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1911; AZ 047

A ciborium is a receptacle for the host, the communion wafer used in the Mass. This is one of three ciboria containing Bible scenes derived from now lost decorations in the chapter house of Worcester Cathedral. Probably made in the same workshop, all three are masterpieces of English Romanesque art. Six Old Testament scenes on the bowls prefigure six New Testament scenes on the covers. In the Morgan ciborium, Aaron's rod below prefigures the Nativity above; Moses and the brazen serpent below, the Crucifixion above; Samson and the harlot of Gaza below, the three women at Christ's tomb above.

Christoph Maucher (1642–after 1705) and Johann Ernst Kadau (d. 1711)

Tankard with ivory work depicting the Queen of Sheba paying homage to King Solomon

Poland, Gdańsk, possibly 1692

Ivory and silver-gilt

**Wadsworth Atheneum, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan;
1917.308**

This tankard probably came from two shops working in tandem, one directed by the ivory- and amber-carver Christoph Maucher, the other managed by the goldsmith Johann Ernst Kadau. Maucher and Kadau produced several of these display pieces—not intended for drinking! The Habsburgs and other princely patrons collected them along with ivory powder flasks, gun stocks, musical instruments, and furniture. The meaning of the tankard would not have been lost on those collectors, who could easily understand the impressive entourage, the ostentatious pomp of the occasion, and the significance of gifts exchanged between kings and queens.

Polyptych with scenes from Christ's Passion

France, ca. 1350

Ivory, paint, and gilding with metal mounts

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan, 1917; 17.190.205

Book covers, plaques, caskets, and icons—more than three hundred ivories were among the gifts Morgan's estate made to the Metropolitan Museum of Art (about seven thousand items in all). The gift included depictions of the Passion in ivory diptychs and polyptychs, booklike structures with a wealth of narrative content. The Gothic trefoil arches encourage the viewer to “read” the sequence of events and pause at each compartment for a moment of meditation. The lower-right compartment shows the stripping and buffeting of Christ.

Master of the Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian

The Fall of Man

Probably Austria, Vienna, before 1650

Ivory

Wadsworth Atheneum, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan;

1917.303

Several superb ivory sculptures have been attributed to this master, known for the dramatic physicality of his figures. Here the main motif is the flesh of Adam and Eve, both still in a state of innocence but already succumbing to temptation. They are all too human, contrasted to the rich diversity of God's creation—the birds and beasts gathered around the elephant, a synecdoche of ivory.

Coiled around the Tree of Knowledge, the serpent turns into a deceptively cherubic Satan. There is no biblical rationale for the human head, which does not appear in Fall of Man depictions until the late thirteenth or fourteenth century. But the cherub might have been inspired by mystery plays in which a boy played the part of Satan.

Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641)

***Study for the Dead Christ*, ca. 1635**

Black chalk, with white chalk highlights, on blue-gray paper

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont

Morgan with the Fairfax Murray collection, 1909; I, 243

The Lamentation is one of the most powerful scenes in Christian art, a canonical image revisited by countless artists from the Middle Ages through the Counter- Reformation. Van Dyck executed this figure study for a painting commissioned by the Italian diplomat Abbé Cesare Alessandro Scaglia, an art patron who had lived in luxury before withdrawing from politics and retiring to a monastery. The drawing shows experiments with different poses of the left arm so that St. John can hold it up (in the painting) to show the wound made by the nail.

Filippino Lippi (ca. 1457–1504)

***Job Visited by His Three Friends, with the Visitation in the Background*, ca. 1500**

Pen and brown ink and wash, over black chalk

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan with the Fairfax Murray collection, 1909; IV, 3

Trained by his father, Filippo Lippi, Filippino Lippi went on to become a gifted draftsman, a prolific painter of altarpieces and chapel frescoes, and one of the most prominent artists of the Italian Renaissance. He thought through his paintings with a vast quantity of preparatory sketches, figure studies, and composition drawings. This drawing for a lost painting seems to conflate two scenes in the second chapter of Job: Job's admonition to his wife (who might be the first of the three figures) and his encounter with the three consolatory friends.

