

LABELS

Cedar and Papyrus. Biblical Landscapes.

EXHIBITION LABELS

The Bible, an array of landscapes

1

Flemish school

Saint Anthony in a landscape

Circa 1720

Gouache on paper

Saint-Antoine-l'Abbaye, Musée de Saint-Antoine-l'Abbaye, inv. MSA.2020.001.001

This peaceful scene is set on a background in which the rocks of the hermit's Thebaid are replaced by plants. This was a characteristic way of depicting Athanasius' story when it reached the West. Clumps of trees stretch along the side of a river that fades into a distant bluish horizon, creating an almost evanescent, atmospheric perspective. This background that opens onto a more rugged environment with hills and mountains brings to mind the works of the Flemish masters Joachim Patinir and Quentin Metsys. **G.M.**

2

New Testament map "Description of Holy Land, & places mentioned by the four Evangelists"

Nicolas Des Gallars (1520?-1580?) (author), Jean Calvin (1509-1584) (pref.)

La Bible, qui est toute la sainte Esriture ascavoir, le Vieil & Nouveau Testament

Geneva, 1561

Print

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, inv. A-2407

Maps were gradually used to accompany biblical scriptures and they became a new way of illustrating the Old and New Testament. Maps of the Exodus or maps describing the Holy Land were placed at the beginning of the books they illustrated, serving as topographical descriptions. Here, we see the Holy Land unfolding between the shores of the Mediterranean, the Jordan Valley and Lake Tiberias. Emblematic places described in the Gospels - Bethlehem, Emmaus, Nazareth, Cana and Jerusalem – are indicated, as well as the topography which is sometimes rugged, depending on the region. **G.M.**

3

Pierre Giffart (1643-1723)

Map of places inhabited by the holy Desert Fathers **FAC-SIMILÉ**

Paris, 1696

Print

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, inv. GE C-10874

4

Nicolas de Fer (1646-1720)

Ancient Thebaid or the general map of places inhabited by the holy Desert Fathers

Paris, 1700

Copper engraving, on paper

Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, inv. GE DD-2987 (10501)

5

Anonymous Italian

Christ and Mary Magdalene, Noli me tangere

16th century

Oil on marble and slate

Dole, musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. 39

This elegant little oil painting combines two stories from the gospels relating the Resurrection of Christ. The three female myrrh-bearers are mentioned in the Gospel according to Saint Mark (16: 2-9), as well as the early morning sky and the tombstone. The painter has made clever use of the natural patterns on the marble to depict the open cave, at the entrance to which he has placed the angel. The dialogue between Jesus and Mary Magdalene is cited by Saint John (20: 14-18). **N.C.**

6

Pieter Stevens II (1567-1624)

The Temptation of Saint Anthony

1595-1605

Oil on wood

Grenoble, Fonds Glénat, inv. 1823

This lavish painting draws upon the repertoire of Giorgio Ghisi, i.e. *The Dream of Raphael*, and borrows many motifs from the world of Jerome Bosch. Pieter Stevens II organises the scene like a brilliantly orchestrated theatrical décor. The exuberant natural setting is full of realistic animals and hybrid humans and the high-quality naturalistic perspective must have appealed to the court of Prague who were keen on animal, mineral and plant-based curiosities. The multitude of intermingling perspectives are conducive to the development of fantastic narration, opening with a maritime perspective under the aegis of winged monsters ready to destroy people and their cities. **G.M.**

7

Johan Sadeler (1550-1600) (engraver) based on a work by Marten de Vos (1532-1603) (illustrator)

Onuphrius

16th century

Burin engraving on copper, ink on paper

Lyon, bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, inv. N16SAD008485

In the 1580s and 1590s, the Flemish painter Marten de Vos, who was a catholic, created 108 landscape compositions depicting monks and hermits. Onuphrius, with his long hair and wearing only a loincloth of leaves, is saying the rosary in a luxuriant landscape full of rocks and plants. To make the Egyptian desert more convincing, several palm trees stand out clearly in the centre of the work. **L.F.**

8

Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) (attributed to)

View of a hermitage with several monks

Circa 1538

Pen and brown ink drawing, brown wash on black chalk on paper

Paris, Louvre Museum – Graphic Arts Department, inv. 2213

This drawing, attributed with certainty to Giorgio Vasari, is a preparatory study for a fresco that no longer exists, produced by the painter from Arezzo in the monastery of Camaldoli, depicting the life of Saint Romuald. As Giorgio Vasari himself says in his autobiography in *Lives*, the scene depicts Romuald and his monks imagining what the hermitage founded in the early 11th century on the Casentino mountains would be like, with several large buildings and cells organised into tidy rows and small enclosed vegetable gardens. **L.F.**

