



**MUSÉE DE CLUNY**  
le monde médiéval

# THE “LADY AND THE UNICORN TAPESTRIES” AND THE FIVE SENSES

23<sup>th</sup> march 2019 – 20<sup>th</sup> august 2019



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# THE “LADY AND THE UNICORN TAPESTRIES” AND THE FIVE SENSES

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The exhibition “The Lady and the unicorn tapestries and the five senses” showcases the meaning and hierarchy of senses the Middle Ages constructed. Many texts on the five senses equate senses to different things (the four elements, parts of the body, animals, sins and vices, or human emotions). The five senses were also considered gateways to the human soul, granting access to knowledge. These associations led to a classification and hierarchy of the senses, for example in relation to the position of sensory organs on the human face: sight and hearing, whose corresponding organs are placed the highest, are the noblest, while smell, taste and touch are baser senses.

This exhibition is organized in two parts as the two different hierarchies of the senses based on the writings of the Cistercian monk Guillaume de Saint-Thierry (circa 1085-1148): courtly and literary on the one hand, and religious on the other. This exhibition’s guide follows the same organization and breaks down each part into five sets. It provides you with keys of understanding and labels’ translations of every collections’ works.

## I. THE COURTLY HIERARCHY OF THE SENSES

### A. Sight

#### 1. Stained glass panel: chess players

France, Lyon area or Beaujolais, ca 1450

Colorless glass, vitreous paint and silver stain

Purchase, 1993, Cl. 23422

This stained glass panel, itself part of a window, displays a couple playing chess in front of a pair of bay windows. In late medieval courtship scenes, a window can be read as an allusion to the role of sight in romantic encounters



#### 2. Mirror case: the meeting of Tristan and Isolde in the orchard

Paris, 1<sup>st</sup> half of 14<sup>th</sup> century

Ivory

Purchase, 1898, Cl. 13298

Tristan and Isolde are among the most famous lovers of medieval literature. By mistake, they drank a love potion which strengthened their love for each other, in spite of every obstacle, even Iseult's marriage to Tristan's uncle, King Mark. The mirror case depicts Tristan and Iseult meeting at dawn in the orchard, while King Mark looks on in jealousy. Mark has hidden himself in a tree, but his presence is revealed by his reflection in the fountain. The upside-down image of the king's reflection points to his ridiculous position and makes for a shift in power balance.

#### 3. Page of penitential psalms: Bathsheba bathing

Hours of the Virgin, for Rome use

Printed in Paris, 1500, June 26<sup>th</sup> by Thielmann Kerver for Gillet Remacle.

Printed on parchment

Purchase, 2008, Cl. 23841

In this page, the role of sight in stirring love is evoked: King David spies Bathsheba bathing in a fountain. Her dress and shoes lay on the floor. This print is an illustration for penitential psalms, which Christians say in order to ask God to forgive their sins. Penitential psalms are part of the books of hours which gather prayers for the different circumstances of life and of the day. The purpose of the decoration is to be a support for prayer, but also to help the reader to reach the right prayer at the right moment.

#### 4. Mirror case: knightly tournament in front of the castle of love

2<sup>nd</sup> ¼ of 14<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century

Ivory

On loan from the musée du Louvre, 1977, OA 116

This mirror case is obviously linked with the sense of sight, as it is

intended to check one's self-image. Some mirror cases display scenes inspired by medieval novels. On this mirror case, ladies, protected by the ramparts, watch knights fighting in front of the castle. Numerous mirror cases can be found in museums, but few are complete boxes, as it is the case for the Cluny mirror case.

## B. Hearing

### 1. Gemellion (shallow bowl): a couple, musicians and coats of arms

Limoges, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 13<sup>th</sup> century

Copper, champlevé enamel

From Alexandre Du Sommerard collection, Cl. 954

Gemellions were twin basins used for hand washing before meals. This single gemellion is decorated with a central medallion, showing a couple in between two musicians, who are playing the harp and the medieval fiddle. On the edge, four coats of arms alternate with female figures and two other musicians, playing the same instruments.



