

The Medieval Magazine

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Medieval Manuscripts

Byzantine Mosaic Map
Uncovered



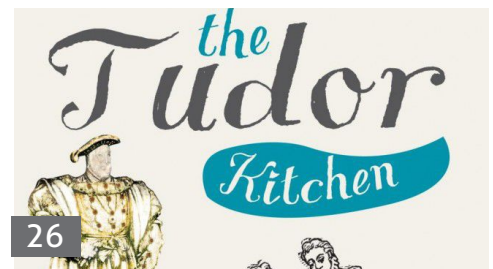
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Interview with Erik
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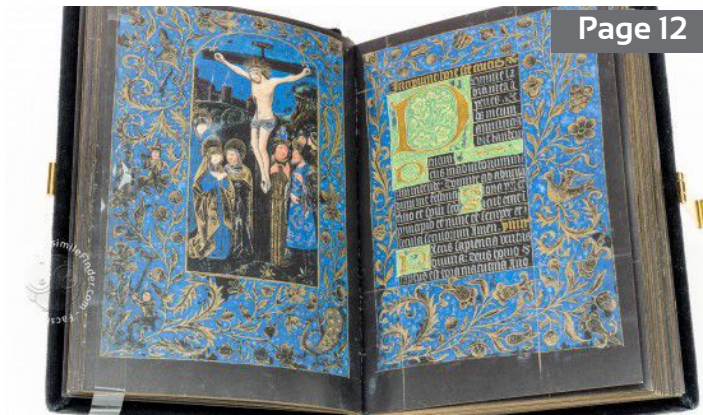
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Medieval Manuscripts in Living Colour

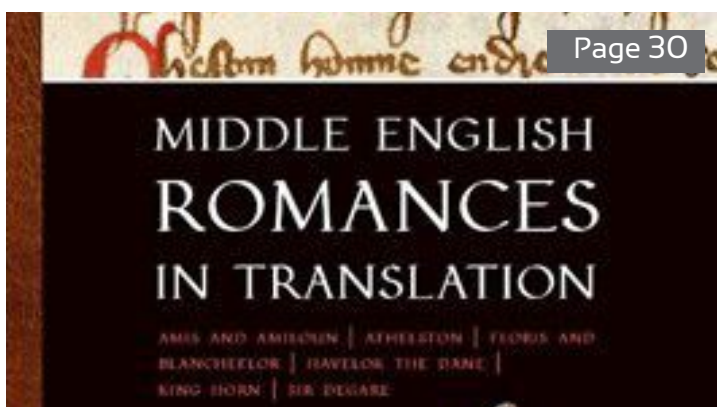
How did medieval people get such magnificent colour, and how can it still be so brilliant a thousand years later?



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Medieval News

The Broughton Missal purchased by Lambeth Palace Library

The Broughton Missal, an extremely rare medieval manuscript containing the text and music needed for church services, has been purchased for Lambeth Palace Library.



The Broughton Missal - photo courtesy National Heritage Memorial Fund

A grant of £15,000 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) along with grants from the Art Fund, the Friends of the National Libraries, the B.H. Breslauer Foundation and the Friends of Lambeth Palace Library, has helped to purchase the beautifully illuminated early 15th century manuscript. It will now be available for study and appreciation by the public and historians for the first time.

The Broughton Missal is a rare surviving manuscript of the text and music for Roman Catholic church services, according to the Use of York, with adaptations reflecting the practice and interpretations which developed at York Minster during the Middle Ages. Prior to the Reformation, most parish churches in northern England would have owned at least one York Use missal, but now only 12 examples are known to survive

anywhere in the world and several of these are incomplete.

The Broughton Missal is the last known example still to be in private hands and is the first to be acquired by a British institution since 1932. Its penwork and decoration is English and of high quality, with large illuminated initials in gold, blue and red, elaborate borders and extensive penwork flourishing. The volume is still in its original late medieval binding.

Each one of these manuscripts is different, ranging in date from the 13th to the 15th century, and each has its own story to tell, offering new insights into the way in which medieval church services were conducted and how they were experienced by the congregation. The Broughton Missal, for example, gives detailed information about the colours to be worn by the different ranks of clergy participating in the mass.

The Broughton Missal was in use in the parish

church of All Hallows, Broughton (three miles north of Preston, Lancashire), for at least 150 years, spanning the English Reformation. The various notes and alterations written on the text, including replacing mentions of the Pope with references to the King, provide an important witness to the religious and cultural life of a parish in the north-west of England during that period of upheaval.

Giles Mandelbrote, Librarian and Archivist of Lambeth Palace Library, said: "This is a major acquisition for Lambeth Palace Library, filling a significant gap in our holdings as the principal library and archive for the national history of the Church of England. We are delighted to have acquired this important manuscript, which will be of great interest to historians, who have never had a proper opportunity to study it. It is also a beautiful and evocative object, which we look forward to making available to a wider public, through the library's website and in future exhibitions."

Global Middle Ages Project launches website

Online users can now travel back in time to the medieval world by clicking through a collection of international research on the first digital platform of its kind from The University of Texas at Austin.

The web portal is from the Global Middle Ages Project, founded in 2007 by Geraldine Heng, an associate professor of English and comparative literature at UT Austin; and Susan Noakes, a French and Italian professor at the University of Minnesota.

The portal features six digital projects, including one that examines the story of Prester John, a virtual tour of the Spanish city of Plasencia, and "The North American Middle Ages: Big History from the Mississippi Valley

to Mexico". More are being developed during the next year, such as "Global Ivory," a collection of descriptions and histories of 12 ivory objects from around the world; and "Mapping the Mongol World: Cities."

Heng commented about the new site, "It's fully multidisciplinary and serves academic communities in several disciplines, as well as the public."

It was officially launched last week and can be found at globalmiddleages.org.

Byzantine-era mosaic map restored in Israel

Although the Byzantine-era church that existed about 1500 years ago in southern Israel no longer exists, its mosaic floor has now been restored and shows a map revealing a scene of streets and buildings from an Egyptian town.



Photo by Nikki Davidov, courtesy of the Israel Antiquities Authority

The Israel Antiquities Authority announced last week that the mosaic, which measures about 3.5 metres by 3.5 metres, was found about two years ago in the town of Qiryat Gat. After undergoing restoration, the mosaic has been restored and is now on public display.

Sa'ar Ganor and Dr. Rina Avner, archaeologists working for the Israel Antiquities Authority, said in a statement, "The appearance of buildings on mosaic floors is a rare phenomenon in Israel. The buildings are arranged along a main colonnaded street of a city, in a sort of ancient map. A Greek inscription preserved alongside one of the buildings exposed in the mosaic indicates that the place which is depicted is the settlement Chortaso, in Egypt. According to Christian tradition, the prophet Habakkuk was buried in Chortaso. The appearance of this Egyptian city on the floor of the public

building in Qiryat Gat might allude to the origin of the church's congregation".

The mosaic pavement was part of the floor of a church that did not survive. Two sections of the mosaic were preserved; animals such as a rooster, deer and birds and a special goblet with red fruits are portrayed on one part of the pavement. According to Ganor, "The artist utilized tesserae of seventeen different colors in preparing the mosaic. The investment in the raw materials and their quality are the best ever discovered in Israel".

A Nile River landscape in Egypt consisting of a boat with a rolled-up sail, streets and buildings is depicted on the second section. The buildings are portrayed in detail and in three dimensions, and they have two–three stories, balconies and galleries, roofs, roof tiles and windows.

Beautiful 15th century sculpture now on display at the Getty Museum

The Getty Museum is now showing its latest acquisition – a rare medieval alabaster sculpture of *Saint Philip* by the Master of the Rimini Altarpiece.



Saint Philip by the Master of the Rimini Altarpiece – photo courtesy The Getty Museum

In medieval times, fine carvings in alabaster were amongst the most prized and sought after works of art. A soft stone that can be carved in the finest detail, alabaster was often used for small figures such as the statuette of Saint Philip that the Getty Museum has just acquired from a private collector.

The statuette, dating from about 1420–1430, represents the apostle Saint Philip holding a cross, a reference to his death by crucifixion. Although some areas of the figure were once painted in multiple colors—traces of pigment are still visible on his lips and eyes—it is likely that the sculpture was left mostly unpainted to highlight the lively surface of the polished alabaster, with its attractive veining.

Saint Philip was carved by the Master of the Rimini Altarpiece, the most influential alabaster sculptor of the South Netherlands in the early 1400s. This artist takes his name from his most famous work, an alabaster altarpiece that once adorned the Church of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Covignano, just outside the Italian city of Rimini, and that is now conserved in the Liebieghaus in Frankfurt, Germany.

This statuette of Saint Philip was probably once part of a group of all twelve apostles made to decorate a now-lost altarpiece in a church or private palace. Such altarpieces had small niches to house statuettes of saints and apostles, surrounding a bigger niche reserved for a group depicting the Crucifixion or the Virgin with the dead Christ. Many such altars were dismantled and their pieces scattered across Europe during the Reformation of the sixteenth century.