9

Master of the Prodigal Son (active 1530-1560)

Landscape with Christ walking among the pilgrims of Emmaus

16th century

Bister and indigo brush drawing, with highlights of white gouache, on sepia paper

Paris, Louvre Museum – Graphic Arts Department, inv. 19198

The Master of the Prodigal Son, an anonymous Flemish painter, has depicted Christ walking incognito and bareheaded, with no halo or other distinctive sign, with pilgrims of Emmaus, both of whom are wearing the headwear of pilgrims or country people. The surrounding landscape is all at once vast (stretching into the distance), rugged and rather dreamlike: the ruins perched on the central rock look somewhat improbable. There appears to be no clearly marked path or route but the walkers seem to be walking peacefully, barefooted, from the edge of the forest towards the village of Emmaus. **F.B.**

10

Aegidius Sadeler (1570?-1629) (engraver) based on a work by Paul Bril (1554-1626)

(illustrator)

Mountainous landscape with hermit

16th century

Burin engraving on copper, ink on paper

Lyon, bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, inv. N16SAD008667

The series created by Aegidius Sadeler based on Paul Bril's drawings is similar to that based on the drawings of Marten de Vos. Son of landscape painter Matthijs the Elder, Bril followed in the footsteps of his father by specialising in works that focused on nature. In this engraving featuring a mountainous landscape, the hermit appears as a very small figure in the right-hand corner and can be recognised by his hooded garment and the presence of a book. **L.F.**

11

Speculum humanae salvationis

South-east France? (Provence?), circa 1470-1480

Parchment manuscript

Marseille, bibliothèque de Marseille, fonds rares et précieux, folio 33 verso - 34 recto

[presented from 12 September to 27 October]

The *Speculum* is a theological treaty, written in the early 14th century, no doubt by Ludolph of Saxony. This poem tells the story of mankind from the fall to the redemption, based on the typology doctrine that claims that there is a relationship between the two Testaments, and suggests that each event in the life of Christ is prefigured in the Old Testament. The landscape, which in itself is not particularly relevant, is reduced to a minimum. **M.J.**

11 bis

Speculum humanae salvationis

South-east France? (Provence?), circa 1470-1480

Parchment manuscript

Marseille, bibliothèque de Marseille, fonds rares et précieux, MS 89, folio 2 verso - 3 recto

[presented from 27 October to 3 December]

The *Speculum* is a theological treaty, written in the early 14th century, no doubt by Ludolph of Saxony. The landscape, which in itself is not particularly relevant, is reduced to a minimum. Only the green colouring and some tufts of grass evoke the lush greenery of nature to highlight the tree of knowledge and the snake, framed by Adam and Eve. The silhouettes encircled with black lines bring to mind the xylography technique which was then becoming widespread with the circulation of printed books and seemed to have an impact on the approach to manuscript painting. **M.J.**

12

Claude Paradin (15..-1573)

Quadrins Historiques de la Bible

Genesis I. "The Creation"

Lyon, 1555

Print

Lyon, bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, inv. 389453, folio *Genesis I. "The Creation"*

It was in Lyon, an important centre of humanism and printing, that the writer, historian and collector Claude Paradin created the *Quadrins Historiques de la Bible* which was illustrated by the painter and engraver Bernard Salomon. This pictorial history book presents a passage from the Bible on each page, written in verse and illustrated with a wood engraving. On the page devoted to the Creation, God, in all his glory, strides forwards, like the master of the universe He has just created, towards Adam who is still lying on the ground asleep, revealing the beauty of his naked body. The two characters are surrounded by a teeming "world-landscape" full of animals, similar to the landscapes of Brueghel. **M.J.**

13

Marten de Vos (1532-1603)

Penitent Saint Mary Magdalene

Rapture of Saint Mary Magdalene

16-17th century

Pen and brush drawing, ink and brown wash on paper

Paris, Louvre Museum – Graphic Arts Department, inv. 20583, recto and 20583 bis

In this brown ink drawing by Flemish painter Marten de Vos, Mary Magdalene is praying before a crucifix and large open book, in a cave carved out of a rock. The vase of ointments and long hair allow us to identify her with certainty. Behind her unfolds a vast natural landscape - not a desert but the countryside in which two country people are walking. **L.F.**

Landscapes, the key to the story

14

The Exodus

Hans Holbein (1497?-1543) (illustrator), Nicolas Bourbon (1503?-1550?) (pref.), Gilles Corrozet (1510-1568) (author?)