### 2. Casket with dancers, minstrels and courtly scenes

France of Netherlands, 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> century

Bone with traces of polychrome

Purchase, 1849, Cl. 1808

The rectangular plaques show musicians and dancers, on the lid. The sides of the casket are decorated with hunters, musicians, a battle, a stag hunt, a couple picking flowers. The scenes and characters are drawn on crosshatched backgrounds. This casket shows leisure activities, with particular emphasis on the dance, encouraged by the musical rhythm of the tabor and of the song.

### 3. Book of hours: King David in prayer

Master of the echevinage of Rouen, 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 15<sup>th</sup> century

Watercolour with egg or gum binding medium on vellum

Constantin bequest, 1881, Cl. 10955

King David is the most prominent musician in the Bible and he was thought to be the author of the psalms during the middle ages. He is often portrayed playing the harp, or praying, with his instrument near him, asking God to forgive his sins and not to get angry with him. The harp was the instrument used for songs of praise and joy.

### 4. Three whistles: horn, rooster and bagpipe

14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century

Lead, Gift, 1909, Cl. 17925, Cl. 17931 et Cl. 18159

Numerous lead badges were pinned or stitched on medieval clothes. Lots of them were discovered in Paris during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and

others may still be found in archaeological excavations. These cheap objects were often souvenirs from pilgrimages, decorated with religious images. Other were secular. They could be religious or political insignia, or musical instruments. Those three whistles belong to this category. One of them looks like a small horn, the second one is a rooster, and the third is a bagpipe.

### 5. Misericord: pigs playing the organ

East of France, 15th century

Carved oak

From Alexandre Du Sommerard collection, Cl. 20396

Musical instruments were played in churches or in lay occasions during Middle Ages. On the Hearing, from the Lady and the Unicorn series, the lady and her assistant play the organ. The lady composes the tune while her assistant pumps on the bellow. On this misericord, two pig-like animals also play the organ. The male plays the music while the female pumps on the bellow and breast-feeds a piglet.

## C. Taste

### 1. Knife handle: two pairs of lovers

Italy or France, late 14<sup>th</sup> century

Ivory

Purchase, 1856, Cl. 2547

The handle of this hunting knife shows two pairs of lovers. On one side, the seated male figure strokes the hair of the kneeling woman whose arms are crossed. On the other side, the two are standing and giving each other a kiss. Stylized trees frame the scenes.



### 2. Standing dish

Venice, 15th century

Enamelled copper

On loan from the musée du Louvre, 1977, MR 2508

This dish is made of a thin copper sheet, covered by a fragile enamelled layer. It was not intended for table use, but rather for display on sideboards or credenze around the sides of the dining room. The shape and quality of this dish echo those of the one which can be seen in the hands of the assistant on the Taste tapestry, in the series of The Lady and the Unicorn.

### 3. Ewer with coat of arms of the Squarcialupi family

Germany, 15th century

Bronze with black patina and gilding

Purchase, 1862, Cl. 3427

The ewer was the usual container for water during the Middle ages.

It has an elegant form, but is decorated simply with stripes. The lid shows the coat of arms of a Sienese family, the Squarcialupi

#### **4. Hexagonal saltcellar with lid**

Italy? ca 1370

Pewter

Purchase, 1847, Cl. 1661

The rectangular panels of the saltcellar show effigies of Christ and saints. The upper side of the lid is decorated with a scene of the Annunciation and includes an inscription mentioning the craftsman who made the object: *Bosetus me fecit* (made by Bosetus). Under the lid, a Crucifixion is depicted, with a Latin inscription which can be translated: "when you are eating, first think of the poor fellow; when you feed one, you feed God, my friend". The inscription testifies that this box was used during meals. It was probably a saltcellar. Salt was precious during Middle Ages, was used as flavor enhancer and as preserving agent.

#### **5. Spoon**

France, 15<sup>th</sup> century

Bronze with black patina and gilding

Gift of Jean Boxhorn, 1984, Cl. 23206

Medieval spoons usually have a slender six faceted stem and a fig shaped bowl. The decoration may occur between stem and bowl, on the stem or on the finial, here a simple ribbed bud.