Among the alabasters attributed to the Master of Rimini, Saint Philip stands out for its exceptional quality and preservation. The drapery folds, beard, teeth, and wrinkles around the eyes are carved with great finesse. Working on a very small scale, the artist succeeds at conveying the saint's religious devotion through a remarkably vivid facial

expression.

The Getty Museums's collection of medieval sculpture and applied has been steadily growing in recent years. In 2003 a major collection of Medieval and Renaissance stained glass was acquired, and in 2010 much of this collection was permanently installed in the newly interpreted North Pavilion galleries, where Saint Philip is now on view.

This collection is complemented by the 2007 acquisition of the *Christ in Majesty*, a major 12th-century Limoges enamel, created for an altar frontal in Ourense Cathedral in Northern Spain. And in 2011, acquired the partially polychromed statue of *Saint John the Baptist* by the Master of the Harburger Altar, about 1515, adding to the collection a superb example of virtuoso carving, here in limewood, dating from the moment of transition between High Gothic and Renaissance sculpture in Germany.

In alabaster, the Getty has the five reliefs of *Marine Scenes*, about 1640, by Gerard van Opstal, Bust of a Man attributed to Conrat Meit about 1515-1520, and the bust of *The Vexed Man*, 1771-83, by Franz Xaver Messerschmidt.

This masterpiece of late-Gothic sculpture is on view now in the Getty Museum's North Pavilion, Gallery N103, at the Getty Center.

To learn more, please visit [The Getty website](#)

Priests found spiritual satisfaction by serving nuns, medieval historian says

By Kathryn Dickason

A study of medieval texts and imagery by Stanford history Professor Fiona Griffiths counters commonly held beliefs about misogynistic practices in medieval Europe. Griffiths' research reveals how some male clergy acknowledged and celebrated the perceived religious superiority of nuns.

The culture of medieval chivalry conjures tales of valiant knights vowing to honor and protect fair damsels. Yet outside the realm of romance, men regarded women as their inferiors – or so we thought.

According to Griffiths, "We've tended to assume that men held power in medieval Europe and that they actively excluded women from any share of it – especially within the church."

Challenging this claim, Griffiths uncovers how some clergy recognized women's spiritual power, to which they were often very much attracted. The collaborative relationships between religious men and women, Griffiths explains, challenge our preconceptions about the Church's misogyny. "Some priests spent their lives serving women, and developed lasting relationships with nuns, whom they admired as their spiritual superiors – even as conduits to the divine," she explains.

In her forthcoming book, *Nuns' Priests' Tales:*

Gender, Authority, and Apologetics in the Medieval Monastery, c. 400-1200, Griffiths, a professor of medieval Western Europe at Stanford, examines monastic life, theological texts and religious images to reveal "a broader dialogue about women's spiritual potential."

Griffiths emphasizes the opportunities, rather than restrictions, that the Church afforded medieval women. In her view, "some male clergy admired religious women, and felt that they could benefit spiritually through service to them, whether through women's prayers (which some felt were superior to men's prayers) or through the heavenly rewards that men believed would be given to them as servants of Christ's 'brides.'"

Focusing especially on the 11th and 12th centuries, Griffiths traces how the Church reform movement at that time affected relationships between religious men and women. The reform movement required members of the clergy to remain celibate and to restrict their involvement with women, including communities of nuns.

While traditional medieval scholarship has emphasized the presumed segregation of the sexes, Griffiths believes that this tendency has "lost sight of productive relationships" between religious men and women.



A female scribe and male artist present their book to the Virgin Mary in this medieval manuscript, called the Guta-Sintram Codex (c. 1154). The Codex supports Fiona Griffiths' finding that men and women collaborated during this period of history. Photo by Claude Truong-Ngoc / Wikimedia Commons

tendency has "lost sight of productive relationships" between religious men and women.

Indeed, another effect of Church reform was the dramatic expansion of female monasticism. In other words, many women embraced a religious lifestyle that involved practicing their faith in nunneries. These cloistered women, Griffiths notes, required a male presence. In the Middle Ages, as in Catholicism today, nuns relied on priests because only male clergy could perform the Communion rite and hear their confessions. Although traditional medieval texts praise celibate men and saintly women, Griffiths said, "the one figure who seems to have been particularly unworthy of contemporary acclaim is the nun's priest."

However, as Griffiths found, "monastic men

who took this role as nun's priest conceived of their position as having spiritual merit, largely by positioning themselves as women's inferiors, which they did by characterizing nuns as the brides of Christ." "I don't mean to pretend that the medieval world was one of equality," she said, "but I believe that for religious women in the Church there were certain things that we would think of as being very surprising."

Spiritual superiors

"When I tell people that I'm working on nuns' priests, they typically assume that I'm studying scandal," Griffiths said. The dubious nature of the relationship between nuns and priests typically recalls the Canterbury Tales, which includes a sexually charged story about a cock in a hen house.

Instead, Griffiths' study showcases the overall harmonious nature of their relations. "In many cases, priests and nuns lived in very close circumstances." In fact, certain priests and monks even lived in the women's monasteries. For Griffiths, this proximity between devoted men and women nourished friendships that were both spiritual and intellectual.

One of the key male figures in Griffiths' study is Peter Abelard (d. 1142), a French monk and prominent theologian who wrote for and about women more than any other man in the 12th century. As Griffiths observed, "Abelard says very clearly that women's prayers are more powerful because women are married to Christ."

Given Abelard's relationship with Heloise, his former wife-turned-nun, most scholars have doubted the sincerity and the impact of his ideas about women. However Griffiths' research demonstrates that Abelard was one among several theologians who promoted women's spirituality, even "addressing women as their spiritual superiors."

Dignity of women

Moreover, a medieval manuscript recently acquired by Stanford University Libraries gives credence to Griffiths' claims. Though of later date (c. 1450), the manuscript includes a short text arguing for the dignity of women, echoing ideas that Abelard, too, expressed. Uncovering an increasing amount of documentary support, "it became clear that those ideas had currency in the twelfth century," Griffiths explained.

One of Griffiths' key sources is a manuscript known as the Guta-Sintram Codex (c. 1154), which is named after the female scribe and male artist who co-produced it. In one image, Guta and Sintram present their book to the Virgin Mary. In the text opposite the image, Griffiths identified Abelard's writings on women's spirituality. This artifact testifies to

an actual collaboration between a man and a woman.

"On one of the pages it looks as though their hands alternate," Griffiths said. "They were working together in the same room."

For Griffiths, this manuscript "blows open modern assumptions concerning the separation of the sexes in medieval religious life and men's resistance to women. It suggests very strongly that there was a valorization of religious figures who engaged with women.

"Looking at what women themselves said and did, it became clear to me that this was not an entirely oppressive, misogynistic period," she concludes.

[Click here to see Fiona Griffith's webpage at the University of Stanford](#)

Top 10 Most Beautiful Medieval Manuscripts

How does one judge what is a beautiful medieval manuscript? In our case we turn to an expert: Giovanni Scorcioni, co-founder of **Facsimile Finder**, the leading provider of facsimile editions of medieval manuscripts and books.

Based out of Italy, Giovanni has spent almost a decade looking through hundreds of medieval works in facsimile, and here is the list of his favourite manuscripts chosen from the most beautiful that were made in the Middle Ages.

All images courtesy [FacsimileFinder.com](https://www.facsimilefinder.com)

1) Lindisfarne Gospels (Cotton MS Nero D IV › British Library)



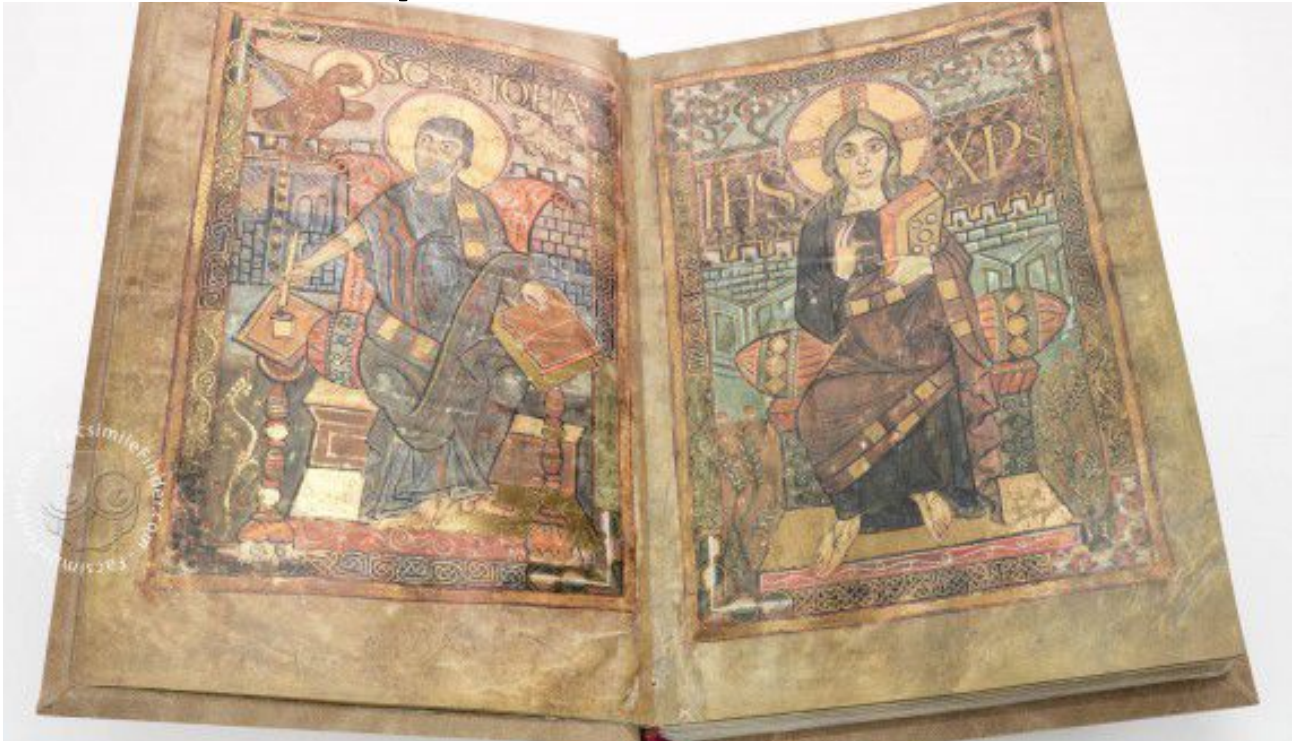
The Lindisfarne Gospels doesn't need many words of introduction: it's one of the finest works in the unique style of Hiberno-Saxon or Insular art, combining Mediterranean, Anglo-Saxon and Celtic elements.

2) Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux (Acc., No. 54.1.2 › Metropolitan Museum of Art)



All miniatures are in demi-grisaille, a painting technique using mainly shades of grey and coloring for the figures' face and hands. The surprising amount of details that can be fit in such small space is outstanding.

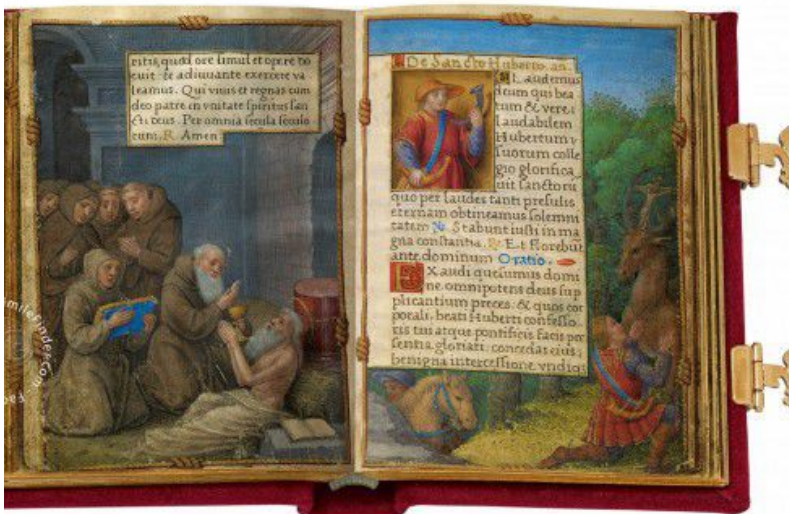
3) Godescalc Evangelistary (Ms. Nouv. acq. lat. 1203 › Bibliothèque Nationale de France)



Why is this manuscript so important? In the words of Godescalc himself:

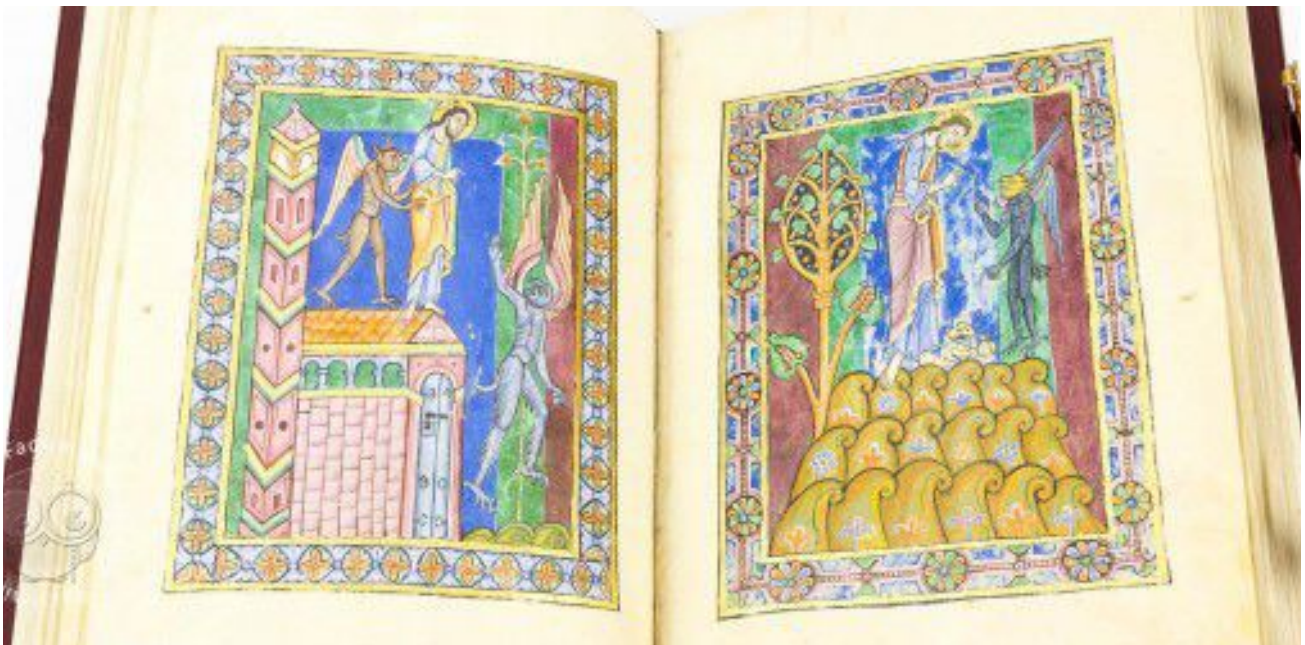
*Golden words are painted [here] on purple pages,
The Thunderer's shining kingdoms of the starry heavens,
Revealed in rose-red blood, disclose the joys of heaven,
And the eloquence of God glittering with fitting brilliance
Promises the splendid rewards of martyrdom to be gained.*

4) Prayerbook of Claude de France (MS M. 1166 › Morgan Library & Museum)



In the words of Roger Wieck, curator of manuscripts at the Morgan Library: "An artistic triumph..." The personalized prayer book of the French queen Claude de France enchants us especially by its delicate paintings in a charmingly small format of 69 x 49 mm, and even more so by the unusual wealth of illustration it contains.

5) St. Alban's Psalter (MS St. God. 1 › Dombibliothek Hildesheim; Inv. No. M694 ›



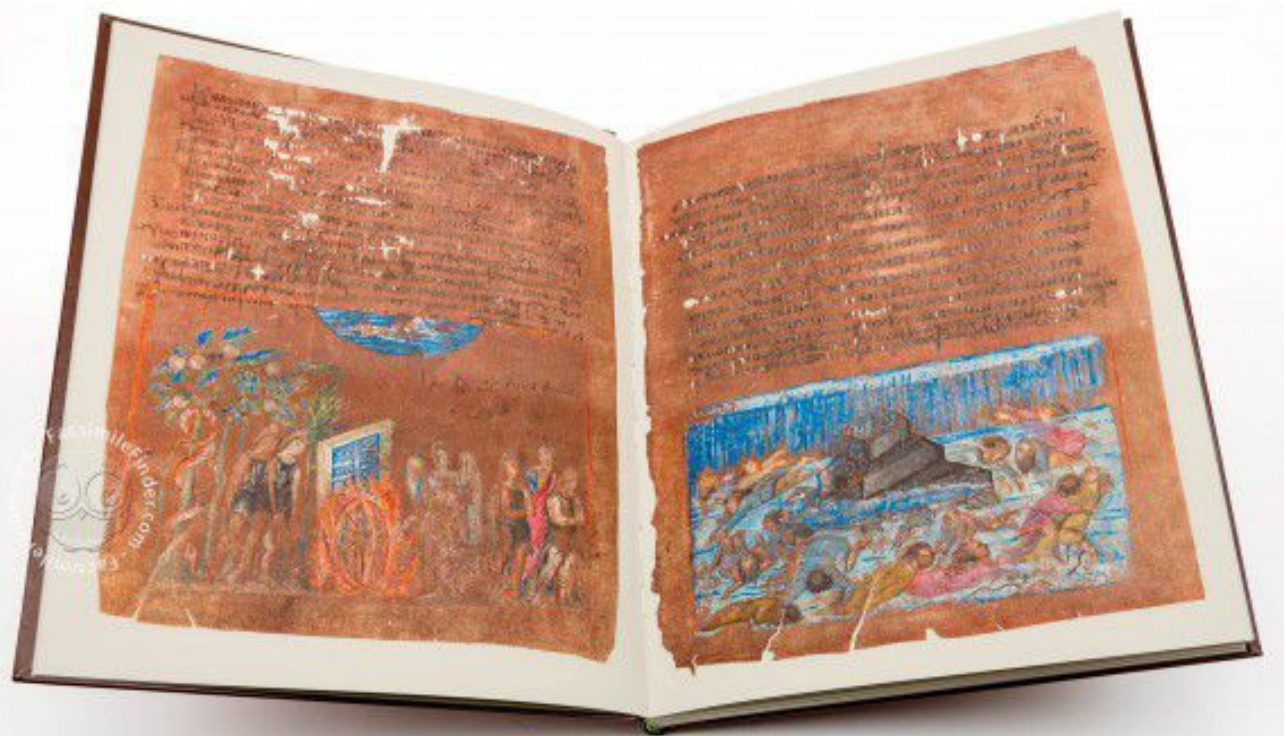
The lavish miniatures and painted initials form such an expressive and lively colored decoration that one can imagine them moving to the rhythm of music: a fantastic picture gallery from the heyday of English book illumination.