Icones historiarum Veteris Testamenti

1547

Print

Paris, bibliothèque nationale de France, inv. A-17893

Combining a short commentary with engravings, *Figures of the Bible*, intended for the devout, illustrates emblematic episodes from the Old Testament. Here, the Latin text is translated into French quatrains by Gilles Corrozet which detail the scene illustrated. Drawing from chapters 14 and 15 of the Book of Exodus, the engraver enthusiastically describes the chaos caused when Pharaoh's armies are engulfed while crossing the Red Sea. The sharp lines of the mountains and the rough waves visually confirm the historical topography and opens onto clouds - this is a tangible sign of the divine breathe guiding Moses and the Chosen People towards the Promised Land. **G.M.**

15

Bernard Salomon (1506-1561) (illustrator), Jean de Tournes (1539-1615) (publisher)

The Holy Bible

1557

Printed on vellum, illuminated

Paris, bibliothèque nationale de France, inv. Vélins-94, vol. 3, folio 219

Framed in arabesques, the figures engraved by Bernard Salomon reflect the dramatic intensity that prevailed in "the ruin and end of the world" described in chapter 8 of the Apocalypse according to Saint John. In a swirl of deep blue clouds, raging waters and blazing fires, the landscape is reduced to a minimum. The earth and sky merge together, absorbing human figures who are wiped out by the burning star. **G.M.**

16

Jakob II Koch (active from 1583 to 1619)

Lot and his daughters

16th century

Copper alloy

Écouen, musée national de la Renaissance –Château d'Écouen, inv. E.Cl.10147

The story of Lot is told in the Book of Genesis. He has to flee the town of Sodom to escape the divine punishment that leads to the destruction of the town that we see in the background. He takes refuge in a cave with his two daughters, who in an attempt to provide him with descendants, get him drunk so they can seduce him. The German engraver Virgil Solis engraved this scene in a collection devoted to the Old Testament. Jakob II Koch sets himself apart by placing the scene in a plant-filled environment that evokes a garden of the Middle Ages in the west rather than one of the Middle East. **G.F.**

17

Amand Durand (1831-1905) based on a work by Martin Schongauer (circa 1445-1491)

Nativity I

Circa 1900, based on an original work dating from between 1470 and 1475

Rotogravure on paper

Colmar, musée Unterlinden

When we see the finesse and richness of this engraving by Martin Schongauer, produced here by Amand Durand using the gravure printing process, we understand why Dürer considered him his master. According to a traditional motif, a gap in the ribbed vault that places the scene in a church in ruins rather than in a stable, conveys the obsolescence of the "Old Testament". In the distance, on a hill, an angel announces the birth of the Messiah to shepherds "hurrying" to the manger (Luke 2: 8-19): some have already arrived. Above, three angels of the "Heavenly Host" are singing *gloria* while unfolding a score. **N.C.**

18

The Pseudo-Monvaerni (attributed to) (15th century)

The Nativity

4th quarter of 15th century

Enamel painted on copper

Lyon, musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. L 466

This polychrome enamel is attributed to the Pseudo-Monvaerni Master. About fifty of his works produced between the end of the 15th and beginning of the 16th century are known to us. The Nativity depicted here is accompanied by the Annunciation to the Shepherds and the Angel Appearing to Gideon as cited in the Book of Judges (6: 11). In front of a pleached hedge, kneeling on a cover of quadrilobal flowers, Mary and Joseph look down at Infant Jesus, while in the background, shepherds hurry to the manger after hearing the angel's announcement. On the other side, the story of Gideon is depicted via a knight in armour and the miraculous fleece. **G.M.**

19

Tankard

16th century (tankard) / 1681 (lid)