#### **6. Two bowls**

Paris, 1<sup>st</sup> half of 14<sup>th</sup> century

Silver

Purchase, 1851, Cl. 1952

Beaker

Amiens, before 1355

Silver

Purchase, 1851, Cl. 1953

Those two pieces of tableware present various marks that point to their centers of production in Paris, Rouen and Amiens. They were part of a hoard, found buried in Normandy, probably in Rouen or in Gaillon. Bowls, called *hanaps* were used as we use plates today, whereas beakers, which are drinking vessels, are usually flare-shaped. The medieval tableware could be made of earthenware, glass, lead, pewter, copper, silver or gold, according to wealth and to the circumstances.

## D. Touch

### 1. Crimson cut velvet with pomegranate motives

Italy mid-15<sup>th</sup> century

Silk velvet

Purchase, 1932

Cl. 21615

This piece of velvet is very soft to touch and has kept its vivid crimson color. We cannot be certain whether it was woven in Firenze or in Venice, but it is a high quality fabric. The use of such textiles could be a lay one, as well as a religious one. A tunic of subdeacon, cut in a similar textile, is still kept in the museum of the basilica of Gandino, in Lombardia.



### 2. Chess piece: a hunter blowing his horn

Scandinavia, 14<sup>th</sup> century

Whalebone

Gift of Charles Stein, 1886

Cl. 11286

According to recent scholarship, this chess piece was part of a Scandinavian set. The hunter is roughly carved with two assistants and his dog. Polished bone or ivory were highly valued for their smoothness and their scarcity.

### 3. Mirror case: Tristan and Isolde encounter the hermit Ogrin

France (Paris ?) ca 1320-1330

Ivory

From Alexandre Du Sommerard collection

Cl. 383

A bearded man wearing a hooded robe, speaks with a loving pair. The encounter takes place in a wood and is probably an episode of the story of Tristan and Isolde. The fugitive Tristan and Isolde, who have been banished from the court, hide themselves in the Morrois forest, where the hermit Ogrin blames them for their lack of chastity. They explain that they are under the power of a love potion. The loving embrace testifies to their love.

### 4. Mirror case: courtly scenes

France, Paris? 1<sup>st</sup> half of 14<sup>th</sup> century

Ivory

From Alexandre Du Sommerard collection, Cl. 403

On the upper registrar, the god of love points his arrows towards two kneeling figures, man et woman. On the lower level, a young lady crowns her lover, who kneels in front of her. Afterwards, the two are standing and the young man strokes the face of his beloved. The mirror case shows the evolution of the loving relationship, according to the rules of courtly love. The lady has to choose her beloved, who can then receive a kiss.

## E. Smell

### 1. Tapestry with millefleurs design

Southern Netherlands, end of 15<sup>th</sup> century of beginning of 16<sup>th</sup> century

Wool and silk

Purchase, 1948, Cl. 22570b

A network of flowery plants is represented on this tapestry: blue violets, orange daffodils, red or pink flowers. The millefleurs tapestries were frequently used as decoration for seats, beds or walls. They evoked the idea of spring and of fragrance in medieval houses.



### 2. Drug jar

Manises (probably made, Spain, Valence region), 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 15<sup>th</sup> century

Tin-glazed earthenware with lustre decoration

Purchase, 1854, Cl. 2375

This pot, covered with vine-leaves and grapes decoration, was used for storing spices. Italian paintings of the 15th century show similar pots, closed off by a piece of textile or parchment and a string. Spices were increasingly present on the tables of the nobility, as Mediterranean trade extended during the late Middle Ages.

### 3. Brocatelle with plant pattern

Spain, 16<sup>th</sup> century

Silk and metal thread

Purchase, 1890, Cl. 12196

This textile was woven not very long after the completion of The Lady and the Unicorn. The motifs are different flowers, red blooming flowers with yellow heart, or campanulas with crumpled edges which recall crocus buds. The term “brocatelle” designates a type of silk woven textile, belonging to the lampas family. This expensive technique imitates the appearance of figured velvet.

