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**GETTY MUSEUM TO EXHIBIT TWO EXCEPTIONALLY RARE  
MASTERPIECES OF MEDIEVAL ENGLISH ART:**

**STAINED GLASS WINDOWS FROM CANTERBURY  
CATHEDRAL AND THE ST. ALBANS PSALTER**

***Canterbury and St. Albans:  
Treasures from Church and Cloister***

*Six of the earliest and most important surviving examples  
of English stained glass, dating back to the 12th century,  
will be on view alongside one of the most famous  
English Romanesque manuscripts of this period*

September 20, 2013–February 2, 2014  
At the J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Center

LOS ANGELES—This fall the J. Paul Getty Museum will offer visitors the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience two masterpieces of medieval English art: six dazzling, monumental stained glass figures depicting the Ancestors of Christ from England's famed Canterbury Cathedral and the St. Albans Psalter, a richly illuminated manuscript that is a landmark of English Romanesque art.

***Canterbury and St. Albans: Treasures from Church and Cloister*** will be on view at the J. Paul Getty Museum from September 20, 2013 to February 2, 2014, and will unite monumental glass painting with the intimate art of book illumination to reveal how specific texts, prayers and environments shaped the medieval viewer's understanding of these pictures.

Image above: *Noah*, from the Ancestors of Christ Windows, Canterbury Cathedral, England, 1178-1180; design attributed to the Methuselah Master. Colored glass and vitreous paint, lead came; 148.8 x 69.5 cm (58 1/2 x 27 3/8 in.). © Robert Greshoff Photography, courtesy Dean and Chapter of Canterbury

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The exhibition of both these bodies of work is possible because of preservation activities. The six glass windows from Canterbury Cathedral have been temporarily removed from the Cathedral's Great South Window for conservation on the architectural framing. The St. Albans Psalter, on loan from the Cathedral Library in Hildesheim, Germany, has been temporarily unbound for documentation and conservation and will soon be permanently rebound.

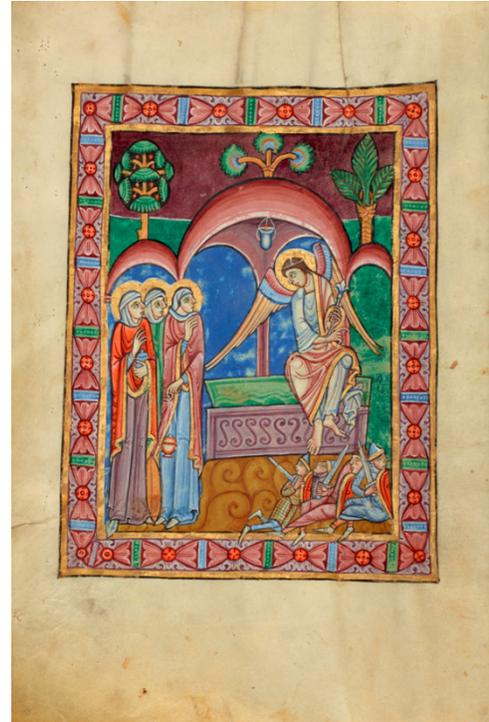
"It is a unique privilege to be able to exhibit these two masterpieces of medieval English art in Los Angeles," said Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "Both dating to the twelfth century, the magnificent monumental, stained-glass Ancestors of Christ from Canterbury Cathedral and the intimate images of biblical subjects in the St. Albans Psalter complement each other perfectly at the highest level of technical and artistic achievement. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for anyone interested in medieval art—and especially for those who do not yet know that they are!"

These two bodies of works are among the most famous examples of English Romanesque art, representing innovations of 12<sup>th</sup>-century English painting on a monumental and miniature scale. Both the psalter, created at the beginning of the 12<sup>th</sup>-century and the stained glass from Canterbury, created at the end of that same century, share the fully modeled and articulated figures, saturated colors and elaborately patterned border decorations that characterize Romanesque painting.

### **The Canterbury Glass**

Canterbury Cathedral is one of the best-known Christian buildings in England and is part of a World Heritage Site. Famously featured in Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the Cathedral has attracted thousands of pilgrims honoring Saint Thomas Becket, who was murdered in the Cathedral in 1170.

