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**THE J. PAUL GETTY MUSEUM PRESENTS**  
***TRAVERSING THE GLOBE THROUGH ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS***

*A kaleidoscopic narrative about what it meant to be 'global' in the premodern world*

LOS ANGELES - Considering networks rather than boundaries, connectivity rather than isolation, and a world of cross-cultural artistic interaction, *Traversing the Globe through Illuminated Manuscripts*, on view January 26–June 26, 2016 at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center, offers the opportunity to explore the strong connections between Europe and the broader world during the Middle Ages and Renaissance.

Drawn primarily from the Getty Museum's collection of illuminated manuscripts, complemented by related decorative arts and prints, as well as important loans from collections across Los Angeles, the exhibition offers a rich view into how people in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas communicated and thought about their place in the world. The nearly 80 works on display have been selected to illustrate the exchange of ideas, styles, and materials that took place between the East, West, and cross-geographic centers and periphery regions, during the 9th to the early 17th centuries.

Contrary to popular belief, premodern Europe was a place of fluid cultures, blurred boundaries and multi-ethnic centers. The Middle Ages and Renaissance were periods in which the world was known to be round, a concept that can be traced intellectually back to the classical world and various places around the globe, and people from Europe, Africa, and Asia interacted with great frequency. Many Europeans, however, attempted to fit unknown peoples or places that they encountered into a more familiar Christian worldview.

"The tradition of illuminating manuscripts bound into books flourished among all of the Abrahamic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) of Europe, the Middle East and Africa, and developed alongside rich book cultures further afield in India, Central and East Asia and the



An Emperor at Court, about 1460 – 1470. French. Tempera colors, gold leaf, gold paint, and ink on parchment. Leaf: 6 15/16 x 4 1/2 in. 2001.45.14v. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Ms. 68, fol. 14v

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Americas," says Timothy Potts, director of the J. Paul Getty Museum. "While the Getty's collection focuses on the European schools of Medieval and Renaissance illumination, we also hold examples from Armenia, Ethiopia, Egypt, and Tunisia. Together with the loans from other local museums and private collectors, the Getty's manuscripts in this exhibition paint a vivid picture of the dynamic interchange of ideas, narratives, styles and images that characterized these eras. It is a useful reminder that globalization is not a new phenomenon. Indeed, it has lain at the foundation of much of our intellectual, artistic, social and economic life throughout history."

The real and imagined worlds of artists, writers, pilgrims, travelers, and many others come to life in stunning and at times surprising ways on the pages of illuminated manuscripts and painted book arts. These highly prized objects are prisms through which we can admire, and study the various peoples, belief systems, and artistic traditions of the world, making possible an interconnected global history of human thought and ideas about art.

In a time before the borders of cities, nations, or even continents were clearly defined, individuals turned to texts, including epic romances, world histories, travel literature, and sacred writings, to learn about distant lands, exotic goods, and foreign people. Many of these accounts were accompanied by wondrous illuminations, which visualized a world that was otherwise accessible only to intrepid travelers and creative imaginations. "A rich multimedia tour developed especially for the exhibition allows visitors to hear several of the texts in the exhibition read aloud by specialists in these historic languages, along with a narrative and translation in English," says Bryan Keene, assistant curator in the Manuscripts Department at the J. Paul Getty Museum and the curator of the exhibition. "This engaging tour will complement *Medieval Manuscripts Alive*, a series on *The Iris*, the Getty's online magazine, and will include readings by specialists in Middle French, Greek, Ge'ez (Ethiopian), Arabic, Coptic, Catalan, Navarro-Aragonese, Middle Armenian, Prakarit, and Latin."

The exhibition explores material from—and about—Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas, including the stunning *Canon Tables* 1256 by T'oros Roslin from Armenia and the recently acquired *Romance of Gillion de Trazegnies* 1464. Texts and illuminations convey Jewish, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Jain narratives and explore the various pathways of religious contact. Maps reveal distinctive worldviews, and texts highlight the land and sea routes along which information and goods were transported and communicated, including the multifaceted Silk Roads between Asia and Europe.