### 4. The Promenade, scene from the series of tapestries: the Seigniorial Life

Southern Netherlands, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 16<sup>th</sup> century

Wool and silk

Purchase, 1852

Cl. 2178

This millefleurs tapestry shows numerous birds and five people, three women and two gentlemen. One of the women holds a bouquet of carnations, while three other young characters present fruits to their companion. The tapestry depicts a life of refinement, in a beautiful garden where fragrant plants grow.





## INTERLUDE

### 1. Narwhal tusk

Known in the treasury of Saint-Denis abbey from 1495 on Narwhal ivory

On loan from the Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1918  
Cl. 20202

During the Middle Ages, narwhal tusks were seen as marvels of nature. Simply touching one was believed to cure the effects of poison. Thought to be unicorn horns, they were often the pride of their possessor, standing out among the treasures of churches like Saint-Denis and adding to the prestige of regal collections. At the time of the creation of the Lady and the Unicorn tapestries or just after, certain authors like Rabelais started playing with the idea of this improbable animal, unable to graze. At the turn of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, unicorns were still thought of as exceptional creatures with qualities like purity, speed and gentleness.



## II. THE RELIGIOUS HIERARCHY OF THE SENSES

### A. SMELL AND THE LOVE OF EVERYONE

#### 1. Capital: scenes from the Genesis Book

Saint Peter of Rodes (Catalunya), last quarter of 12<sup>th</sup> century

Limestone

Purchase, 1881, Cl. 18999

Small in size and similar to the capitals of other Catalan cloisters, this capital is from the cloister of the monastery of Saint Peter of Rodes, in the Catalan Pyrenees. This cloister was decorated with capitals bearing representations of plants and animals, as well as scenes from the Old and the New Testaments. This piece shows four scenes: the creation of woman, the temptation in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve before the creator after the original sin, and then Adam and Eve working on earth. The creation of the first family, the seed of natural love according to Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, is evoked here.



#### 2. Incense boat

Limoges, ca 1200-1215

Copper-gilt, champlevé enamels

Purchase, 1946, Cl. 22423

The incense boat is a small receptacle in the form of a boat which holds the grains of incense during celebrations, which are then fed

into the thurible. The lid of this boat is decorated with the busts of two saints emerging from stylized clouds, evoking paradise.

### 3. Censer adorned with busts of angels

Limoges, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 13<sup>th</sup> century

Copper-gilt, champlevé enamels

Purchase, 1946, Cl. 22424

During ceremonies, the thurible holds burning coals which grains of incense are put on top of to produce a scented smoke. The thurible is swung to surround the altar, the celebrant, and the assistants in a smell of incense, which symbolizes honor, prayer, and purification, and prefigures the celestial world. Still in possession of its chains, this thurible bears signs of usage, like concretions on the interior, or fractures in the enamel surface of the lower bowl.

### 4. Lower part of a censer adorned with angels and rinceau decoration

Limoges, ca 1200

Pierced copper-gilt, enamels

Acquisition, 1896, Cl. 14026

Discovered with the treasure of Cherves (Charente, not far from Cognac), this piece of a thurible is divided into sections alternating with plant motifs and busts of angels. The interior bowl is missing, a necessary piece because of the openwork character of the thurible. The thurible was swung to surround the altar, the celebrant, and the assistants in a smell of incense, which symbolizes honor, prayer, and purification, and prefigures the celestial world.

## B. TOUCH AND FAMILY LOVE

### 1. Relief: the Holy Family

Possibly carved by Lux Maurus, active in Kempen (Upper Swabia) from 1517 to 1527

Painted and gilded limewood

Wasset bequest, 1906, Cl. 15390

Theologians associate touch with familial love. In this low-relief carving, the Holy Family (the Virgin Mary, baby Jesus, and Joseph) is evoked in a very simple way. While his mother tries to read with him, the young Jesus grabs at Joseph's face to wake him up from his nap. The tactile relationship between the three characters is subtly put into play. Mary makes a discrete hand motion to catch Joseph's attention; Jesus is more direct.



