

Basic Detail Report



Title

Biblia Pauperum

Artist

Rivière

Date

1460-1479

Dimensions

11 × 8 1/16 in. (28 × 20.5 cm)

Medium

leather

Classifications

Books

Credit Line

Museum Purchase

Object number

1921.78

Label Text

Although the condition of these pages show the ravages of time, they are surviving examples of a typical late medieval picture book. The earliest prints in Europe were of religious subjects, usually pictures of saints, made from wood blocks. Block books were made up of pages of illustrations accompanied by a brief text (usually in Latin)-- each page made from a single wood block. These books were a simple and popular means of religious instruction, conveying Bible stories and moral lessons to guide one's spiritual conduct. The BIBLIA PAUPERUM, used by less learned masses, showed scenes from the life of Christ (center) surrounded by parallel Old Testament episodes, which taught the same moral lesson. Until recently, block books were believed to be made only before movable type was used. However, it is now known that both forms of book making continued to be printed through the end of the fifteenth century, until movable printing clearly proved to be more commercially viable.

Not On View