6) Westminster Abbey Bestiary (Ms. 22 › Westminster Abbey Library) Schnütgen Museum



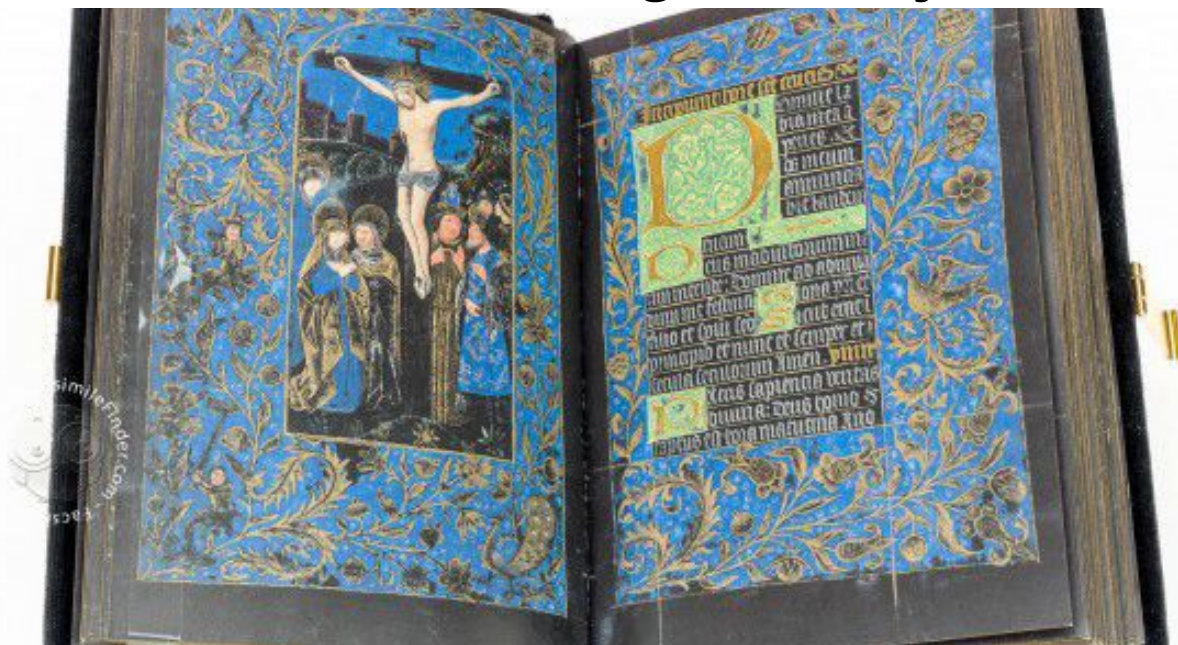
Out of all the Bestiaries, the Westminster is considered to be one of the most beautiful and richly decorated bestiaries in the world, and is full of all kinds of incredible descriptions, legends and myths.

7) Vienna Genesis (Codex Theol. Gr. 31 › Österreichische Nationalbibliothek)



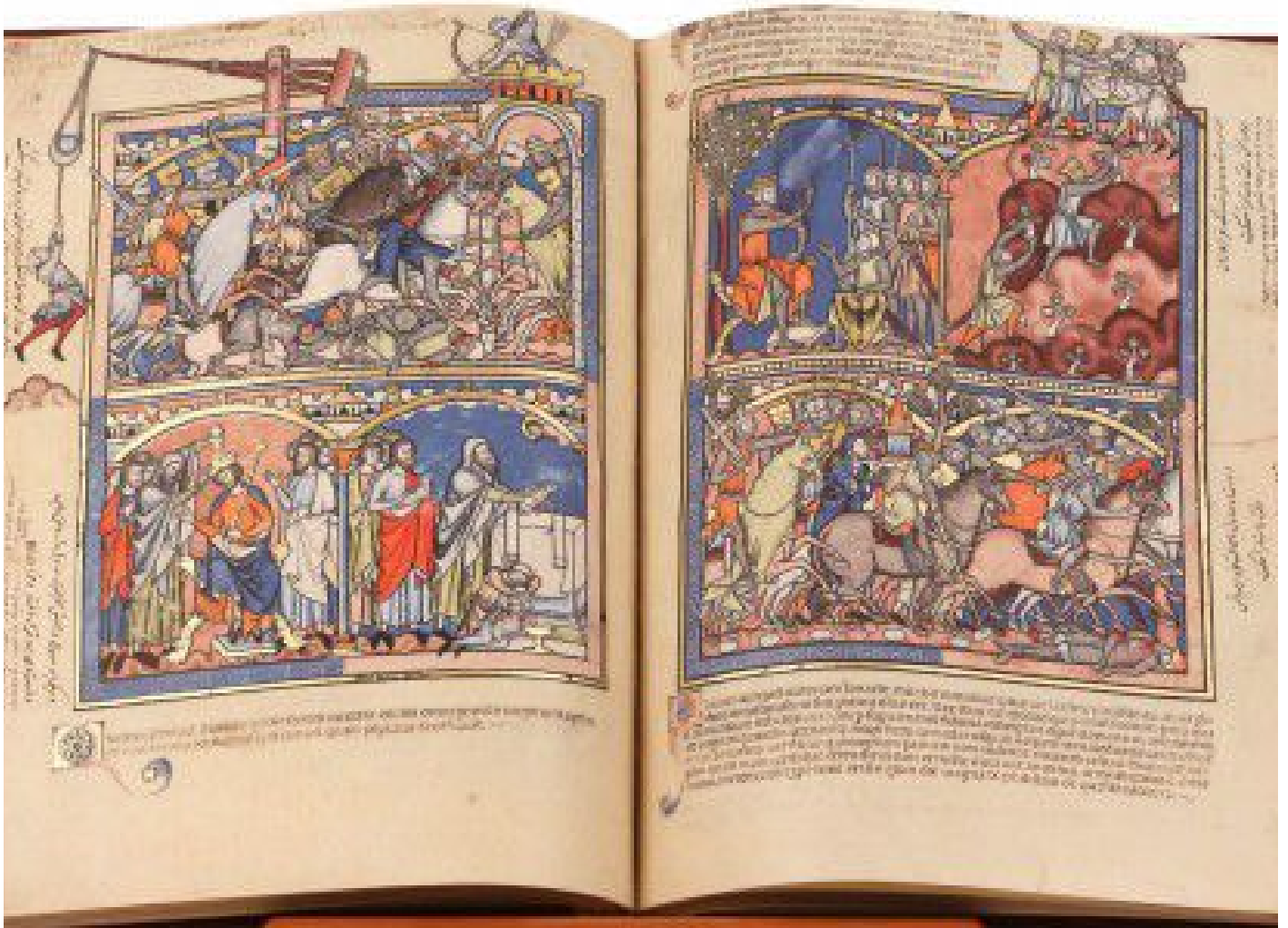
It is the most ancient purple manuscript surviving today. The fragment of the Genesis (from the Greek Septuagint translation) is compiled in golden and silver ink, on a beautifully purple-dyed calfskin vellum. Each page contains a lavish miniature depicting the text, for a total of 48 well-preserved images.

