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Index of Christian Art News Release

News from
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Getty Grant Program Awards \$250,000 to Princeton's Index of Christian Art
Project Will Catalog Medieval Manuscripts of The Pierpont Morgan Library

Princeton, N.J. -- The Getty Grant Program has recently awarded a \$250,000 grant to Princeton University's Index of Christian Art to support the initial phase of a project to create an online, digitized, searchable catalogue of the medieval manuscripts in the collection of The Pierpont Morgan Library in New York City.

The resulting resource will make available to scholars for the first time a thousand years of Western medieval iconography organized in a searchable online database that is unmatched in its depth and degree of access.

Harold T. Shapiro, President of Princeton University, stated, "The Index is a unique resource throughout the art historical world, and for most of this century it has drawn scholars to Princeton University to conduct research in art and medieval history. Adding searchable data and images from the Morgan Library's holdings to the Index's database will enable scholars to study manuscript paintings in the Library's collections within wider artistic contexts.

"The J. Paul Getty Trust's generous support of this project will enhance scholarship in many disciplines, expanding and enriching our understanding of the past," President Shapiro said. The Getty Grant Program is a part of the J. Paul Getty Trust that funds a diverse range of projects including research in the history of art and related fields.

The Morgan Library -- an independent research library and museum with extensive holdings of manuscripts, drawings, and rare books -- houses one of the preeminent collections of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts. The Library's manuscript collection spans some 10 centuries of Western illumination and includes nearly 1,300 manuscripts as well as papyri. Notable manuscripts in the Library's collection include the 9th-century bejeweled Lindau Gospels, the 10th-century Beatus, and the 15th-century Hours of Catherine of Cleves. Since it became an educational institution in 1924, the Morgan Library has played a pioneering role in the development and training of American scholars in medieval studies, art history, and other fields.

The Index of Christian Art -- the largest archive of medieval art and the most comprehensive database for Christian iconography in the world -- is an art historical resource that has served scholars from a wide range of fields for the past 80 years. It focuses on Christian art in all media from the early

apostolic period to the late Middle Ages. (The term "Christian" is broadly construed and by no means restricted to art that is theological in theme or produced within ecclesiastical contexts.) The Index currently holds descriptive records of over 200,000 works of art recorded in over 500,000 entries and classified under 26,000 specially created subject terms.

Under the proposed project, staff at the Index of Christian Art will photograph, digitize, and analyze the iconography of all medieval manuscripts in the Morgan Library's collections. The project in its entirety will cover approximately 30,000 medieval illustrations from over 500 manuscripts dating from the Late Antique to the Late Medieval period and will result in complete photographic coverage of the Library's Western manuscript holdings. The text and image records will be included on the Index's World Wide Web site, which is available on a subscription basis throughout the world. The inclusion of the Morgan records on the Index's site will make them available to a much wider research community than is currently possible. Placing them in the context of the Index's iconographic classification system will provide scholars with a completely new way of studying these documents.

Charles E. Pierce, Jr., Director of the Morgan Library, added, "Photographing and digitizing the Library's manuscripts will help preserve the collections by reducing the need to handle fragile materials, while making the manuscripts available online, in a searchable database, will promote their scholarly use and dramatically increase their accessibility. This collaboration with Princeton University will greatly benefit both the Library and its users. We are grateful to the Getty Grant Program for making this project possible."

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