Stoneware, metal

Lyon, musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. D 340

Three sequences unfold like balloons around the paunch of this elegant stoneware tankard. The background of one of the sequences is a waterscape set below a triple arcature topped with arabesques. In accordance with the biblical story, the young Tobiah is accompanied by an angel: "The child left home with the angel and the dog followed... The child went down to the river to wash his feet and a large fish leapt out of the water and tried to swallow his foot..." (Tb 6: 2). A town can be seen on the banks of the Tigris river. The waves rippling beneath the boats reinforce the picturesque nature of the scene which is explained in an inscription in a cartouche - TOBEAS.SON.DEM.FISS.DIE.LEFER.NAM. (the son of Tobiah took out the fish's liver). **G.M.**

20

Marten de Vos (1532-1603)

God orders Jonah to go to Nineveh

1585

Pen and brush drawing, ink and brown wash, grey wash, black chalk on paper

Paris, Louvre Museum – Graphic Arts Department, inv. 20582, recto

This delicate drawing by Marten de Vos, the famous painter from Anvers who illustrated biblical subjects, depicts the first three verses of the Book of Jonah. God commands Jonah to go to "the great city of Nineveh" to convert its people whose wickedness became known to him. In front of the prophet stretches a wide path that invites him to follow the way of God. The enormous clouds surrounding the theophany announce the storm that God will create over the sea and Jonah agreeing to being thrown overboard to prevent the ship from sinking. **N.C.**

21

Peeter Van der Borcht (1535?-1608)

Jacob is welcomed to Egypt by Joseph

16th century

Burin engraving on copper, ink on paper

Lyon, bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, inv. N16BOR000851

As a talented representative of the Flemish Renaissance, Peeter van der Borcht was one of the first to do copper engravings. This print illustrates the reunion of Jacob and his favourite son Joseph, whose jealous brothers had staged his death (Genesis 37). In fact, Joseph's qualities enabled him to become second-in command of Egypt (Genesis 41) and Pharaoh gave the land of Goshen to Joseph's tribe. The joyful and downward-sloping landscape reveals the fertility of the land while at the same time illustrating the story. **N.C.**

22

Peeter Van der Borcht (1535?-1608)

Jacob's dream or the ladder to heaven

16th century

Burin engraving on copper, ink on paper

Lyon, bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, inv. N16BOR000853

The "Jacob's ladder" motif was already popular in Paleochristian Art. While the tetragram representing God in the cloud is rather approximative, as was often the case at the time, we can admire the rendering of the morning light in the leaves and on the tree trunks in this very Flemish Mesopotamia. Peeter van der Borcht, one of the best botanical illustrators of the 16th century, remains faithful to the text. **N.C.**

23

Johan Sadeler (1550-1600) (engraver) ; Marten de Vos (1532-1603) (illustrator)

Pharaoh's daughter retrieves Moses

16th century

Burin engraving on copper, ink on paper

Lyon, bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, inv. N16SAD008595

This engraving, one of a set of thirteen in the Old Testament, illustrates a well-known passage from the Book of Exodus. According to Exodus 2: 1-19, Pharaoh's daughter sends a servant to retrieve the basket she saw floating among the reeds. But the Flemish painter Marten de Vos, influenced by Italian Mannerist painting, condenses and dramatises the story. The engraver Johan Sadeler shows great finesse in his rendering of the town and castle where the child would grow up, although they are more Flemish than Egyptian in style, as he does with the water plants in the foreground. The name Moses means the one who was saved from the water. **N.C.**

24

Anonymous, inspired by Paul Bril (1554-1626)

The Flight to Egypt

17th century

Oil on wood

Besançon, musée des Beaux-Arts et d'Archéologie, inv. 934.6.3

This painting could just as well be entitled *Herd of Goats with their shepherds near a mountain stream*. Indeed, this is a clear example of the sort of privilege accorded during the Grand Siècle to those with a passion and a talent for depicting landscapes. This unprecedented vogue led to the subject indicated in the painting's title being overshadowed, but the prestige associated with it remained. **F.B.**

25

Master of the Plump-Cheeked Madonnas (active between 1500 and 1550)

Virgin and Child with Saint Joseph and an Angel

Circa 1530

Oil on wood

Saint-Omer, musée Sandelin, inv. 245 CM

This Virgin and Child, imbued with tenderness, sitting in a lush natural setting, in many respects resembles the Gardens of Paradise of the previous century. But the Passion is even more present, for example in the blood-red cherries a serious-looking angel is handing to the Child. The fact that Joseph is present suggests that the picture, painted in the style of Gérard David, depicts more of a Rest during the Flight, especially as there is a donkey drinking from a river in the background. The accurately painted watch turrets, grove, bridge and boats in this landscape are both naturalistic and metaphorical. **N.C.**

