Jesus Christ. Crucifixion. XV cent.

45 Our Lord upon the Cross; and St. Leonard delivering a prisoner. (note. St. Leonard, the patron of prisoners, is especially venerated in Bavaria)

Two full-page miniatures upon heavy vellum, executed in Germany (Bavaria) by Johannes Bemler (1) in 1457. (2)

They are painted upon 1 sheet of vellum, folded into 2 leaves (each 11 1/2 x 16 1/2 in.), which may have been prefixed to a Matricula or Register of a confraternity of St. Leonard, in Germany.

fol. 1. The Crucifixion. Our Lord is attached to the titled Cross by 3 nails and wears the crown of thorns. The Virgin, head bowed to right, stands at his right and St. John (with upraised hand) at his left. Elaborate florested inner and outer frame, surrounded by a brown panel containing the following lines (reading from the top) Aspice mortalis fuit unquam passio/ taliis peccatum sperne pro quo mea virum carne aspice qui traf/ neis quia tu michi causa doloris ut vi/ves morior non est dilectio maior artifex Johannes Bemler 1457/ Dr. Montague James states that the same lines down to the word doloris are in the frame of a miniature at Wolfenbuttel (Cod. Aug 1, 13, no. 1029 in August, v. 2 of Von Heinemannis cat.)

Folio 2. St. Leonard, robed in a gray-black habit over a gold robe, gold ground. He stands at right and takes the hands of the foremost of 2 men who are emerging from the doorway of a prison. A chain dangles from the right ankle of the prisoner whose hands are raised in Supplication to St. Leonard.

The framework is arranged similarly to that on fol. 1. Around the outer (red) panel border is the following inscription: O Leonardus mirificus qui solus/ vincas/ solvere a fereis compeditus solve nos tuis precibus a peccato/ rum vinculis et a cunctis periculis/ ora pro fratribus tuis. Hoc deo Leonhardi pater/ misericordiae.


History: John Rigott (Burlington Fine Arts Club. 1874, cat. no 22); Bernard Quaritch cat. 1886, no. 3577; William Morris; Richard Bennett.

Note (1). These miniatures are noted as the work of Bemler in Thieme-Becker. (For further description see Morgan cat. MSS. 1905, no. 105).

Add. cards.

MSS. Illum. German. XV cent.

MSS. Illum. Bavarian. XV cent.

MSS. Illum. Artist: Bemler (1), Johannes. (1436-1504)

Jesus Christ. Crucifixion, and St. Leonard. 2 full-page illuminations signed and dated Johannes Bemler. 1457. (note) Hens or Johannes Baemler (or Bemler) of Augsburg was notable as a painter, miniaturist and printer. Examples of a large number of books printed by him are in the P.M.L.

Leonard. Saint

45 Jesus Christ. Crucifixion; and, St. Leonard

Iconography - Leonard, Saint

Provenance - All save Bennett

Printers. XV cent. - Baemler,
Two Miniatures by Johannes Beimler

Quaritch, General Catalogue, 1874, No. 48
Quaritch, Catalogue 1886, p. 3496, No. 55777
Quaritch: Catalogue of illuminated books, 359, vol.VI, 1887, No.55777

E. Aeschlimann: Dictionnaire des Miniaturistes, 1940, p. 17, (p.16 in new ed.)


William Morris and the Art of the Book,
N.Y., Pierpont Morgan Library,


No. 53, page 81.