Guyart des Moulins (ca. 1251–1297)

Bible historiale

France, Paris, ca. 1415

Illuminated in the workshop of the Boucicaut Master

Parchment

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1910; MS M.394

The designer of the *Two Riddles* tapestry could have consulted a 1460s engraving or a 1470s woodcut for guidance on how to depict this scene, a popular subject for illustrations. In this manuscript miniature, Sheba holds up her hands in wonderment at Solomon's wisdom and riches. The monarch's fame had reached as far as her distant domain (possibly southwestern Arabia), and now she could marvel at his magnificence. This version of the story evokes French notions of luxury by having her exclaim "everything I heard is true" after seeing the richly dressed servants, the courtiers, and the banquet table—on one side a cohort of sommeliers, on the other a troupe of breadmasters.

Sa'dī (d. 1292)

***Kullīyyāt* (Collected works)**

Iran, probably Shiraz, ca. 1575–85

Paper

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan before 1913; MS M.530

Among the many transmutations of the Solomon and Sheba story, the Islamic versions are especially well documented in manuscript miniatures. Solomon, or Suleiman in Arabic, was revered as a forerunner of Muhammad and was usually portrayed with the flame halo of a prophet. The miniature on the right portrays him on a throne surrounded by angels, demons, birds, and beasts (with whom he could converse and ask advice). Sheba, or Bilqīs, his consort, is similarly enthroned on the left and also has a retinue of angels. The Qur'an mentions the gifts her ambassadors brought to Suleiman, and some of its commentaries contain a variation of the boy/girl riddle, which could be solved by observing the different ways the children wash their faces.

William Blake (1757–1827)

***Job's Comforters*, ca. 1805–6**

**Pen and black and gray ink, gray wash, and watercolor,
over faint indications in pencil**

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan, 1903; 2001.69**

The King James Bible resonates in the verse of William Blake, informs the visions of his prophetic books, and supplies captions for his engraved *Illustrations of the Book of Job* (1826). Job's tribulations evoked strong feelings in Blake, who returned to the subject at low points of his life. Produced for his patron Thomas Butts, this is one of twenty-one watercolors eventually employed as designs for the Job engravings. Considering his own misfortunes—a precarious income, public neglect, political persecution—Blake may have viewed Job's comforters as false friends who urge the beleaguered artist to compromise for commercial gain.

Jane (née Lane), Lady Fisher

Reproduction of a painting, oil on canvas, ca. 1660

National Portrait Gallery, NPG 1798. Photo: © National Portrait Gallery, London.

Jane Lane rescued Charles II after he was defeated by Oliver Cromwell in 1651. She helped him to escape from England, traveling on horseback with him disguised as her servant to evade a dragnet of parliamentary forces. After returning to the throne in 1660, the king awarded her a pension and showered her with gifts, including perhaps this royal Bible, which she signed with her married name, Jane Fisher.

The portrait makes an allegorical allusion to her role in rescuing the crown of England, cherished in one hand, hidden by the other beneath a veil of secrecy. The Latin tag (“Thus, thus I go gladly into the dark!”) also has a hidden meaning, probably a reference to feelings of neglect or concerns about delays in paying her pension.

***The Holy Bible, Conteyning the Old Testament, and the New,
Newly Translated Out of the Originall Tongues***

London: Robert Barker, 1611

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan, ca. 1905; PML 2021**

Interleaved and expanded to five volumes, this copy of the King James Bible (KJV) has a heady combination of scholarship, royal provenance, and historical romance. It contains a list of scripture commentaries in the hand of the KJV translator Laurence Chaderton. The front covers bear the arms of Charles I when he was Prince of Wales. Prince Charles was present at the ceremony when Chaderton received a doctor of divinity degree in 1611, the year the Bible was published. The title page is signed by Jane Fisher, who saved the life of Charles II after the Battle of Worcester. If you can't have King James's King James Bible, this is the next best association copy.