8) Black Hours (M. 493 › Morgan Library & Museum)



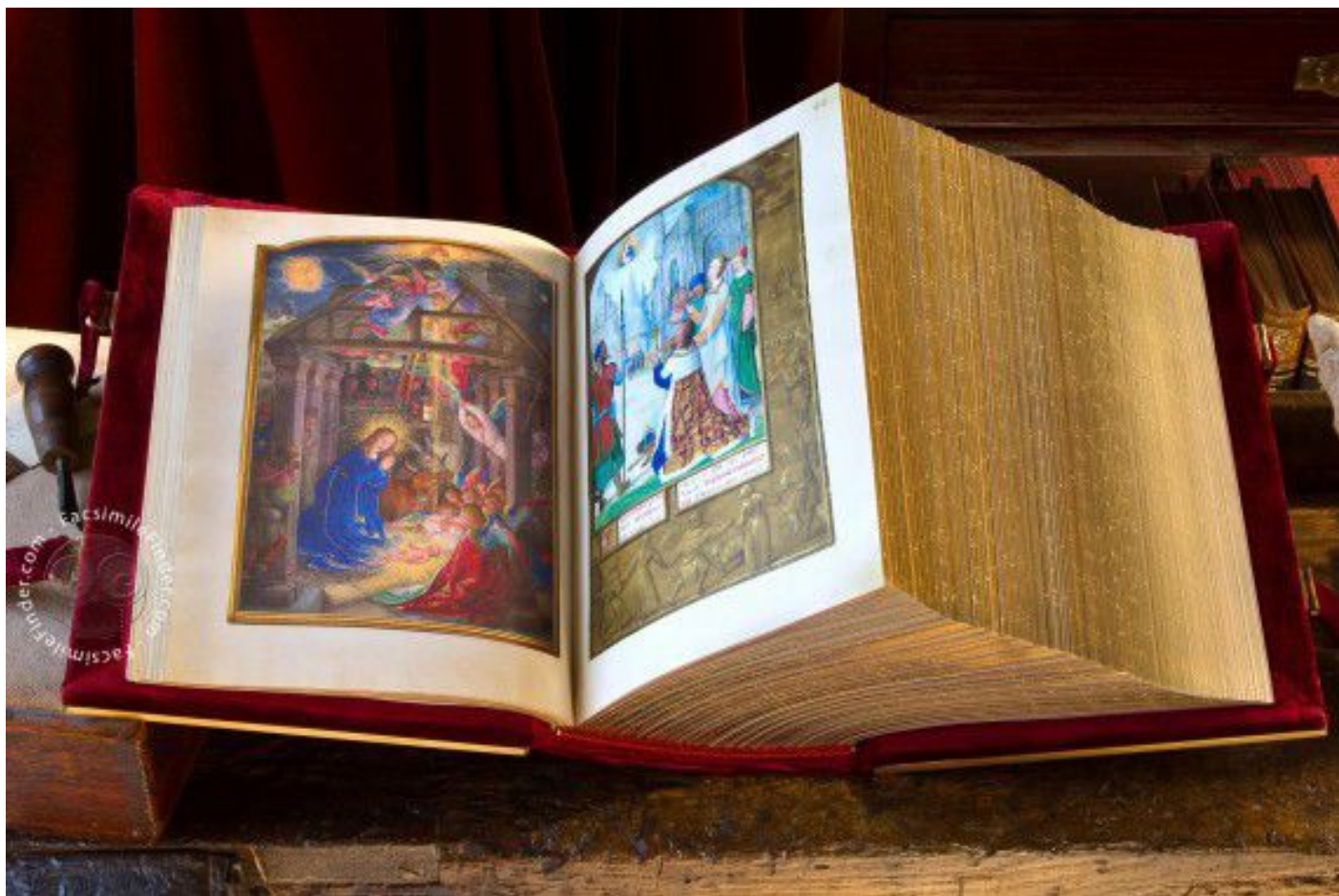
The Black Hours is a product of unequalled luxury. All 121 vellum folios are stained in black. To make the writing stand out against the dark background, only white lead and opaque paints were used for the miniatures, and gold and silver ink for the script. Only three of these black parchment manuscripts survive to this day.

9) Morgan Crusader Bible (Ms M.638 › Morgan Library & Museum; Ms Nouv. Acq. Lat. 2294 › Bibliothèque Nationale de France; Ms Ludwig 16 83. M.A. 55 › Getty Museum)



In this manuscript history is depicted in great detail, without any text and recalls the Creation of the world, the Righteous Wars and the deeds of the most important characters of the Old Testament. The Crusader's Bible fascinates through its rich and refined gold embellishment which comes to enhance the luminosity of the colors.

10) Grimani Breviary (Ms. Lat. I, 99=2138 › Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana)



A monumental witness to the splendor of Flemish art produced during the Renaissance. Perhaps an outstanding features of this manuscript is the choice of motifs, which alternate between religious and lay themes.

Our thanks to Giovanni for sharing his list of the most beautiful medieval manuscripts made in facsimile with us.

It's worth mentioning that Giovanni has just disclosed to us that FacsimileFinder.com has recently undergone a complete renovation and the new website will be published next week, just in time for the Frankfurt Book Fair!

Click here to visit FacsimileFinder.com

Medieval Manuscripts in Living Colour

By Danièle Cybulskie

Not every medieval manuscript involves colour, but the ones that do are unforgettable. A quick glance at The Lindisfarne Gospels or The Book of Kells is only enough to whet the appetite. But how did medieval people get such magnificent colour, and how can it still be so brilliant a thousand years later? Here's a five-minute look at colouring manuscripts.

As I mentioned in a **previous post about scribes**, illumination was the last part of creating a manuscript before gathering and binding. This was to prevent the many mishaps that could occur to a painstakingly-crafted painting, from spilled ink, to flaking off the gold leaf, to cats wandering around over the drying pages. Some existing manuscripts have sketches for illumination that was never carried out, suggesting that the illumination was also a very expensive part of manuscript creation – in these cases, it's likely that the money ran out before the illumination could be completed. The expense of illumination also explains why the most lavishly illustrated manuscripts were often presented as gifts to royalty, the aristocracy, and the church.

Part of the reason why illuminated manuscripts were expensive and treasured was the time put into drawing and painting. Looking at some manuscripts, you can see that the same section has been painted in with many careful brush strokes to give the picture a deep colour. Chances are, the

painter didn't paint a whole bunch of colours at one time (risking muddying the edges), which meant drying time between layers and between colours. Celtic artists also challenged themselves by creating elaborate knotwork, which would have taken precision and time to paint well. This was not a quick process.

The other reason illumination was costly was that creating paint in different colours required the painter to acquire many different ingredients, some of them rare. A good base for paint was eggs, since they mix well, stick well, and have a consistency that is not too runny. (You can check out **a video on egg tempera here.**) Red is the most common colour in medieval manuscripts, used for painting as well as inking important information like saints' days, and it was fairly easy to find ingredients to make it. In *Medieval Craftsmen: Scribes and Illuminators*, Christopher de Hamell lists some potential red ingredients as cinnabar, vermillion, Brazilwood, Madder, and dragonsblood (p.62). Blue involved azurite or the very



Book of Kells, Folio 32v, Christ Enthroned.

expensive and rare lapis lazuli (p.62); green could be malachite (p.62) or plant-based; yellow could come from saffron (in the same way that food was coloured yellow with saffron); and of course colours could be mixed with each other to create new colours. Every one of these ingredients involved some processing, from grinding minerals to steeping plants in hot water, adding to the painter's time and effort.

Depending on what the illuminator was creating, a quill pen could suit, since it can get a nice flow of ink very unlike today's ballpoint pens. Otherwise, a brush was used. De Hamel suggests that in some manuscript pictures featuring illuminators working we might actually mistake a brush for a pen, since both brushes and pens used quills – brush bristles were inserted inside the hollow centre of the quill (p.62). Painters could use horsehair, as we sometimes do today, but it's more likely that fine work would be done with brushes made from softer fur, like ermine and squirrel (de Hamel, p.62).

The most spectacular part of many illuminated manuscripts is gold ornamentation. As with paint, glue could be made out of eggs, and the gold leaf brushed on extremely carefully. (De Hamel's book has a great section on how to apply gold leaf.)

Using gold leaf was a task for those with steady hands and steady nerves, since it was not only expensive, but also necessarily thin. A good sneeze could ruin a lot of hard work. After the gold was applied, it was burnished in order to shine brightly for readers, and much of it still shines brightly today.