### 2. Pax: Crucifixion

France, 15<sup>th</sup> century

Ivory

Gift of Honoré Hugues Imbert, 1900, Cl. 13950

A pax (from the Latin for 'peace') symbolised the kiss of peace shared by early Christians. It was passed around and kissed during the Mass. Paxes were decorated with various religious scenes and frequently the Crucifixion, as in this case.

### 3. Relief: Christ washing the feet of his disciples

France, 14<sup>th</sup> century

Ivory

Purchase, 1889, Cl. 11980

The Gospels of Saint John recount that Jesus Christ washed the feet of his disciples during the last supper. This served as an important example of an act of affection and humility for Christians in the Middle Ages, especially for canons. In some Cathedrals, such as at Angers, the ceremony of Maundy Thursday involved a symbolic washing of the feet of the clerics by the bishop. This bas-relief is part of a cycle representing the scenes of the Passion of Christ.

### 4. Tapestry: the Annunciation, the Visitation: scene with Mary and Joseph

Model by Jean d'Ypres (active in Paris from 1490 to 1508): woven in Paris, ca 1499

Wool and silk

Gift of Pauline Bacri, 1972, Cl. 22865

The life of the Virgin Mary was a particular object of prayer and devotion at the end of the Middle Ages. On this tapestry, two of the "seven joys of Mary" are represented: the Annunciation and the Visitation. The third scene shows Mary and Joseph reading at home. In the Visitation, a scene from the Gospels of Saint Luke, Mary, pregnant with Jesus, visits her cousin Elisabeth, pregnant with John the Baptist. The two women touch each other's stomachs in a gesture of faith. More generally, the act of touching a pregnant woman's stomach has roots in a popular belief that the contact would bring good luck.

## C. TASTE AND LOVE FOR SOCIAL LOVE

### 1. Plaque from a reliquary shrine: the meal of Simon the Pharisee

Limoges, mid-13<sup>th</sup> century

Copper-gilt, champlevé enamels

From Alexandre Du Sommerard collection, Cl. 977

The shape of the plaque indicates that it was once on the long-side of a chasse in the form of a church, the central triangle corresponding to the transept's gabled roof. This triangle also allows for the representation of Christ to be larger in size. Christ has come to eat at the house of a Pharisee named Simon. A woman, traditionally thought to be Mary Magdalene, comes to perfume Christ, particularly



his feet, which she also dries with her hair. Three senses are evoked here: taste, smell, and touch.

## **2. Capital: Abraham and the three angels**

Saint Peter of Rodes (Catalunya), last quarter of 12<sup>th</sup> century

Limestone

Purchase, 1881, Cl. 19000

Small in size and similar to the capitals of other Catalan cloisters, this capital is from the cloister of the monastery of Saint Peter of Rodes, in the Catalan Pyrenees. This cloister was decorated with capitals bearing representations of plants and animals, as well as scenes from the Old and the New Testaments. This capital includes scenes from the story of Abraham. Two sides show Abraham by the Oak of Mamre as he's visited by three angels (Genesis, chapter 18). First, Abraham is kneeling in front of the angels; then, the angels are sitting at his table as Abraham and his wife Sarah serve them. The other sides show the Sacrifice of Isaac.

## **3. Part of an altarpiece: a bishop and two barrels**

Region of Beauvais, mid-16<sup>th</sup> century

Painted oak

From Alexandre Du Sommerard collection, Cl. 20644

In this carving, a bishop pours wine from a pitcher into a barrel. This is probably a depiction of a Sainted Bishop for whom a barrel is one of his symbols. This could be Saint Wilibrord or, more likely, Saint Remigius, who could replenish the wine in a cellar where only drops of liquid were left in a barrel.