***The Holy Bible, Conteyning the Old Testament, and the New,
Newly Translated Out of the Originall Tongues***

London: Robert Barker, 1611

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan before 1913; PML 5460**

King James I (reigned 1603–25) commissioned teams of translators, about fifty in all, to produce a new standard text, an alternative to disputatious Bibles originating in Calvinist Geneva. The translators consulted the Geneva recension, a popular favorite at that time, as well as previous translations going back to Tyndale. The King James Version (KJV), “appointed to be read in churches,” won over the hearts and minds of readers who—whatever their beliefs—revere it as a masterpiece of English literature. In 2011 this copy illustrated a *Vanity Fair* article by the avowed atheist Christopher Hitchens, a four-hundredth anniversary tribute to the KJV headlined “When the King Saved God.”

The Martyrdom and Burning of William Tyndale

Reproduction of a woodcut in John Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (“The Book of Martyrs”) London: John Day, 1562–63

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1900; PML 7817–18

English officials sometimes tried to negotiate with Tyndale, but they could not help him after he was captured by heresy-hunters deputized by the Holy Roman Empire. He was arrested in Antwerp and taken to a castle outside of Brussels, where he was tried and condemned to death in 1536. His executioners strangled him, rather than burning him alive, as an act of mercy for a man of learning. After the chain was placed around his neck, he cried out, “Lord, open the king of England’s eyes.” These defiant last words figure prominently in a woodcut frequently reprinted in Foxe’s “Book of Martyrs.”

New Testament, in English

England, 1400–1450

Parchment

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1909; MS M.362

Followers of the theologian John Wycliffe (d. 1384) were distributing Bibles in English well before the invention of printing. What part Wycliffe might have had in the translation is not known, but the archbishop of Canterbury condemned him by name when he banned these subversive manuscripts in 1409: laypersons should not study scripture lest they be tempted to interpret it on their own. In theory, they could be charged with heresy if they were caught with this kind of contraband. In fact, the circulation of these manuscripts must have been tolerated because around two hundred fifty survive.

New Testament, in English

England, 1380–99

Parchment

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1910; MS M.400

In addition to the New Testament, this manuscript contains devotional notes, theological texts, and a table of lections (biblical readings at the Mass). Why the tables were included in Wycliffite manuscripts is not entirely clear, although some see in them signs of a popular revolt against notions that only the clergy could comprehend the meaning of the Mass. The tables could have been intended as guides to the Latin readings or could indicate that some parts of the service were conducted in English.

The Pentateuch

**Imprinted at Malborow in the lande of Hesse [i.e. Antwerp]: by me Hans Luft [i.e., Johan Hoochstraten],
January 17, 1530**

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1910; PML 16594

William Tyndale (ca. 1494–1536) translated the Bible into English following the precedent of Martin Luther, whose German translations circulated widely through the burgeoning medium of print. A gifted scholar, Tyndale consulted Greek and Hebrew texts and recast them in forceful prose still perceptible in the King James Version. Henry VIII condemned Tyndale's translations, which had to be printed abroad and smuggled into England. As if mocking the censors, this first edition of the first five books of the Old Testament purports to be the work of Hans Luft, printer of more than a hundred thousand Luther Bibles.

***The Newe Testament, Dylygently Corrected and Compared
with the Greke by Willyam Tindale***

Antwerp: printed by Marten Emperowr, 1534

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan with the Irwin collection, 1900; PML 5431**

Tyndale started his translation project with the New Testament in 1526, a publishing venture shrouded in mystery because the earliest editions survive only in fragments and a few scattered copies. Issued just before his death, this revised and corrected edition is remarkable for its side notes, a provocative feature in Protestant translations. For Henry VIII, the temerity of translating the Bible was bad enough, but Tyndale's "pestilent glosses" proved him to be an unrepentant heretic, a mastermind of pernicious doctrine. Here, at the beginning of Ephesians, the translator points out key passages affirming his belief in predestination, a core concept in Lutheran theology.