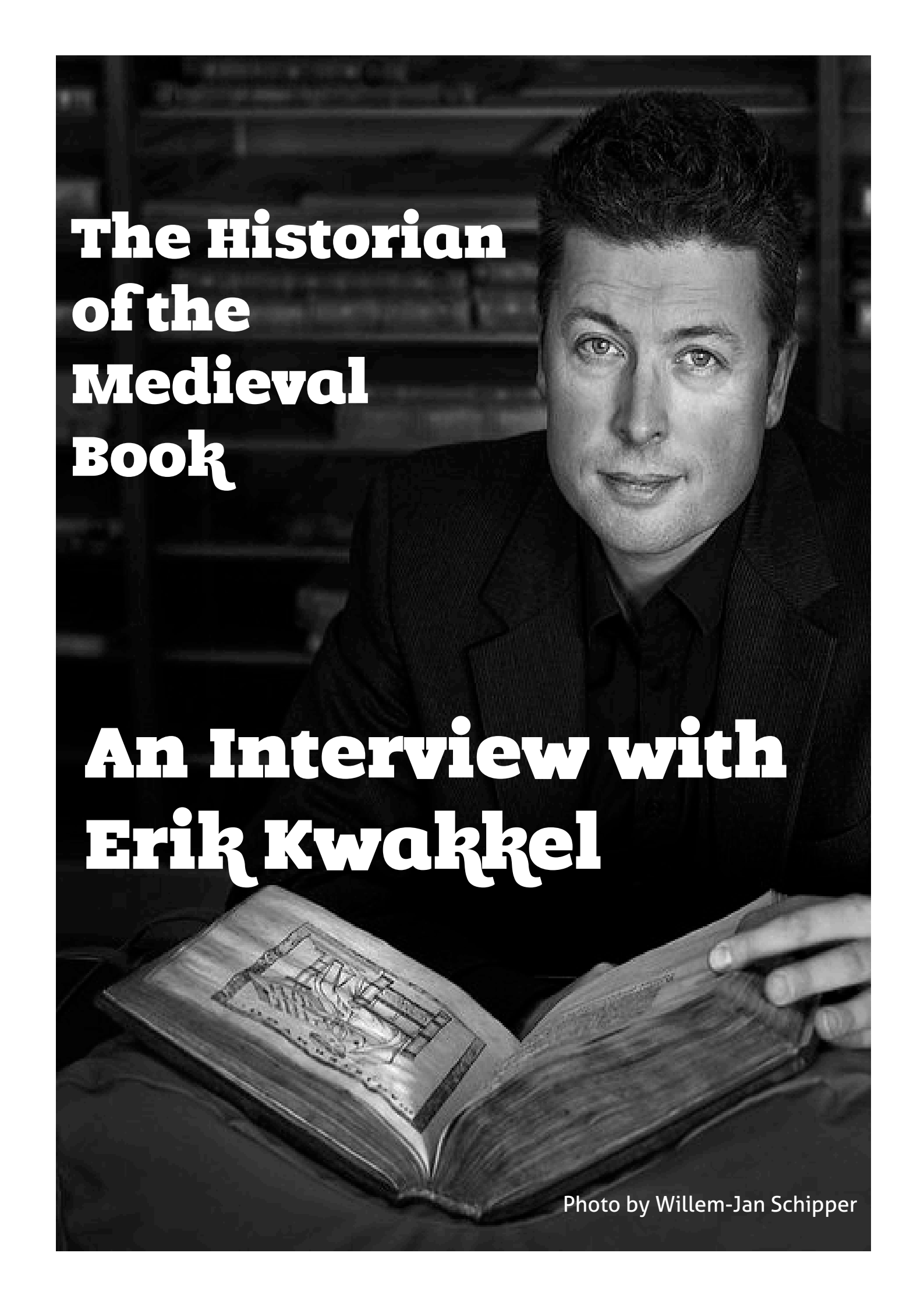
Parchment made of animal skin was a great choice for creating books, because its porous nature holds ink and paint extremely well. While paint and gold leaf eventually will flake off with heavy use, medieval manuscripts were tough enough for regular use without much damage. As most of these books have been stored with their covers closed for much of their lives, opening an illuminated manuscript can easily present readers with colours that are as brilliant today as they were a thousand years ago.

For a great book on manuscript creation, do check out Christopher De Hamel's ***Medieval Craftsmen: Scribes and Illuminators***. For a beautiful kids' storybook which teaches how manuscripts were made, and even what paint was made out of, have a look at ***Marguerite Makes a Book***. For everything you ever wanted to know about manuscripts, follow **Erik Kwakkel** online; and finally, for a visual treat, check out ***The Book of Kells***.

You can follow Danièle Cybulskie on Twitter [**@5MinMedievalist**](#)



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The Historian of the Medieval Book

An Interview with Erik Kwakkel

Photo by Willem-Jan Schipper

In recent years there has been a surge of interest into medieval manuscripts - both among historians and the general public. One of the people leading the way is Erik Kwakkel, who seems to have an unending supply of knowledge and images to share about books from the Middle Ages. The **assistant professor at Leiden University**, Erik focuses his research into medieval paleography and codicology, trying to understand the intricacies of the medieval manuscript. On his **website** and social media pages, he has written about the wonderful and sometimes weird world of books in the Middle Ages, including about topics such as what can be fascinating images found in margins, the chains that kept books in place in medieval libraries, and even heart-shaped manuscripts.

Erik's writings and **Twitter feed** have generated lots of social media buzz and even made international headlines on several occasions. We had the chance to interview him and ask about his interest in medieval manuscripts.

1. While many medieval historians often research using books and manuscripts, you are one of relatively few scholars who decided to focus on the manuscripts themselves and its material culture. Why did you choose to explore that area of the Middle Ages?

I did my MA in Middle Dutch literature and noticed that I enjoyed working with manuscripts more than with the texts they contained. So when I had to come up with a topic for my PhD, I turned to Middle Dutch manuscripts. My PhD-thesis is a study of the oldest collection of prose manuscripts that survives in Dutch vernacular: twenty-three manuscripts from the same monastery, all produced in the fourteenth century. During the four years that I wrote my thesis I learned to appreciate making seemingly insignificant material observations and turning them into arguments that addressed broader, cultural themes – reading, the movement of manuscripts, how people interacted with literature. I realized this was my thing: to take the material and mold it into something that supports the cultural. This link between the material book and history is still what defines my work – I even discussed the importance of this link in a recent book chapter. My interest in the material book and the expertise required to make sense of it was sparked in the manuscript classes by Peter Gumbert, which I took as an MA-student. He was an inspiring instructor and would ultimately become my mentor. I am very grateful that I now occupy his position at Leiden University and that I am able to introduce new generations to the medieval book, hopefully as inspiring as he did.

Watching your social media feeds and your website it seems to me that you are constantly finding many, many fascinating images and items. How much time have you spent going into libraries and archives to discover all of this, and do you have any secret method that allows you to find these hidden gems with manuscripts?

The peculiar thing is that I have much less time now to visit libraries than I had when I was a PhD-student. I ran a big project over that past five years, which at one point included six researchers. This means, inevitably, that there are a lot of things to look after, which pushes looking at actual manuscripts to the background. I enjoy directing a project, but looking at medieval books is now something I do no more than once a week. So when I do go to the library I am trying to make the best of it! Not only do I come out of the building with the data I need for my own research, but also with a lot of “artsy” images, taken with a professional camera – although I also take a lot of snapshots with my phone. I use the images for blog posts, Twitter and for the image column I run in a popular historical magazine in Holland (you can buy it in the supermarket where I shop and love that the medieval manuscript has made it into the grocery store). I think the trick is to always be “on”: I don’t separate being a researcher from being a person that promotes the medieval book via social and other media (I do a lot of radio interviews and public lectures in Holland). It only takes a few seconds to shoot out a tweet with a great image when I am in the library. Another resource for the images you see in my twitter feed and blog are online databases. I “consume” a lot of digital manuscripts per week as I look for specimens to include in my scholarly publications. As I am there browsing, I will simply download images that I think will be enjoyed for Twitter or useful for a future blog post. My rule of thumb is: if I find the image enjoyable, fascinating or unusual, then so will my followers – because that is how twitter works. By the way, those qualifiers usually end up in a tweet, which simply expresses what I think of an image (I will never call something great or unusual if I don’t think so myself). The secret method, to answer that part of your question, is to be curious and allow yourself to be surprised about objects that you routinely encounter.

In the past couple of years I've noticed the interest in medieval manuscripts explode in social media and the web - part of that can be attributed to your own work - but why do you think that we have seen this wave of interests in manuscripts and their images?

I think the interest started to take off with the proliferation of good-quality images on the web. When I first started to research medieval manuscripts, in the 1990s, there was hardly anything out there. And what was available looked pretty terrible, both in terms of the websites’ UI and their content. Today it is very easy to find suitable images of high quality. Moreover, the Creative Commons licenses that libraries have started to adopt invites people to do something with digital manuscripts, from simply tweeting images (like I do) to constructed actual research tools (like @SexyCodicology’s **DMMapp**, which is the best gateway to collections of digitized manuscripts), or even producing coffee mugs with manuscript images on them. I am really grateful that libraries and museums invest money to build up freely accessible

really grateful that libraries and museums invest money to build up freely accessible collection of digitized manuscripts – which is why tweets without attributions make me so mad. I think we are just at the beginning of a movement that will present us with a great deal more. We will see an increase, for example, in the digital output of academic research projects, which present us with free databases and “niche” images collections, like Peter Stokes’ **DigiPal**. The digital presence of the manuscript has opened the eyes of internet users to the extent that a growing number of people are getting accustomed to visiting certain manuscript-related websites and blogs, just as they would for news and fashion. I love that something quirky and nerdy like the medieval book is becoming mainstream.

There is a saying: "beauty is in the eye of the beholder", but what are the kinds of manuscripts that you find that you most enjoy looking at?

You may find this surprising, but I do not favor illuminated manuscripts. My least favorite type of manuscript is the Book of Hours, especially those of high quality. Not only were colorful books like this exceptional in medieval times (some estimates put the presence of illuminated manuscripts in medieval libraries as low as one in ten), they are also completely predictable in terms of production – how many bifolia to the quire, their dimensions and preparation, etc. They are, in a sense, the factory products of the Middle Ages. I much rather look at books that many would call scruffy, but what I like to think of as the “artisan” counterpart to the factory product. Schoolbooks in particular are most enjoyable to study, because you can see how the owner used and revamped it purposefully with a specific aim in mind, as shown by the annotated margins, the layout and the unusual manners in which the objects are put together. Let me put it this way: It is great to see a Ferrari zoom by on the street, but the vintage Volvo that has been altered by different generations of drivers is ultimately much more interesting as an object.