## **4. Chalice and patena**

France, last quarter of 15<sup>th</sup> century

Silver-gilt

Purchase, 1890, Cl. 12089 a et b

The second part of Mass is the ritual commemoration of the last supper of Jesus and his disciples before the Crucifixion. The Host (a type of bread) is placed on a plate, called a paten, while the wine is mixed with water in a cup, called a chalice. Because of its shape and its decoration, this chalice can be dated to the end of the Middle Ages.

## **5. Part of an altarpiece: saint Martha with penitents from a fraternity**

Biberach an der Riss (Upper Swabia), ca 1515-1520

Painted and gilded limewood

Purchase, 1958, Cl. 22763

Saint Martha, recognizable thanks to the pail of holy water she carries, is here the guardian of a Confraternity of penitents partially masked by balaclavas. Social love became notable at the end of the Middle Ages with the development of Confraternities. The members, united by common professional activities, residential areas, or

specific devotional practices, gave each other aid for both material and spiritual problems.

## D. HEARING AND SPIRITUAL LOVE, INCLUDING THE LOVE OF ONE'S ENEMIES

### 1. Leaf from a gradual (song choir book): letter D, Pentecost

Troyes (Champagne), last quarter of 15<sup>th</sup> century

Miniature on parchment

From Alexandre Du Sommerard collection, Cl. 1242b

The feast of the Pentecost commemorates, in the Christian religion, the Holy Spirit's descent on the Virgin and the apostles, like a gust of wind, which made the words of the disciples understandable to all, no matter what language they spoke (Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2, verse 1-13). During research on illumination from the Champagne region, this page was identified as a part of a songbook from Troyes, copied and decorated circa 1475-1480. Its incipit letter contains the scene of the descent.



### 2. Leaf from a missal: Pentecost

Flanders (Ghent or Tournai?), beginning of 16<sup>th</sup> century

Miniature on parchment

Purchase, 1998, Cl. 23538b

The feast of the Pentecost commemorates, in the Christian religion, the Holy Spirit's descent on the Virgin and the apostles, like a gust of wind, which made the words of the disciples understandable to all, no matter what language they spoke (Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2, verse 1-13). This page of a missal (the book of prayers said during Mass) is illustrated with the scene of the descent of the Holy Spirit. The text is that of the opening prayers said by the priest during the Mass of the Pentecost.

### 3. Cope morse: the Annunciation

Paris, 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 14<sup>th</sup> century

Copper-gilt, champlevé enamels

Purchase, 1861, Cl. 3293

This object served to attach the two corners of a cope, a cape worn by clergy, priests, or bishops during ceremonies. It's decorated with an Annunciation scene, which is one of many scenes in which a divine message is communicated to a human being through speech, in this case through the voice of the angel Gabriel.

### 4. Part of an altarpiece: Judas kissing Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane

England, beginning of 15<sup>th</sup> century

Alabaster

Gift of Guy Ladrière, 1993, Cl. 23419

English artists made many low-relief sculpted altarpieces which were exported across Europe. This sculpture is one example. It shows an episode of the Passion of Christ, the moment where his disciple Judas greets him and kisses him to designate him to the troupe come to arrest him. The Christ provides an example of spiritual love, which extends to a love for one's enemies. For Guillaume de Saint-Thierry, spiritual love is associated with hearing.

### 5. Angel playing the lute

Austria, last quarter of 15<sup>th</sup> century

Painted and gilded wood

Gift of Marie Peyrat, marquise Arconati-Visconti, 1892, Cl. 12848

Representations of the Virgin Mary or Christ, particularly in joyous scenes (Nativity, the Adoration of the Magi, etc), are often accompanied by angelic musicians, placed within the compartment of an illumination, in the tympana of stained glass windows, the vaults of a door, or in the frames of altarpieces. This angel playing the lute is certainly part of a small orchestra of angels associated with an altarpiece or a statue, the music serving as a way to express the beauty of creation and the love of the created for its creator.