Title page of the Great Bible

Reproduction of a woodcut in *The Byble in Englyshe* . . .

London: Edward Whitchurch, May 1541

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1899; PML 916

Succeeding editions of the Great Bible retained the original woodcut border, seen here in the fifth edition, published in 1541. The woodcut was formerly attributed to the great Tudor-era portraitist Hans Holbein but is now assigned to a French illuminator, the Master of François de Rohan.

The printers rewrote history after Thomas Cromwell fell from power and was beheaded in 1540. The place he occupied in the woodcut was too prominent for them to erase him altogether, but they routed out his coat of arms, as if stripping him of the worldly honors he had earned while promoting the English Reformation.

Biblia: The Bible, that is, the Holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament, Faithfully and Truly Translated out of Douche and Latyn in to Englishe

**Cologne?: Eucharis Cervicornus and Johannes Soter?,
October 4, 1535**

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1900; PML 909

Miles Coverdale (ca. 1488–1569) completed the task of translating the Bible into English, drawing on Tyndale's work, Luther's German version (the *Douche* in the title), and the Latin Vulgate. The printers of this first edition hid their tracks so well that they can be identified only by comparing their typefaces with those of other publications. The New Testament title page and the facing page are illustrated with woodcuts after Sebald Beham. The illustrations helped to sell copies, which were imported into England after Lutheran sympathizers in the English court came into power.

***The Byble in Englyshe . . . Truly Translated after the Veryte
of the Hebrue and Greke Textes, by ye Dylygent Study of
Dyuerse Excellent Learned Men***

**London: Richard Grafton and Edward Whitchurch,
April 1539**

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan, 1899; PML 911**

This 1539 edition is the first of the Great Bibles commissioned by Henry VIII's chief minister Thomas Cromwell and sanctioned by the king himself. Cromwell ordered that copies should be made publicly available in churches. The woodcut explains the publication of this book: Archbishop Cranmer is shown on the left, Cromwell appears on the right, and above them Henry VIII sits enthroned in state, handing out the Word of God while his grateful subjects call out, "Long Live the King." Morgan bought the first seven editions of the Great Bible all at once, an impressive array, although some copies had been doctored and contain leaves in facsimile.

OLD FAVORITES IN THE GENEVA PSALTER

French and English Protestants are still singing tunes adopted in the sixteenth century by John Calvin, who saw spiritual benefits in psalms set to music. He thought that the people should sing them, not just the choir and not just in church.

In 1539, during a sojourn in Strasbourg, Calvin published settings for eighteen psalms, perhaps inspired by the Lutheran chorales he heard in that city. The music for Psalm 1 in the 1647 New Testament comes from the Strasbourg edition. English exiles in Geneva followed Calvin's lead and reused many of the French tunes in the 1556 first edition of the Geneva Psalter, here open to William Whittingham's metrical paraphrase of Psalm 23, "The Lord is My Shepherd." Thomas Ravenscroft edited the definitive English psalter, including the perennial favorite Old Hundredth seen here in a harmonization by the lutenist and composer John Dowland. The melody, however, belongs to Calvin's protégé Loys Bourgeois, a debt acknowledged in this Episcopal hymnal—copy number one in an edition financed by J. Pierpont Morgan Jr.

REAR LEFT

***The Forme of Prayers and Ministration of the Sacraments, &c.
Vsed in the Englishe Congregation at Geneua***

Geneva: Jean Crespin, 1556

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan, 1909; PML 16410**

REAR RIGHT

Le Nouveau Testament

Charenton and Paris: Pierre Desshayes, 1647

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan, 1907; PML 16052**

FRONT LEFT

***The Whole Booke of Psalmes, with the Hymnes Evangelicall,
and Songs Spirituall***, edited by Thomas Ravenscroft

**London: printed by Thomas Snodham for the Company of
Stationers, 1621**

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan, 1907; PML 15187**

FRONT RIGHT

***A Hymnal, as Authorized and Approved for Use by the
General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church***

New York: Church Pension Fund, 1916

**The Morgan Library & Museum, gift of J. Pierpont
Morgan Jr.; PML 20501**

POPULAR MOTIFS

Needleworkers chose fashionable motifs that would catch a shopper's eye in retail outlets like milliners' shops and bookstores. Here are three typical examples.