The six figures in the exhibition are part of the Ancestors of Christ series, which was originally housed in the clerestory windows ringing the eastern end of the cathedral. Among



*The Maries at the Tomb*, circa 1130. Alexis Master. Tempera and gold on parchment. The Dombibliothek Hildesheim.

the earliest windows surviving at Canterbury, they were made soon after a severe fire in 1174 and after the redesign and expansion of the cathedral to include a shrine for the recently canonized Becket. The Ancestors of Christ windows originally consisted of eighty-six figures, largely based on the list of names contained in the Gospel of St. Luke, with additional names from the Gospel of St. Matthew. From this, the largest known series of the genealogy of Christ in medieval art, forty-three figures of the original series survive. The windows exhibited at the Getty show the imposing, life-size figures of *Jared*, *Lamech*, *Noah*, *Thara*, *Abraham*, and *Phalec*.

"These are the earliest and finest surviving windows from Canterbury, and indeed from 12<sup>th</sup> century Britain," explained Jeffrey Weaver, associate curator of sculpture and decorative arts at the Getty. "Not only are they vibrant examples of the Romanesque style in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, they are extraordinarily rare—very little glass from this period remains."

Most of the ancestor figures were later transferred to other parts of the cathedral while their wide decorative borders were left in the clerestory. The majority of the surviving figures were moved in the eighteenth century to the Great South Window. Six of the ancestor figures from this window will be exhibited along with sections of their original borders that have been removed from the clerestory for the exhibition. As a result, four of the figures have been united with their borders for the first time in over 200 years.

Each panel is characterized by powerful, fully modeled human forms, rich colors, and elaborately patterned borders. Among the earliest of the series to be created, the figures of *Jared* and *Lamech* are attributed to an artist known as the Methuselah Master, named after the window depicting that Old Testament patriarch. The Methuselah Master's skillfully designed and painted figures have a striking sculptural gravity and distinctive psychological animation. The artist is thought to have left Canterbury by 1180. He may have designed the figure of *Noah*, but the actual painting is by a different, unknown hand.

In the middle ages, it was thought that images could prompt one to become more emotionally involved in prayer. Since then, these remarkably large and light-filled images have



*Thara*, from the Ancestors of Christ Windows, Canterbury Cathedral, England, 1178-1180. Colored glass and vitreous paint, lead came; 148.5 x 70 cm (58 1/2 x 27 1/2 in.). © Robert Greshoff Photography, courtesy Dean and Chapter of Canterbury.

worked in conjunction with the architectural setting and liturgical ceremonies involving music and incense to instill feelings of introspection and awe.

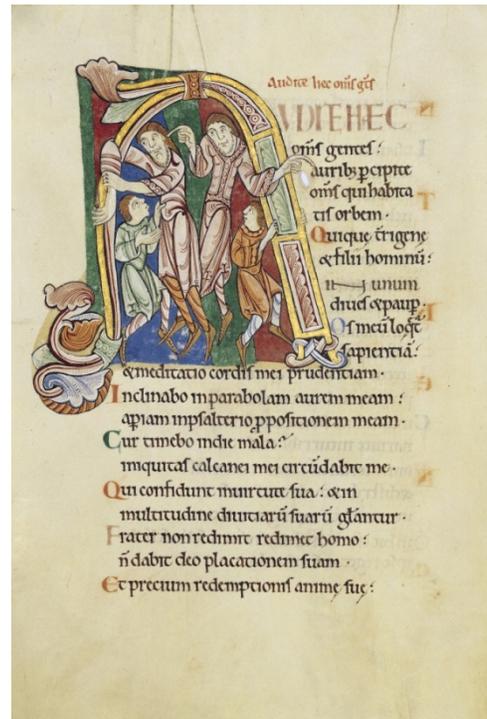
Of the six stained glass figures exhibited at the Getty, five have never before left the Canterbury Cathedral precincts. Following the Los Angeles exhibition, the stained glass windows will travel to the Cloisters Museum and Gardens in New York City in spring 2014 before returning to Canterbury.

### The St. Albans Psalter

Alongside the windows, *Canterbury and St. Albans: Treasures from Church and Cloister* will feature another rarely viewed medieval English work, the St. Albans Psalter (circa 1130) on loan from the Cathedral Library in Hildesheim, Germany, where it has been since at least the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The book was made at St. Albans Abbey, on the site where Alban, England's first saint, was martyred by the Romans. This lavishly decorated manuscript contains life-of-Christ images that act as a preface to the psalter, which is further decorated with intricately painted and gilded initials. The book is believed to have been owned by the anchoress Christina of Markyate (about 1095/1100 –after 1155), a noble-born nun of Anglo-Saxon descent. It is thought that Geoffrey Gorron, the Norman abbot of St. Albans who ruled from 1119 until his death in 1146, may have given the manuscript to Christina. The psalter contains the most extensive series of life-of Christ images for its time, as well as illuminated initials that deftly encapsulate complex psalms into singular, powerful images.

