

**Master of Ango (Rouen, active c. 1515 through 1530s)**

***Annunciation* (c. 150 x 115 mm)**

**France, likely Paris, c. 1520**

This large, finely painted miniature of an Annunciation once prefaced Matins in the Hours of the Virgin from a Book of Hours. Although the miniature is laid down on old card, the "D" for "Domine labia mea" is still visible on the verso at the first of 25 lines of Gothic script. The parent manuscript remains unidentified.

The elegant miniature was illuminated by the Master of the Ango Hours, the artist named after a manuscript, a Primer-Hours, ordered by the Ango family of Normandy to celebrate the birth of a daughter, Marie Ango, on January 31, 1515 (Paris, BnF, MS n. a. l. 392; cf. Friesen, 1993; and Delaunay, 1990). Textual evidence indicates that the artist was based in Rouen. His style shows familiarity with another painter of the School of Rouen, the Master of Girard Acarie, with whom he participated in an exceptional commission, a copy of the *Roman de la Rose* painted around 1520 for Francis I (Morgan Library and Museum, MS M. 948). Although his known manuscripts date from 1515 through the 1520s, the Ango Master was acquainted with manuscript painting in Rouen from the 1480s, and he was perhaps active even after 1530. He often used prints by Albrecht Dürer as models for his compositions, although that is not the case here.

Characteristics of his work are unmistakable in the present miniature. The broad chubby faces of the figures with their silken brown hair and large, half closed eyes are distinctive. So too is the disposition of interior space, in which the receding tiles and the backdrop define two distinct planes. The opulent Renaissance architectural frames are hallmarks of his style; here the lavish liquid gold frame includes ornamental friezes with white decoration on a blue ground, rather like Renaissance enamelwork. With its profile cameo portraits the present border finds close parallels in a profusely illustrated Book of Hours by the artist (London, Christie's, June 7, 2006, lot 51). The Ango Master is interesting: he escaped the dominant influence Noël Bellemare had on his Parisian contemporaries and, rather, offers a continuation of the style of the School of Rouen exemplified by the Master of the Échevinage de Rouen in the 1480s followed by Robert Boyvin, who died in 1510.

**Literature:** Delaunay, 1990; Friesen, 1993, pp. 148-150.