The 1638 Bible (*left*) portrays Faith on the front cover and Hope on the back, an allegorical scheme prevalent in Christian imagery. Faith and Hope would have been immediately recognizable to customers who wished to cultivate those virtues.

Customers would have also understood the symbolism of the 1641 Bible's front cover (*center*): a pelican about to pierce her breast and spill her blood to feed her young. A set piece in medieval bestiaries, this allegory of self-sacrifice often illustrates Christ's Passion and occupies a prominent place on the title page of the first-edition King James Bible (1611).

The soldier motif on the front of the 1650 Bible (*right*) appears on at least four other embroidered covers. This copy belonged to Ellen Childe, who signed it in 1653. Similar inscriptions indicate that these bindings were mainly intended for women, who would have had a practiced eye for these intricate sewing techniques and could appreciate them from personal experience.

The Holy Bible

Edinburgh: Robert Young, 1638

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1907; PML 15981

The Holy Bible

London: Robert Barker and the assigns of John Bill, 1641

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1907; PML 15987

The Holy Bible

London: printed by the Companie of Stationers, 1650

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan with the Toovey collection, 1899; PML 2095

The Bible

**London: deputies of Christopher Barker, 1599 [i.e.,
Amsterdam: Jan Fredericksz Stam, 1639]**

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan, 1910; PML 17197**

Guilds controlled the production of embroidered Bibles, but there are occasional exceptions to the rule. This is the best documented and most vivid example of a nonprofessional's ingenuity and expertise. It was made by a member of the Staffordshire gentry, Anne Cornwallis Leigh (1612–1684), who signed her work around 1640: “Anne Cornwaleys Wrought me | now shee is called Anne Leigh.” The front cover depicts Adam and Eve in Paradise with the animals of Creation, and the rear cover portrays Mary Magdalene and Christ with the Instruments of the Passion. Parts of the front cover's composition were derived from a woodcut, but the ornamental frame was her idea, an evocation of Eden based on Ezekiel 38:20: “the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field.”

EMBROIDERED BIBLES

London milliners sold Bibles, Psalm Books, and devotional works with “rare and curious couers of Imbrothery and needleworke” along with their usual wares—women’s apparel, bonnets, and fancy goods. The trade was regulated by guilds, which zealously defended their lucrative monopolies. The milliners petitioned the archbishop of Canterbury in 1638 to protect their profitable sideline against an attempt to restrict retail sales of Bibles to members of the Stationers’ Company. Chartered in 1561, the Broderer’s Company enforced its privileges against freelance interlopers and women, who could not be admitted as apprentices as of 1609 but were grudgingly allowed to join the needle trade later in the century. Most of the surviving embroidered Bibles were produced by professionals, “poore freemen of London,” probably paid by piecework and obliged to repeat patterns by rote as efficiently as possible.

The Holy Bible

London: Bonham Norton and John Bill, 1625

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan before 1910; PML 2091**

The Holy Bible

London: Bonham Norton and John Bill, 1619

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan before 1913; PML 2092**

The Holy Bible

London: Robert Barker and the assigns of John Bill, 1638

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan before 1913; PML 2094**

FRENCH ROYAL BINDINGS

The art of fine binding flourished in Paris primarily because of royal patronage. These psalm books are just a sampling of Morgan's collection, especially strong in the Renaissance and Rococo styles. Royal arms are not always marks of ownership, but they usually indicate some connection with the court. King Henry III (reigned 1574–89), for example, encouraged his courtiers to join penitential congregations committed to ascetic religious practices. The comparatively austere binding on the 1582 Latin Psalms (*left*), with his arms, motto, and the death's head ornament, may have belonged to a fellow penitent proud of his close association with the king.