Landscapes - a world of their own

26

Chalice pall with *The Crucifixion*

Spain, late 16th century

Silk, spun yarn and streaks of metal, trimmings on cardboard covered in cloth

Écouen, musée national de la Renaissance – Château d'Écouen, inv. E. Cl. 13225

During a religious ceremony, a pall is used to cover the chalice to protect its contents. The refinement of the pall is enhanced by the elegance of the composition adorning it which seeks to resemble a small picture, and especially by the preciousness of the technique. The variations created suggest a background of rocky escarpments, a fortified citadel and a mountainous landscape. This theatrical décor, acting as a screen for the dramatic scene of the Crucifixion depicted in the foreground, is a symbolic and fantasised evocation of Jerusalem. **M.G.**

27

After Desiderio da Settignano (1429-1464)

Saint Jerome in the Desert

Italy, 15th century

Bronze

Paris, musée des Arts Décoratifs, inv. 3656

There are two known copies of this bronze reproduced in a low-relief in marble by Desiderio da Settignano, (Washington NGA and Michael Hall collection), one of which is maybe mentioned in the Florence Palazzo Vecchio in 1553. Son of a stone mason and probably trained by Bernardo Rossellino, the sculptor demonstrates his mastery of the *schacciato* technique that produces a very low relief, developed by Donatello. Revered as the patron saint of the clergy and humanists, Saint Jerome is one of the most widely depicted saints during the Quattrocento period when the iconography of his penitence in the desert was created. **P.-G.G.**

28

Vincent Malo (circa 1585/1605-1645)

Moses leading the Israelites to the Promised Land

17th century

Oil on wood

Châlons-en-Champagne, musées de Châlons-en-Champagne, inv. 2008.2.1

Vincent Malo, a prolific pupil of Rubens, offers us a refined crossing of the Red Sea (Exodus 12-14). In this small oil painting, it is not easy to distinguish Moses with his shining horns standing near the shoreline. It depicts the crucial moment when God tells him to raise his staff and mountains of water, acting as a counterpoint to the mountains of stone, fall down on Pharaoh's chariots. In the centre, the Elders, richly attired in 17th century costume, await Joseph, whose bones Moses has brought with him, to be buried in Sichem. **N.C.**

29

Léonard Limosin (1505?-1575?)

Genesis: the Creation of Adam and the Fall of Adam and Eve

Limoges, 2nd third of the 16th century

Enamel painted on copper with gold highlights

Limoges, musée des Beaux-Arts de Limoges – Palais de l'Évêché, purchased by the Limousin Archaeology and History Society in 1858, inv. 168 a-b

Limoges' most famous enameller, one of the major Renaissance artists, has given this biblical subject a very profane appeal. These two scenes illustrate the moment God breathed life into man and the moment a snake with the bust of a woman tempted the couple. Indeed we see a charming hilly paradise with exotic animals (an elephant, a lion, a camel) and lush flora (a rather strange palm tree...). Its sharp shades reflect the French court's taste for Mannerism as practised by Rosso and Primaticcio. **A.-C.D.**

30

Pierre Courteys school (15.-1591)

Adam and Eve expelled from the Garden of Eden

4th quarter of the 16th century

Enamel painted on copper

Écouen, musée national de la Renaissance – Château d'Écouen, inv. E.Cl.10959

Adapting a horizontal composition by Étienne Delaune drawn from the *Genesis series* (circa 1560-1570) to the vertical format of his plate, the enameller compresses the scene of Adam and Eve being expelled from the Garden of Eden (Genesis, 3, 23). The landscape plays an important role here - the row of trees on the right materialises the frontier between the two worlds, the lush palm trees of Eden contrasting with a vast plain dotted with a few dried trunks on the left. This contrast evokes the two characters' fall from grace, making them face their new state of mortality. **A.G.**

31

Claude Paradin (15..-1573)

Quadrins historiques de la Bible

Genesis 21. "Hagar and the angel"

Lyon, 1553

Print

Lyon, bibliothèque municipale de Lyon, inv. 377665, folio *Genesis 21. "Hagar and the angel"*

The text is incorporated into the image to such an extent that it is unclear as to whether the image illustrates the text or whether the text is a caption for the image. The purpose of these illustrated *Quatrains* is not to present the Word of God but to present something of historical interest that is pleasing to the eye. **M.J.**

32

Amand Durand (1831-1905) based on a work by Martin Schongauer (circa 1445-1491)

Saint John in Patmos

Circa 1900, based on an original work dating from between 1485 and 1491

Rotogravure on paper

Colmar, musée Unterlinden, page 156

John was often likened to the fourth Evangelist and ascribed the eagle of the tetramorph. A legend has it that the bird spread out its wings to serve as a pulpit for him. He is in the process of writing chapter 12 in which there is "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars". Maybe the frail and crooked tree, which is turning green, is an image of the seven emerging Churches in which John is instructed to awaken faith? **N.C.**

33

Jean Duvet (1485?-1570?)

