

Koller Auktionen - Lot 127*

A174 Collection d'enluminures italiennes - vendredi 18 septembre 2015, 13h30



MASTER OF THE BEFFI ALTAR Historiated initial B from an antiphonary with the Virgin Mary at prayer. Vellum. Abruzzo, ca.1410-1420. 183 x 177 mm. Provenance: - from a Benedictine monastery on the lands of the Aquaviva family (Teramo, Atri). - Since ca. 1830-40, Edinburgh, collection of Lord James Dennistoun of Dennistoun (1805-55). - Thence to a family collection. - Subsequently in the collection of the Bishop of Durham, Durham Castle Bishop Auckland (Durham). - Since 1933, Saltwood Castle (Kent), Collection of Lord Kenneth Clark (1903-1983), Lord of Saltwood Castle. - London Sotheby's 1984, 3 July, lot 86/2. - 1985, New York, H.P. Kraus. - 1989, London, Sam Fogg. - In the current collection since ca. 1990. Bibliography: - Medieval & Renaissance Miniature Painting, Cat Sam Fogg, Bruce Ferrini, London 1989, No. 12. - Francesca Manzati, in: Illuminare l'Abruzzo. Codici Miniati tra

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medioevo e Rinascimento, Pescara, 2012, pp. 233-239. - Friedrich G. Zeileis Più ridon le carte (3.ed.), Rauris 2014, pp.216-217. Further relevant literature: - Pia Palladino, Treasures of a Lost Art. Italian Manuscript Painting of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, exh. cat. Cleveland/San Francisco/New York 2003, pp.60-61. - Francesca Manzati, Il Messale Orsini per la chiesa di San Francesco a Guardiagrele, pescara 2007. This simple but generous initial B, set against a ground of gold and blue, may have opened the antiphony of the first nocturn for Candlemass (Purificatio Virginis, 2 Feb) The Beffi master was one of the leading artistic figures in Abruzzo and was also sought after as a painter of frescoes. The distinctly iconographic arrangement around the Virgin, leads us to assume that the dispersed antiphony came from a Benedictine monastery within the district of Acquaviva dedicated to the Virgin.

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