The fervently religious Marie Leszczyńska (reigned 1725–68) distributed quantities of devotional books personalized with her arms, pious gifts she called “my little missionaries.” This 1671 French Psalm book (*right*) is problematic, however, because she would not have approved of its heterodox Jansenist translation.

Closer to the throne, Laval's French paraphrase of the psalms (*center right*) was dedicated to King Louis XIII (reigned 1610–43) and is here bound by the royal binder Clovis Ève in a style typical of dedication copies. Its covers are gilt tooled

with a *semé* of fleur-de-lis, the crowned cipher in the corners, and the arms in the center.

Métezeau's translation (*center left*) was intended for Louis XIII's father and predecessor, Henry IV (reigned 1589–1610), who was assassinated while it was in press. Métezeau then dedicated it to Louis XIII, who married Anne of Austria in 1615. Her crowned cipher is on the front cover of this copy along with the Instruments of the Passion.

***Liber Psalmorum cum aliquot canticis ecclesiasticis:
litaniae & hymni ecclesiastici***

Paris: Guillaume Chaudière, 1582

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan with the Toovey collection, 1899; PML 1846**

Jean Métezeau (b. 1567)

Les CL pseumes de David

Paris: Robert Fouët, 1610

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan, 1910; PML 17523**

Antoine de Laval (1550–1631)

Paraphrase des CL pseumes de David

Paris: Veuve de Abel L'Angelier, 1619

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan, 1907; PML 15463**

Isaac-Louis Le Maistre de Sacy (1613–1684) and

Antoine Le Maistre (1608–1658)

Pseumes de David

Paris: Pierre Le Petit, 1671

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan, ca. 1905–10; PML 1906**

**Jeweled plaque, style of Imperial Habsburg Workshop
Vienna, nineteenth century
Silver-gilt, gold enamel and open work, set with baroque
pearls, emeralds, diamonds, and rubies
The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan, 1909; AZ 153**

This book cover offered everything Morgan sought in the way of luxury, artistry, and provenance. It bears the arms of the ruthless champion of Catholic orthodoxy, Philip II of Spain (reigned 1556–98), ostensibly the richest, most powerful monarch in Europe, although always at war and always in debt. Philip II may have owned Bibles and liturgical books encased in gold and silver, the glittering spoils of his dominions in the Americas, but this almost certainly did not belong to him.

Anomalies in the arms and anachronisms in the metalwork indicate that it is a nineteenth-century fabrication. Nonetheless, it is a masterpiece in its own right and might even be attributed to the Viennese goldsmith Reinhold Vasters, whose ruefully admired forgeries have been identified in several English and American museums.

Perino del Vaga (1500/1501–1547)

***Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes*, 1538–39**

**Pen and brown ink and wash, with white opaque
watercolor, over black chalk**

**The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont
Morgan with the Fairfax Murray collection, 1909; I, 21**

The rock-crystal cornerpieces are the most prominent features of Guillaume Libri's pastiche treasure binding seen nearby. Highly esteemed by collectors, these quartz semiprecious stones were used for reliquaries, chalices, goblets, bowls, and vases, often mounted in gold and adorned with jewels. Morgan owned many of these luxury items, including a battle scene engraved on an oval plaque by the medalist Giovanni Bernardi.

This drawing by Perino del Vaga is one of six biblical scenes commissioned by Cardinal Alessandro Farnese to be used as models for rock-crystal plaques engraved by Bernardi. The art historian Giorgio Vasari extolled the "exquisite" plaques in his *Lives of the Artists* (1550) and noted that they had been mounted in silver candelabra.

**Gold and cabochon rock crystal box-case, a nineteenth-century pastiche, containing:
Gospel book fragments, in Latin
Salzburg, Austria, second half of the eighth century
The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1905/6; MS M.564**

This treasure binding used to be on display in Morgan's Library, along with the nearby "Philip II" jeweled book cover. But eventually Morgan's librarian Belle da Costa Greene realized that only part of it was authentic: the twelfth- or thirteenth-century champlevé enamel plaque of Christ in Majesty.

