

Φ MM 99-25

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ORIGINAL



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Jean and Paul Limbourg. Active c1400; d place unknown, c1416. **January** (from the *Très Riches Heures*), c1413. Illumination on vellum: h24 x w15.2 cm; h9 5/8 x w6 in. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

A fine example of miniature painting, this is a page from one of the greatest manuscripts of Northern European art. Illustrating January, identified by the stellar chart with the constellations of Capricorn and Aquarius, the festive banquet depicted in the main scene includes a portrait of the Duc de Berry who commissioned the manuscript. He is wearing a large fur hat and an elaborate blue and gold robe. The paintings in this Book of Hours were executed by three brothers who joined the

Duke's court in around 1410 and who all died in the same year as their patron, before the manuscript was complete. Their work is praised for its unprecedented attention to everyday detail and for its marvellous sense of narrative. A Book of Hours was used during the Middle Ages as a prayer book for private devotion. It recorded the daily services throughout the year and this particularly sumptuous example devotes a single page to each month.

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