"The St. Albans Psalter is a tremendous work of art and marks the moment when the Romanesque style of illumination really takes hold in England," said Kristen Collins, associate curator of manuscripts at the J. Paul Getty Museum. "Its pictures are dramatic, beautiful, and designed to provoke a powerful response for the book's readers."

The anonymous artist known as the Alexis Master is most renowned for the luminous and expressive paintings in the picture cycle of the book. He takes his name however, from



Initial A: Psalm 48, about 1130. Alexis Master. Tempera and gold on parchment. The Dombibliothek Hildesheim.

the miniature with scenes from the Life of Saint Alexis, that appears in the so-called "Alexis Quire," a section of the book containing miscellaneous religious texts and images.

For conservation purposes, the pages of the psalter will be displayed in two rotations, with the works on view changing halfway through the exhibition. The exhibition will display all of works by the Alexis Master as well as about one third of the psalm initials.

The psalms in the St. Albans Psalter feature illustrated initials that provide visual and literal representations of one or two lines of the accompanying prayer. Utterances of despair, battle cries, or offerings of humble thanks are expressed through sweeping gestures in which the figures of God and the psalmist speak or physically interact. Throughout the psalter, unknown illuminators deftly molded the figures in and around their surrounding letterforms to evoke the spirit of the accompanying prayer. For example, the initial "A" of Psalm 48 is filled with four expressive figures, two large and two small. One of the men points to the ear of his neighbor to underscore the message of the song of praise, "hear these things all nations."

Throughout the early and high Middle Ages, the psalter was the preeminent manual for personal devotion among the laity and monastic community alike. From the psalter, individuals learned to read the words they had already committed to memory through years of recitation, both in church and in the home. In the high Middle Ages, when the St. Albans Psalter was made, readers customarily read aloud. The combined experience of seeing, reciting, and hearing the psalms enabled the reader entry into the meditative state of prayer.

Because the psalter is temporarily unbound, visitors will have the opportunity to walk through several galleries filled with its luxuriously painted pages. The St. Albans Psalter has never before been exhibited in the United States and the Getty is the only place where the windows and the manuscript will be shown together.

***Canterbury and St. Albans: Treasures from Church and Cloister*** is curated by Kristen Collins, associate curator of manuscripts at the J. Paul Getty Museum and Jeffrey Weaver, associate curator of sculpture and decorative arts at the J. Paul Getty Museum. In conjunction with the exhibition, Getty Publications has produced *The St. Albans Psalter: Painting and Prayer in Medieval England* and *The Ancestors of Christ Windows at Canterbury Cathedral*. For these publications, Collins and Weaver collaborated with leading experts in the field of glass painting and illumination: Madeline Caviness, Peter Kidd and Nancy Turner.

**The J. Paul Getty Trust** is an international cultural and philanthropic institution devoted to the visual arts that includes the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Getty Research Institute, the Getty Conservation Institute, and the Getty Foundation. The J. Paul Getty Trust and Getty programs serve a varied audience from two locations: the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the Getty Villa in Malibu.

**The J. Paul Getty Museum** collects in seven distinct areas, including Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts, and photographs gathered internationally. The Museum's mission is to make the collection meaningful and attractive to a broad audience by presenting and interpreting the works of art through educational programs, special exhibitions, publications, conservation, and research.

### **Visiting the Getty Center**

The Getty Center is open Tuesday through Friday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. It is closed Monday and major holidays. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking is \$15 per car, but reduced to \$10 after 5 p.m. on Saturdays and for evening events throughout the week. No reservation is required for parking or general admission. Reservations are required for event seating and groups of 15 or more. Please call (310) 440-7300 (English or Spanish) for reservations and information. The TTY line for callers who are deaf or hearing impaired is (310) 440-7305. The Getty Center is at 1200 Getty Center Drive, Los Angeles, California.

Same day parking at both Museum locations (Getty Center and Getty Villa) is available for \$15 through the Getty's Pay Once, Park Twice program.

**Additional information is available at [www.getty.edu](http://www.getty.edu).**

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