Morgan acquired the binding with four other pastiches, all probably fabricated for the notorious Guillaume Libri (1803–1869), who had stolen medieval manuscripts from French libraries and sold many of them in England. Libri marketed his wares adroitly. Just before the pastiche bindings came up for auction in 1862, he published a grandiose catalogue of his collection with scholarly commentaries and sixty color plates. This one was described as "a silver-gilt cover of the Xth–XIth Century, embellished with bas-reliefs, enamels and crystals," a statement not entirely untrue but guilty by association.

The Holy Bible, vol. 1

Cambridge [England]: printed by John Field [and reissued by John Ogilby], 1659–60

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1912; PML 19499

Looking out for the main chance, the London print dealer John Ogilby capitalized on the excitement aroused by Charles II's restoration to the English throne in 1660. He bought up the sheets of a previously published large folio Bible, packed them with engraved illustrations, and dedicated his magnum opus to the king. This copy is in a contemporary binding by the royal binder Samuel Mearne, the greatest exponent of profusely gilt-tooled Restoration binding styles.

The elaborate clasps, cornerpieces, and royal arms are not original, however, and are now considered to be nineteenth-century additions. But they were grand enough to convince a bookseller specializing in royal Bibles that this was the copy the mayor of Dover gave to the king when welcoming him on English soil upon his return from exile.

“Golden Gospels of Henry VIII”

Germany, Trier

Written and decorated at Benedictine Abbey of St. Maximin at Trier, during the abbacy of Archbishop Egbert (977–993)

Purple parchment

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan with the Irwin collection, 1900; MS M.23

As many as sixteen scribes were employed to produce this luxury manuscript, apparently made in haste for a grand state occasion. Its mysterious origins and complicated provenance have inspired romantic myths, including the conjecture that Pope Leo X had given it to Henry VIII as a reward for his services as “Defender of the Faith.” Recent scholarship disproved that story but reconfirmed its royal provenance. Henry VIII did own this manuscript, which appears in a 1542 inventory of his upper library at Westminster Palace. How it got there and why it left is still unclear, but it is now confidently attributed to a monastic scriptorium in the Ottonian Empire, and it is possible that an antiquary patronized by the king found it in northern England and appropriated it for the royal library.

The Nativity and Annunciation* in an initial *P

Gradual cuttings, leaf 1

Italy, Florence, 1392–99

Illuminated by Silvestro dei Gherarducci (1339–1399)

Parchment

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1909; MS M.653.1

The gradual introit (opening hymn) for Christmas Day begins *Puer natus est*, “for unto us a child is born.” Illuminators made the most of this graphic opportunity by painting nativity scenes inside the initial *P*, a space large enough to include iconographic details such as the manger, ox and ass, angels, and the shepherd. Gradual manuscripts could be enormous multivolume compilations two or three feet high, with text and music for the Mass easily legible by the choir standing before a church’s lectern. Here, that broad expanse of parchment left room for the artist to portray the Annunciation to the Shepherds at the foot of the page and Isaiah’s head in the stem of the initial—a reminder that his Old Testament prophecies are the origin of the introit (Isaiah 9:6).

Presepio (Manger)

Italian, Romagna or Le Marche, ca. 1480–1510

Tin-glazed earthenware (maiolica)

**Wadsworth Atheneum, gift of J. Pierpont Morgan;
1917.432**

Saint Francis urged the faithful to envision the birth of Christ with a manger, ox and ass, and other humble attributes of the Nativity. Centuries later, ceramic workshops of the Italian Renaissance made it possible to see this scene in brilliantly colored, brightly glazed maiolica sculptures. Some workshops used plaster molds to make inexpensive, smaller pieces suitable for domestic devotions, among them *presepi* in the shape of inkstands with the legend “The Word was made flesh.” This unusually large and elaborate example was probably designed to be wall-mounted in a church or chapel next to an altar.