The Book of Revelation depicted

"The angel with the key to the abyss"

Lyon, 1561

Print (collection of prints)

Grenoble, bibliothèque municipale de Grenoble, inv. B.595 Res., Chap. 20 The angel with the key to the abyss

The Book of Revelation, written in the 1st century AD by John exiled in Patmos, borrows many prophecies from the Book of Daniel. The iconic register, like the original text, hinges on numerous cosmic numbers that preside over the spiritual struggle between Good and Evil. Here, the chaotic vision is heightened by the density of the engraving that gives the action all its power through the heavy draping and dynamism of the figures. In the background, an apparently calm lakeside town enlivened by just a few swans contrasts with the mineral world of grottos and rocks in the foreground. A high fortress prefigures New Jerusalem, the holy city described in chapter XXI. **G.M.**

34

Gourd

Manna and hailstones

16th century

Tin-glazed earthenware with underglaze decoration

Lyon, musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. L 671

Each side of the paunch of this delicate gourd displays two episodes from the Book of Wisdom of Solomon - the hailstones and the manna - presented as the fourth antithesis. Highlighting the punishment then the mercy of God, the composition aims to narrate and faithfully illustrate the story - the hailstones show the characters and animals being hit by divine wrath, echoing the seven plagues of Egypt. *In contrast*, the manna presents the faithful people in a camp, during the Exodus, receiving blessings "sent down from heaven - ready-prepared manna, that tasted delicious and was to everyone's taste" (Wisdom of Solomon 16:20). **G.M.**

35

Master I. C. (called Jean Court) (before 1555-after 1585)

Saint Genevieve

17th century

Enamel painted on copper

Lyon, musée des Beaux-Arts, inv. H 465

Stamped with the IC monogram, this large plaque enamelled in shades of deep blue could be attributed to the workshop of Jean Court, a Master Limoges Enameller, active up until the early decades of the 17th century. The figure of the slender, richly-dressed saint stands out against a landscape of greenery on which she treads barefoot, evoking the pastoral scenes that were popular in the 16th century. Some trees growing near a village make for a wooded perspective. We see mountains on the horizon under a star-studded sky. **G.M.**

36

National Museums Casting workshop

The four trees and four rivers of Paradise (capital at the Abbaye de Cluny)

1929

Plaster with patina

Paris, cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine – musée des Monuments français, inv. MOU. 06794

This capital depicting Paradise is one of a series of eight recovered when the Abbey was demolished and a very realistic reproduction was placed in the ambulatory of the choir of Cluny Abbey III. It represents two symbolic and complementary aspects of Paradise: four trees (one on each side) recognisable because of their fruits – a vine, an apple tree, a fig tree and probably an almond tree. On the corners are four rivers in the form of four small naked crowned figures, evoking ancient allegories, holding a recipient from which water flows. The rich vegetation and water, which is a source of life, suggest the fertility of the earlier Paradise, i.e. the lost Paradise, yet give a glimpse of the promised Paradise. **M.J.**

Landscape as a source of inspiration

Valérie Delarue (born in 1965)

Olive Garden

2016

Glazed sandstone

Le Mans, musée de Tessé, inv. 2018.4.1

Valérie Delarue, originally from Le Mans, is a ceramist who is unanimously acknowledged for the power of her work that borders upon sculpture, painting and performance, and who has a strong desire to imprint her body onto clay and leave her stamp there. With this recent piece of work, the artist revives the bas-relief landscape theme, inspired by the *Agony in the Garden*, the famous painting by Andrea Mantegna (1430/1431 - 1506) conserved in the Musée des Beaux-arts de Tours. This mineral landscape into which mysterious grottos are carved is partially coated in a blue glaze. It evokes an unfinished and fascinating primordial world. **C.H.**