Finally, what are the kinds of issues and topics that you would encourage medieval scholars to explore when it comes to manuscripts and books from the Middle Ages? What do we want to learn more about?

The study of the medieval book is so young (codicology as a discipline was established in the 1950s) that there is still a lot of work to be done – thankfully. The great thing about the professional study of medieval books is that academics all have a very particular interest, resulting in studies that are actually presenting very different observations, even when it concerns the same manuscripts. I would hope that there will be generations of scholars who find their own niches and look at medieval books in their own unique ways. I am not in favor of steering research in a particular direction, which would limit the range of new things we learn. That said, the digital dynamic is becoming increasingly important, in part because funding bodies favor this kind of research – this includes my own research, of course. Old-fashioned research, involving a scholar leaning over an actual manuscript with a pencil, will likely not disappear, but I hope it will remain a significant part of what we do as manuscript scholars.

Books

Recipes for a Tudor Dinner Party

The Tudor Kitchen, What the Tudors Ate and Drank

By Terry Breverton

Amberley Publishing, 2015

ISBN: 9781445648743

Did you ever wonder what you would cook in 16th century England? The new book *The Tudor Kitchen, What the Tudors Ate and Drank*, by Terry Breverton, has over 500 sumptuous – and more everyday recipes, enjoyed by the rich and the poor, all taken from authentic contemporary sources.

Breverton writes about food and drink during the Tudor era, examining topics such as the Kitchens at Hampton Court, Tudor Etiquette at Table, Banquets and Sumptuary Laws. The second part offers over 350 pages of recipes of main courses, desserts, snacks, drinks and sauces. Here are four recipes - enough to host a Tudor dinner party!

STARTER: ***SALMON SALLET FOR FISH DAYS – SALMON AND ONION SALAD WITH VIOLETS***

Thomas Dawson's *The Good Huswifes Jewell* 1585, 1594, 1596

Colours and presentation were extremely important at the rich man's table, especially when demonstrating one's wealth, and therefore power, to guests. Many types of edible flower were used, both for taste and visual appeal. Flowers were also set at table to enhance the presentation of the food. Large and elaborate sculptures and settings of 'flowers' were even made of cut vegetables and herbs, if attractive flowers were not in season. This has a resonance today. With a well-presented dish, in attractive settings, we often think mentally that the meal is a small portion, and we eat it more slowly. We then realise that we are full, and consequently tend to eat less in quantity than when a mound of food is heaped on our plates. One can easily make this a main meal, and substitute other edible flowers such as nasturtiums.

'Salmon cut long waies with slices of onyons upon it layd and upon that to cast Violets, Oyle and Vineger'.

Ingredients: Salmon fillet cut into 4 strips for 4 servings; large mild onion sliced very thin; 1 tbsp lemon juice; 2 tbsp white wine vinegar; 1 tsp sugar; ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil; ¾ cup edible violets; salt and pepper to taste.

Method: Put the vinegar, sugar and lemon juice into a bowl and slowly whisk in the olive oil. Season to taste, then add the sliced onion to the vinaigrette. Remove the onion for later. Lightly coat with some of the vinaigrette, and place under a preheated medium grill. Cook for 3-4 minutes each side, or until firm. Place a mound of the onion in the centre of each dish, with the salmon strip on top. Drizzle the rest of the vinaigrette over the salmon, and scatter violets across the top.

MAIN: ***SAMON ROSTYD IN SAUCE – GRILLED SALMON IN WINE SAUCE***

Gentyll Manly Cokere, MS Pepys 1047 c.1490

Try to buy non-farmed salmon, e.g. Pacific salmon. Atlantic salmon is becoming scarce, and farmed salmon is often unpleasant. The copious grey slime in the meat of the fish is because it has not properly developed muscle meat in the Atlantic Ocean, and unhealthy farmed salmon almost uniformly have lice and other problems which pass on to non-farmed salmon as they pass the fish farms to breed.

'Samon rostyd in sause. Cut thy salmon in round pieces and roast it on a grid iron. Take wine and powder of cinnamon and draw them through a strainer. Add thereto onions minced small. Boil it well. Take vinegar or verjuice and powder of ginger and salt. Add thereto. Lay the salmon in dishes and pour the syrup thereon and serve forth'.

Ingredients: 6 salmon steaks; 1 large onion; 1 tsp ground cinnamon; 5 ml ground ginger; 575 ml red wine; 1 tbsp wine vinegar; 5ml salt.

Method: Finely chop the onion, place in a saucepan with the wine and cinnamon, cover and cook for 15 minutes. Place the salmon on a grill and cook for 4-7 minutes each side, dependent

dependent upon thickness. When the salmon and onions are cooked, place the salmon on a hot dish. Stir the vinegar, ginger and salt into the onions, and pour over the salmon just before serving.

SIDE DISH: SWEET POTATOES IN ROSE AND ORANGE SYRUP

Elinor Fettiplace's Receipt Book 1605

This work has some of the earliest recipes for sweet potatoes in Britain. Because these were called potatoes in later Tudor and early Stuart recipe books, they are often confused with the newly discovered New World potatoes, which were not being used for cookery at this time. This latter potato was grown widely in Ireland a long time before it became common and popular in the rest of Britain, and John Forster was the first to refer to it as the 'Irish potato', to distinguish it from the sweet potato which was far more widely known. From the beginning, it was considered lowly food, only suitable for pigs, peasants, and prisoners. One who did promote the 'Irish potato' in the seventeenth century was John Forster, who published a treatise in 1664 with the snappy title of: *England's Happiness Increased, Or a sure and Easy Remedy Against all Succeeding Dear Years by a Plantation of the Roots called Potatoes: Whereby (with the Addition of Wheat flower) Excellent Good and Wholesome Bread may be Made Every 8 or 9 Months Together, for Half the Charge as Formerly; Also by the Planting of These Roots Ten Thousand Men in England and Wales Who Know Not How to Live, or What to Do to Get a Maintenance for their Families, may on one Acre of Ground make 30 Pounds per Annum. Invented and Published for the Good of the Poorer Sort.* According to Smythe, ambergris was 'a fragrant drug found floating on sea coasts, greyish, light, easily fusible used as a perfume and cordial and in various essences and tinctures'. Ambergris is a waxy substance found floating at sea, or washed up on beaches, secreted by the Sperm Whale, and still of great value in perfume manufacture. It was often spelt amber grease/greece, signifying its colour and function, and was sometimes mixed with salt. It is omitted below.

'Boile your roots in faire water until they bee somewhat tender then pill of the skinne, then make your syrupe, weying to every pound of roots a pound of sugar and a quarter of a pint of faire water, & as much of rose water, & the juice of three or fowre oranges, then boile the syrupe, & boile them till they bee throughlie soaked in the syrupe, before you take it from the fire, put in a little musk and amber greece.'

Ingredients: 3½ lbs sweet potatoes; 1 cup sugar; ½ cup water; ¼ cup orange juice; ¼ cup rosewater; 1/8 cup fresh rose petals; ¼ tsp double strength vanilla.

Method: Bake sweet potatoes till tender, then peel and slice. Mix sugar and water over low heat until liquefied, then add orange juice, rosewater and rose petals. Stir until heated, then pour over the sliced sweet potatoes. Garnish with fresh rose flowers if available. If using dried rose petals, add with sugar.