Adoration of the Magi* in an initial *E

Gradual cuttings, leaf 5

Italy, Florence, 1392–99

Illuminated by Silvestro dei Gherarducci (1339–1399)

Parchment

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1909; MS M.653.5

Broken up and dispersed, a gradual made in the Florence monastery Santa Maria degli Angeli is the source of this and the leaf on the other side of the *presepio*, just two of the gradual's many leaves now in libraries and museums. The Morgan has twenty-three altogether.

The illuminator was Silvestro dei Gherarducci, subprior and then prior of Santa Maria degli Angeli. The Renaissance art historian Giorgio Vasari reported that Don Silvestro's fellow monks so greatly admired his work that they preserved his right hand as a relic. The initial *E* here introduces the text for the introit for the feast of Epiphany, *Ecce advenit dominator dominus*, "Behold, the Lord, the ruler is come."

Miniatures of the Life of Christ

France, perhaps Corbie, ca. 1175

Parchment

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan with the Bennett collection, 1902; MS M.44

Some luxury psalters made at the end of the Romanesque period begin with full-page or extra-large miniatures depicting scenes from the life of Christ. This series has been difficult to localize because the miniatures were removed from the manuscript, but they may have been made in northern France at Corbie, a monastery renowned for its library and scriptorium. Thirty in all, they start with the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary and conclude with the Last Judgment, Christ as Judge, and the Coronation of the Virgin. Shown here are the third and fourth scenes in the series, the Annunciation to the Shepherds and the Flight into Egypt. An angel swings a censer above the fleeing family, which includes perhaps Jesus's stepbrother James, the youth on the left who is goading the ass.

Gospels, in Latin

Northern France, late tenth century

Parchment

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1905; MS M.319

Pen in hand, the Evangelist Matthew hovers in the clouds along with an airborne box of scrolls. Below, a prostrate female figure raises her hands in prayer or adoration.

On the facing page, the text of Matthew begins with a large initial *L* (for *Liber generationis*) topped with two birds' heads intertwined in a knotwork decoration. The background evokes the sumptuous purple manuscripts of an earlier era. Some motifs were derived from another manuscript dating back to the emperor Charles the Bald (823–877), but the illuminator experimented with innovative techniques by using blank parchment as part of the composition. The halo on the female figure suggests that she was a patron saint of a convent.

“Gospels of Matilda, Countess of Tuscany”

Italy, Polirone, 1075–99

Written and illuminated in the monastery of San Benedetto

Parchment

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont

Morgan, 1912; MS M.492

The complex narrative cycle on these pages starts with a portrait of the Evangelist John on the top left. Also on the left, John the Baptist confronts the priests and Levites, and Christ addresses his mother during the wedding of Cana. On the right, Christ drives the moneychangers from the temple. The codex books here signify written records, and the scrolls denote the act of speech, so Christ speaks to his mother with a scroll, and the priest brandishes a book, a written record of the Old Law refuted during the debate by John the Baptist's scroll.

The Italian feudal potentate Matilda of Canossa (1046–1115) gave this manuscript to her highest-ranking monastery, which appended to it other documents attesting to her power, piety, and munificence. Morgan considered it one of his prime collecting achievements.

Moralized Bible, in Latin

France, Paris, 1227–34

Parchment

The Morgan Library & Museum, purchased by J. Pierpont Morgan, 1906; MS M.240

On the left are eight scenes of the Apocalypse in roundels, on the right portraits of Louis IX of France (reigned 1226–70) and his mother, Blanche of Castile. Beneath them, a tonsured cleric dictates instructions to a scribe, who has a pen in one hand and a knife in the other, to scrape away mistakes. These are two of eight leaves that were removed at an early date from a three-volume picture Bible in the Cathedral Treasury in Toledo, Spain. The entire manuscript would have contained around five thousand miniatures in pairs, one roundel depicting a biblical scene, the other drawing a moral applicable to daily life. Here, the moralizing queen regent seems to be telling her son, the future Saint Louis, what it is to be a righteous king.