



Flemish Book of Hours, c.1420-1440

Classmark: Liverpool University Library MS.F.2.19, fol.58  
(Adoration of the Magi).

This illuminated miniature is one of twelve accompanying the liturgical Hours; the manuscript can be dated from the style of the illumination, which has a characteristic background pattern of gold filigree associated with the "Gold Scrolls" group working in western Flanders in the early 15th century. There are local Saints' names in the calendar, which suggest that the manuscript may have been produced in Tournai.

The twelve 12-line pictures are used to introduce separate liturgical sections of the Book of Hours. There are eight in the main section, the Hours of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a series of devotions to be recited at set points in the day, and these follow the usual narrative sequence of events in her life:

Matins: the Annunciation

Lauds: the Visitation

Prime: the Nativity

Terce: the Annunciation to the Shepherds

Sext: the Adoration of the Magi – shown left

None: the Presentation in the Temple

Vespers: the Flight into Egypt or the Massacre of the Innocents

Compline: the Death, Assumption or Coronation of the Virgin.

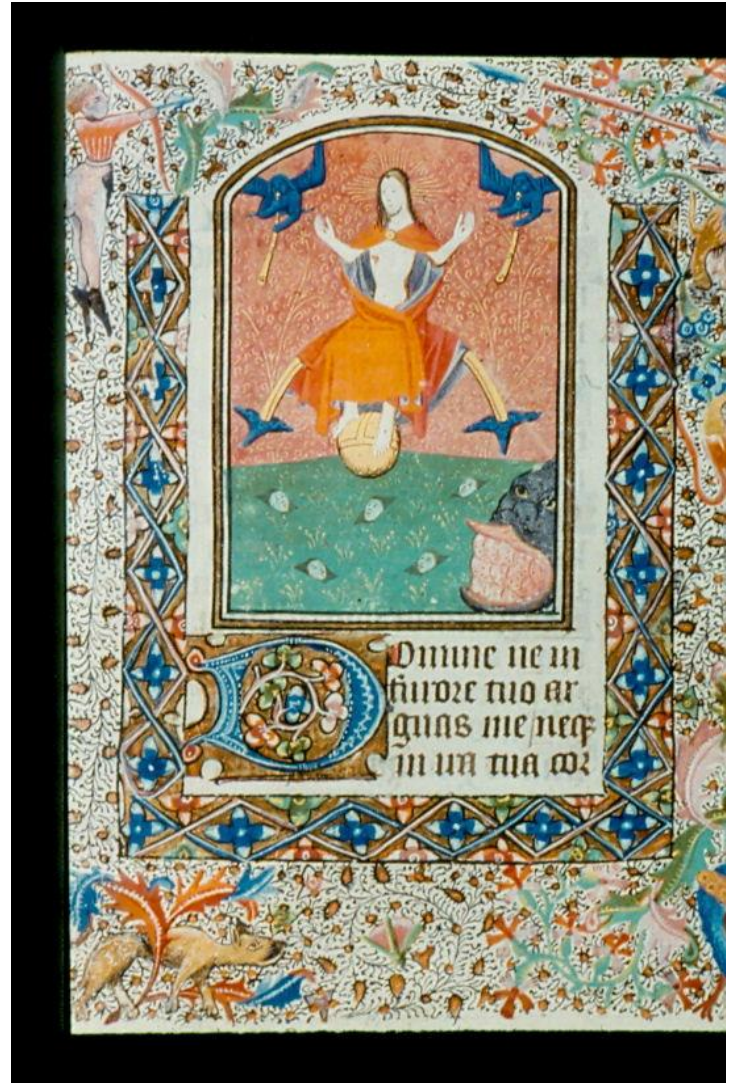
Four more pictures are used before the shorter sections of the manuscript: the Hours of the Cross (the Crucifixion), the Hours of the Holy Spirit (the Pentecost), the Penitential Psalms (the Last Judgement, shown below) and the Office of the Dead (apparently three monks reciting an office behind a draped coffin, with two black-clad mourners).

Liverpool University Library MS.F.2.19, fol.88  
(The Last Judgement).

This picture, used to introduce the Penitential Psalms section of the Book of Hours, shows Christ sitting in judgement on a rainbow with his feet resting on the world, shown with the characteristic 'T-O' division of medieval maps. The anxious souls of the dead peer out of the mouth of Hell, and from cracks in the ground, waiting for the last judgement to be announced by the angels with trumpets at the top of the frame.

**Provenance:**

Previous owners include Francis Jack Needham, 2nd Earl of Kilmorey (d.1880), indicated by his bookplate, and Henry White, from whose sale at Sotheby's (26 April 1902, lot 1125) it is likely that J.W. Hughes bought it, before presenting it to the University Library in 1903. John William Hughes, a Liverpool shipowner in the firm of T & J Harrison, was a member of the University Court and an extremely generous benefactor of the University, especially the Faculty of Engineering and the University Library. With two colleagues, he subscribed more than £40 000 to the Mechanical Engineering Laboratories (opened 1912) and his son, T. Harrison Hughes, established two Chairs in Engineering in his memory in 1920. In addition to the manuscript shown, he gave valuable early printed books, including a dozen or more books printed before 1530, and 25 bound volumes of Liverpool pamphlets.



**References:**

*Medieval Manuscripts on Merseyside* [catalogue of an exhibition] University Art Gallery, Liverpool and Courtauld Institute Galleries, London. The University of Liverpool, 1993.

*Medieval and early Renaissance treasures in the North West* [catalogue of an exhibition] Whitworth Art Gallery, University of Manchester. Manchester, 1976.

Ker, Neil Ripley *Medieval manuscripts in British libraries*. Oxford, 1983. Vol.3: Lampeter-Oxford includes detailed descriptions of manuscripts in Liverpool; edited after the author's death by Andrew G. Watson.

This item is part of the Medieval and Renaissance manuscripts collection and is available for reading in Special Collections & Archives, by prior appointment.