"Cross-cultural trade was ubiquitous in the premodern world and portable objects—such as manuscripts, textiles, and small sculptures—helped link people and spread religions and ideas across vast distances," adds Keene. "Through these objects we can glimpse the desire for



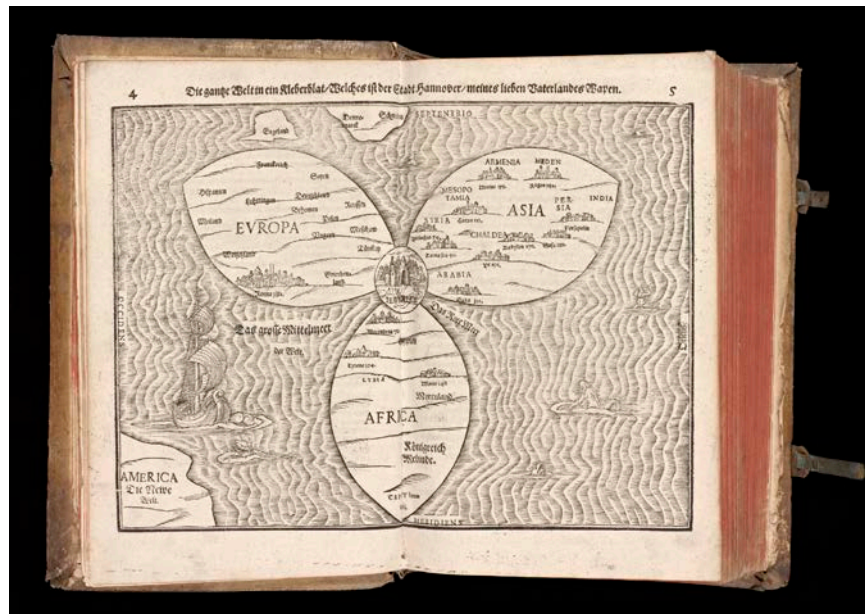
Iskandar at the Kaaba, about 1485 – 1495. Unknown maker and Nizami Ganjavi. Iranian. Ink, opaque watercolor, and gold. 9 x 6 1/8 in. EX.2016.2.6. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, The Nasli M. Heeramaneck Collection, gift of Joan Palevsky. Photo courtesy of LACMA.

knowledge of the unknown and distant worlds that was shared among Afro-Eurasian peoples."

*Traversing the Globe through Illuminated Manuscripts* will be on view at the J. Paul Getty Museum at the Getty Center from January 26 –June 26, 2016. Educational programs related to the exhibition include *The World in a Book: Illuminated Manuscripts and the Global Middle Ages*, a public lecture on February 3, 2016 in which Bryan Keene will explore the themes of mapping, religion, and trade in several manuscripts from the Getty's permanent collection. An international scholarly symposium will take place on April 16-17, 2016, and Professor Sussan Babaie of The Courtauld Institute of Art will present a public lecture on April 19, 2016 about connections between premodern Europe, Armenia, and Persia. Additional information can be found at [getty.edu/360](http://getty.edu/360).

*The Adventures of Gillion de Trazegnies: Chivalry and Romance in the Medieval East*, a recent release from Getty Publications (2015) by Elizabeth Morrison and Zrinka Stahuljak, is a lavishly illustrated volume about one of the Getty Museum's recent manuscript acquisition, which is featured in the exhibition.

On view concurrently, beginning in May at the Getty Center, will be *Cave Temples of Dunhuang: Buddhist Art on China's Silk Road*, featuring paintings and manuscripts from Dunhuang which have rarely, if ever, traveled to the United States. The exhibition, which will include three spectacular full-size cave replicas, celebrates more than 25 years of collaboration between the Getty Conservation Institute and the Dunhuang Academy to preserve this UNESCO World Heritage Site.



Itinerarium Sacrae Scripturae, das ist, Ein Reisebuch über die gantze heilige Schrift in zwey Bücher getheilet..., 1591-1597. Heinrich Bünting (1545 - 1606) and Zacharias Rivander. Woodcut. Dimensions: Closed: 13 7/16 x 3 1/2 x 3 3/8 in. Open (pg.4-5 ("Itinerarium Sacrae Scripturae", vol.1)): 13 7/16 x 15 3/8 in. 44-2.bw. The Getty Research Institute

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**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 Pacific Palisades.

**The J. Paul Getty Museum** collects Greek and Roman antiquities, European paintings, drawings, manuscripts, sculpture and decorative arts to 1900, as well as photographs from around the world to the present day. The Museum's mission is to display and interpret its collections, and present important loan exhibitions and publications for the enjoyment and education of visitors locally and internationally. This is supported by an active program of research, conservation, and public programs that seek to deepen our knowledge of and connection to works of art.

### **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 most major holidays. Admission to the Getty Center is always free. Parking is \$15 per car, but reduced to \$10 after 4 p.m. 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.

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

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