### 6. Triptych: a donor with musicians; the Virgin and Child with musician angels and saints; King David with musicians

Paris, ca 1512

Painted oak

Rothschild bequest, 1901 (wings) et purchase, 2012, Cl. 14102 a et b et Cl. 23889

In this dense composition, in honor of the Virgin Mary, the outer panels are occupied by musicians, some of whom are angels. On the left panel, the figure in the red coat has been identified as a clergy member named Jean, possibly Jean Bohier (circa 1464-1512), while the musician deciphering a scroll might be Antoine Brumel (circa 1460-1512/1513), known for being the master of song at the cathedral Notre-Dame de Paris from 1498-1500. On the right panel, David, musician and King of Israel, occupies the place of honor.

## E. SIGHT: DIVINE LOVE

### 1. Quaterfoil: stigmatisation of Saint Francis of Assisi

Limoges or Italy, ca 1250-1260

Copper-gilt, champlevé enamels

On loan from the musée du Louvre, ML 84

Saint Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) was the founder of the order of friars minors, also called franciscans.



He is still one of the most popular figures of the Middle Ages, and is still influential today.

From 1224 on, he bore the stigmata, the physical wounds of Christ's Crucifixion. Since the middle of 13th century, Franciscan writers mention the reception of the stigmata from a seraphin, a six-winged angel who appeared to Saint Francis. This plaque is an early representation of the event, showing the deep love of Saint Francis for Jesus Christ.

## 2. Reliquary of the umbilicus of Christ: seated Virgin and Child

Pais, 1408

Silver-gilt, color glass

Purchase, 1861, Cl. 3307

Relics of Jesus Christ and of the Virgin were worshipped and highly valued during the Middle Ages, including 15th century. This statuette let the faithful see the relic, which belonged to the church of Our Lady of Vaux, in Châlons-en-Champagne. Divine love is associated with sight and relates especially to Jesus Christ.

## 3. Tapestry: Emperor Augustus and the Tiburtine Sibyl

Southern Netherlands, ca 1520

Wool and silk

Gift of Mr Lenoir, 1844, Cl. 1458

Visions are one of the types of miracles that Medieval Christians believed allowed the manifestation of the divine, such as the vision Emperor Augustus had in the presence of the Tiburtine Sibyl, announcing the birth of Jesus, son of a Virgin. That is the scene illustrated here, on a tapestry which may be modeled after the work of a Dutch painter. Sight, the sense in play here, is associated with the contemplation of the divine and spiritual love.

## OPENING: THE SIXTH SENSE: CHARITY, THE HEART AND RENOUCEMENT

### 1. Casket: Christ, Virgin and saints, with the Coat of Arms of the Canilhac family

Southern France Languedoc or Provence, mid-14<sup>th</sup> century

Copper-gilt, champlevé enamels

From Alexandre Du Sommerard collection, Cl. 979

The casket is decorated with plaques holding fifteen figures of saints, a bust of Christ on the lid, and two images of the Virgin Mary, one time in an Annunciation scene on the lid, and again enthroned with baby Jesus on the back side. This plaque of the Virgin in majesty also includes, on the right-hand side, an image of the pope Saint Clement, and on the left, the episode of the charity of Saint Martin. The saint,



still a Roman soldier, is depicted as a knight, cutting his cloak in order to give half of it to a beggar.

## **2. Medallion: Saint Jerome in the desert**

First half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century

Ivory

Wasset bequest, 1908, Cl. 15319

Saint Jerome (circa 347-420) is one of a number of saints who left society to do penitence in the desert, before moving to Bethlehem where he translated the Bible. Renouncing society was a path to sainthood which remained valorized throughout the Middle Ages.

## **3. Part of a reclining effigy of a woman**

Paris, 14<sup>th</sup> century

Marble

From Alexandre Du Somerard collection, Cl. 19300

This beautiful piece of marble was originally part of the tomb effigy of a married woman. Two dogs sit back to back in the folds of the dress of the deceased. Dogs were thought of as the emblem of marital fidelity, and often depicted at the feet of tomb effigies. Marital love was associated with charity, a love that comes from the heart and therefor is linked to the sixth sense according to Gerson's hierarchy of senses.