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Noël Bellemare (Antwerp-Paris, active 1512-1546)
***Job Beset by Satan* (114 x 63 mm.; min. 104 x 59 mm.)**
France, Paris or Tours, c. 1525-30

This illumination comes from an important Book of Hours, in which it introduced Matins of the Office of the Dead. A magnificent landscape and complex architecture provide the setting for the scantily clad figure of Job, who reclines before the menacing figure of Satan wielding a club. This miniature is one of a group of at least fourteen full-page miniatures, of which six were detached in the nineteenth century; the original manuscript once belonged to Baron Jérôme Pichon (for the other miniatures, see London, 1988). At least three of the extant miniatures are now in the Musée du Louvre (see Paris and Chicago, *Les Enluminures*, Cat. 8, no. 40a and b; Scaillierez, 2002).

The jewel-like painting is attributed to the artist identified as Noël Bellemare, who was the son of a Parisian mother and an Antwerp father. Beginning his career in Antwerp, Bellemare was established in Paris before 1520, and he worked in Fontainebleau for the royal court in the 1530s, when he was designated as "master painter." The only surviving documented work of the artist is the Southern Rose window of Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois. Once known under the sobriquets of the Master of the Getty Epistles or the 1520s Hours Workshop or the Doheny Master, Noël Bellemare probably worked in association with other artists, so large and diverse is the oeuvre. This has led to the classification of a "Bellemare Group" (Leproux, 2001, esp. p. 123). The "Bellemare Group" introduced Antwerp Mannerism into France.

Bellemare's distinctive style is characterized by subtle modeling, muscular figures in dynamic postures, gracefully looping drapery, vibrant color combinations, and sympathetic individualization. Breathtaking vistas of fortified bridges and towns, soaring castles and gateways appear in the backgrounds of his miniatures. The lush borders, the decoration of the text pages with knotted cords, and the compositions compare with illuminations in the Hours in Cambridge (Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 134) and the Hours of Anne of Austria (Paris, BnF, MS n. a. l. 3090), which helps establish a date between 1530 and 1535. The figure of Job in the present miniature has its exact counterpart in an illumination in a book attributed to him in Oxford in the Bodleian Library (Leproux, 2001, p. 114, fig. 123).

Literature: Bagnoli, ed., 2009; Kren, 1983, no. 25; Leproux, 1998, pp. 125-154; Leproux, 2008; Leproux, 2001; London, "An Exhibition," 1988; Orth, 1988, pp. 33-60; Scaillierez, 2002.