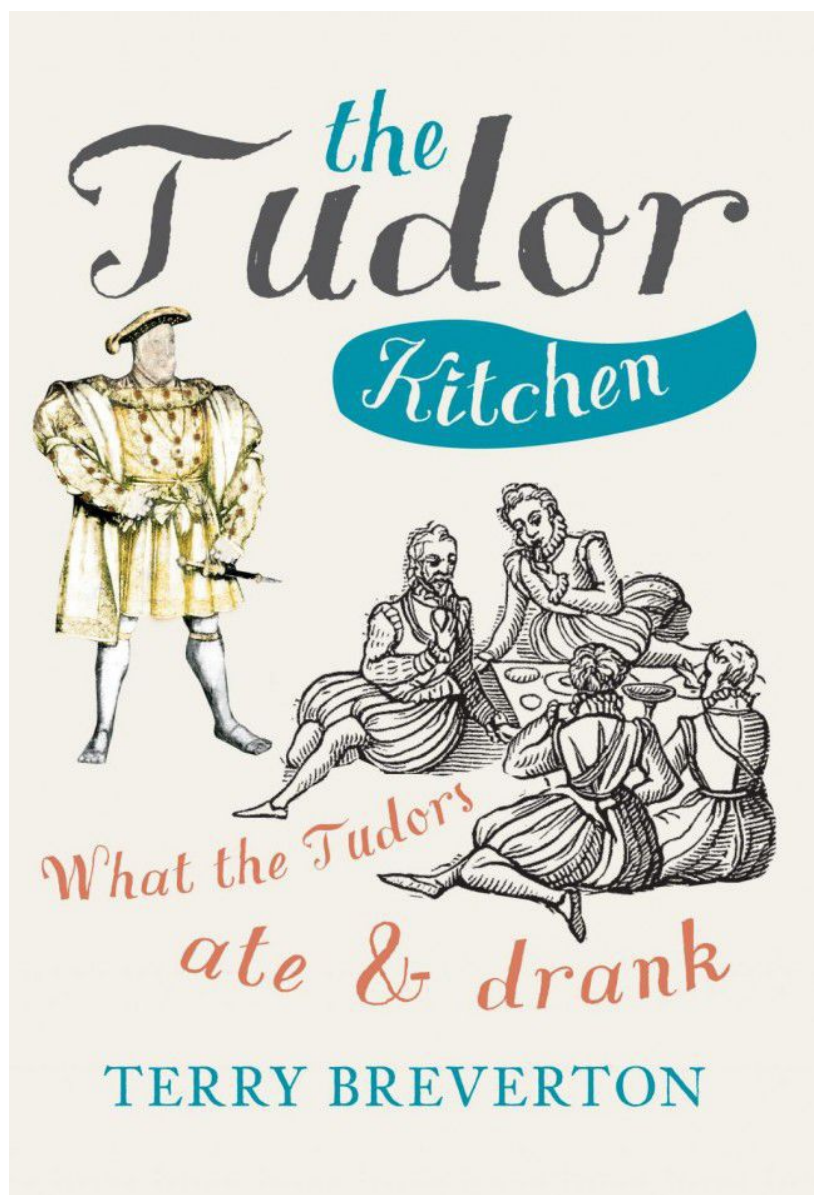
SWEET: EGGES IN MONESHYNE – EGGS IN MOONLIGHT

The Proper Newe Booke of Cookerye c.1557

The eggs are cooked by poaching in a syrup of rose water and sugar, so that they look like moons.

Ingredients: 60 ml rose water; 100 ml water; 75 g caster sugar; 4 eggs.

Method: Combine the water, rose water and sugar in a small frying pan. Heat gently, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Bring to a simmer then crack in the eggs one by one. Ensure the eggs have enough space so that they cook without touching. Cook until the whites are cooked but the yolks are still runny. Transfer the eggs to plates and spoon over some of the syrup. This is even better served on toast for breakfast.



**To learn more about this book, please visit
Amberley Publishing**

Middle English Romances in Translation

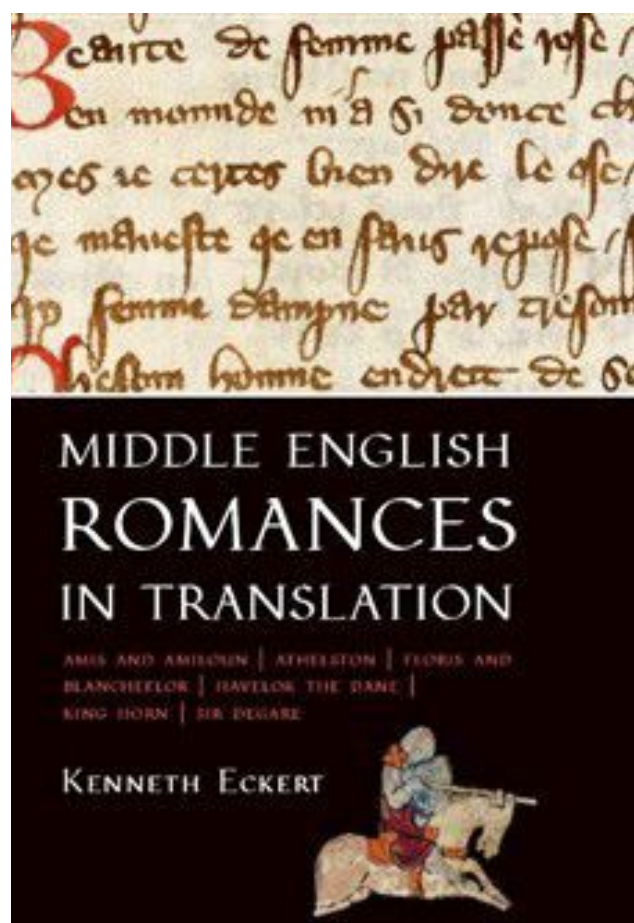
By Kenneth Eckert

Sidestone Press, 2015
ISBN: 9789088903397

The popular romances of medieval England are fantasy stories of love at first sight; brave knights seeking adventure; evil stewards; passionate, lusty women; hand-to-hand combat; angry dragons; and miracles. They are not only fun but indicate a great deal about the ideals and values of the society they were written in. Yet the genre of Middle English romance has only recently begun to attain critical respectability, dismissed as “vayn carpynge” in its own age and generally treated by twentieth-century critics as a junk-food form of medieval literature. Chaucer’s *Tale of Sir Thopas* has been assumed to be a satire of the romances’ clichéd formulas and unskilled authors. But the romances evidently enjoyed popularity among all English classes, and the genre itself continued to flourish and evolve down to present-day novels and movies. Whatever Chaucer and his contemporaries thought of romances, they would have needed some personal familiarity with the stories and texts for comic tales such as *Sir Thopas* to be understood.

A century ago, *Beowulf* faced the same problem that the Middle English romances still face: no modern translations were published because few had heard of the poem—because there were no modern translations published. Where the romances have been printed, they have normally been reproduced as critical editions in their original language, or translated into heavily abridged children’s versions, but few have been published as scholarly close line translations with notes. This book is an attempt to remedy this by making some of these romances available to the student or lay reader who lacks specialized knowledge of Middle English, with the hope that a clearer understanding of the poems will encourage not only enjoyment but also further study.

Thanks to Sidestone Press, here are some excerpts from *Middle English Romances in Translation*:



Floris & Blancheflor

Þe ameral het hire cloþes keste
A litel bineþen here breste.
Þan seȝ he wel sone anon
Þat on was a man þat oþer a womman.
He quok for anguisse þer he stod.
Þe children awoken under þon.
Þai segh þe swerd over hem idrawe
Adrad þai ben to ben islawe.
Panne saide Florice to Blauncheflour
“Of oure lif nis non socour!”

Havelok the Dane

Also he seten and sholde soupe
So comes a ladde in a joupe
And with him sixti oþer stronge
With swerdes drawen and knives longe
Ilkan in hande a ful god gleive.
And seyde, “Undo Bernard þe greuwe!
Undo swiþe and lat us in
Havelok lifte up þe dore-tre
And at a dint he slow hem þre.
Was non of hem þat his hernes
Ne lay þer-ute ageyn þe sternes.

The emir had the covers thrown down
A little beneath their chests.
Then he saw very quickly that one
Was a man and the other a woman.
He quaked with rage where he stood.
The couple awoke in the meantime.
They saw the sword drawn over them,
And were in terror of being slain.
Then Floris said to Blancheflour,
“There is no hope for our lives!”

As they were sitting down to eat,
Along came a lad in an outlaw's jacket,
And with him sixty others strong,²³⁴
With swords drawn and long knives,
Each one with a firm lance in hand.
And he said, “Open up, watchman Bernard!
Open up quick and let us in!
Havelok lifted up the door bar,
And with one blow he killed all three.
There were none of them whose brains
Did not lie there under the stars.

King Horn

Rymenhild, have wel godne day:
No leng abiden I ne may.
In to uncube londe,
Wel more for to fonde;
At seve 3eres ende,
3ef I ne come ne sende,
Tak þe husebonde;
750 For me þu ne wonde.
Heo custe him wel a stunde
And Rymenhild feol to grunde.

Sir Degare

He fil adoun anon 3t
And frapte his tail wi3 gret mi3t
Upon Degarres side
Pat up so doun he gan to glide.
Ac he stert up ase a man
And wi3 his bat leide upan
And al tofrusst him ech a bon
Pat he lai ded stille as a ston.

Sir Degare

"Madame", quad þe maide, "ne care þou nowt.
Stille awai hit schal be browt.
Her time come 3he was unbounde
And delivred al mid sounde.
A knave schild þer was ibore
þe maiden serveðe here at wille
190 Wond þat child in cloþes stille
And laid hit in a cradel anon
And was al prest þarwi3 to gon.

Rimenhild, goodbye.
I cannot stay any longer,
But will go to unknown lands
To find a new life.
At the end of seven years,
If I do not come or send word,
Take some husband
And do not wait for me.
She kissed him for a long time
And Rimenhild swooned to the ground.

The dragon at once fell down
And slapped his tail with great force
Against Degare's sides,
So that he was thrown upside down.
But Degare leaped up like a man
And laid on with his club,
And crushed each bone of his
So that he lay dead, as still as a stone.

"Madam", said the maid, "don't be anxious.
The baby will be quietly taken away.
Her time came and she was unburdened
And delivered, all in sound health.
A baby boy was born there;
The maid served her in her needs,
Silently wrapped the child in clothes,
And laid it at once in a cradle,
And was all ready to leave.

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