

## Illustration and ornament

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### The twelfth century

In England, as on the continent of Europe, the twelfth century saw the production of illuminated manuscripts on a scale not witnessed before.<sup>1</sup> This reflects the overall rise in the number of books produced. There continued to be many books which were not provided with any decoration at all, and the proportion containing extensive illustration was always less than 10 per cent. Books were decorated in an English version of the Romanesque style, the first international style in Western Europe since the fall of the Roman Empire. The main patrons of illuminated books in the twelfth century were monasteries such as Bury St Edmunds, St Augustine's Canterbury, and St Albans, and cathedral priories such as Christ Church Canterbury and St Swithun's Winchester (the Old Minster).<sup>2</sup> Secular cathedrals, such as Lincoln and Hereford, also possessed illuminated books, but it is not always clear whether they produced them themselves.<sup>3</sup> But even if illuminated books were made for monastic patrons, they were not necessarily illuminated by monks: there is evidence from the twelfth century of lay professional artists working for (and sometimes in) monasteries.<sup>4</sup>

Books were also imported into England from abroad, especially from Normandy.<sup>5</sup> Though the Normans had lagged behind their Anglo-Saxon contemporaries in the art of manuscript illumination, their preoccupation with the decoration of initial letters was to prove the springboard for the development of the Romanesque initial as a vehicle of artistic expression in twelfth-century England. Indeed, experiments in the relationship between script, ornament

<sup>1</sup> The best introduction to English illumination of the period is *Survey*, III. For the first part of the period, see Gameson 1999a, which gives a brief indication of the presence of illumination in each manuscript listed.

<sup>2</sup> Thomson 1985; Dodwell 1954; McLachlan 1986.

<sup>3</sup> Mynors and Thomson 1993; Thomson 1989. <sup>4</sup> Alexander 1992, pp. 10–20; Gullick 1998a.

<sup>5</sup> Exeter and Durham, in particular, seem to have acquired numerous manuscripts from Norman sources, including manuscripts containing illumination by 'Hugo pictor', who was probably active at Jumièges for at least part of his career: see Pächt 1950; Gameson 1999b and 2001; Gullick 1999.

and illustration were to last throughout the three centuries under review, with letters providing major sites for decoration or the opportunity to unite a visual and verbal message.<sup>6</sup> The most basic function of decorated initials, as of tituli, rubrics and punctuation, was to structure a text, aiding memorization and cueing the process of recollection by means of which a reader engaged with a text.<sup>7</sup> To achieve this it was important to maintain a decorative hierarchy, so that the size and elaboration of the initial could act as a guide to the reader, communicating the position of major and minor textual divisions even before a word was read. The clarity of the decorative hierarchy, together with the endless invention displayed by the Romanesque decorated initial, can create an exquisite combination of function and ornament even in a modestly decorated book. Whilst some initials are entirely foliate, consisting of foliage coils terminating in luxuriant blossoms, others contain animals enmeshed in foliage scrolls, or clambering elongated human figures, often engaged in combat with animals, dragons or hybrid monsters. Such creatures, often ultimately classical in origin, could be derived from near-Eastern textiles, or from astrological illustrations, calendar scenes or bestiaries. The distinction made by modern scholars between 'decorated' and 'historiated' initials is not always clear: many initials feature human figures but do not seem to represent an identifiable narrative or history. Some of these initials may have been intended to represent the eternal struggle of human beings, trapped in a hostile world of sin, searching for salvation; their attraction lies partly in the tension between the exuberant imagination of the parts and the ordered balance of the whole, as well as in the contrast between the levity of many initials and the solemnity of the majority of miniatures.

In the twelfth and subsequent centuries, the book which most commonly received extensive illustration was not the whole Bible but the Psalter. Recited both by monks and by the laity, the Psalms were the prime devotional texts of the earlier Middle Ages. The text of the Psalms is often preceded by a liturgical Calendar which can contain pictorial cycles of the occupations of the months and the signs of the zodiac, either within or connected to the KL monogram itself (for the Latin *kalends*) which stands at the head of each month, or in separate roundels. The text of the Psalter was divided first into eight sections, marking the beginnings of the parts to be read at matins each day and at vespers on Sunday: that is, at Psalms 1, 26, 38, 52, 68, 80, 97 and 109 (Vulgate numeration). At the same time the three-fold formal division at Psalms 1, 51 and 101 (Vulgate numeration), which had Insular origins in the early Middle

6 Alexander 1978b. 7 Parkes 1976.

Ages, was also retained, the two systems combining to make a ten-fold division. These divisions were marked by large decorated initials, and sometimes by historiated initials. A consistent choice of subjects begins to appear in the historiated initials of some twelfth-century Psalters, but it is not until the following century that a regular series of ten historiated initials becomes standard.<sup>8</sup> The subjects themselves are usually not literal illustrations of the text, but were suggested either by the Psalm's *titulus* or by its opening verse. The small group of manuscripts, of which the c.1150 Eadwine Psalter is one (fig. 15.2), which contain a literal illustration to every Psalm, was directly inspired by the presence at Canterbury of an extraordinary exemplar, the Carolingian Utrecht Psalter.<sup>9</sup> Several Psalters also have a cycle of full-page miniatures prefacing the text of the Psalms. This practice had begun in eleventh-century England, but only became common in the twelfth. Thus it was the Psalter, not the complete Bible, which carried the largest cycles of full-page biblical scenes.<sup>10</sup> As well as narrative subjects drawn from the Old and New Testaments, especially from the life of Christ, these cycles sometimes also include images of the Tree of Jesse, King David, the Virgin and Child, and Christ in Majesty. The scenes do not illustrate the text of the Psalms directly, but can be related to the Christian typological reading of the Psalms as messianic prophecies.

The twelfth century also saw the production of magnificently illustrated giant Bibles; these lectern volumes were read both in church and refectory, and must have been impressive symbols of the status of the communities which possessed them.<sup>11</sup> In many cases each book of the Bible is provided with a historiated initial; some manuscripts also have a full-page frontispiece to some but not all of the biblical books. As in the case of the Tree of Jesse illustration for the Book of Isaiah in the Lambeth Bible, these frontispieces can go beyond the illustration of the biblical narrative to become vehicles of complex typological or theological doctrines.<sup>12</sup> In Gospel Books each Gospel may begin with an Evangelist portrait and a large decorated initial; decorated canon tables preceding the biblical text are found only occasionally after 1100.<sup>13</sup> Manuscripts of the Pauline Epistles can contain a historiated initial for each Epistle, either showing St Paul or an episode from his life.<sup>14</sup>

The handsome copies of the biblical commentaries and other works of the Church Fathers, such as St Jerome and St Gregory the Great, with which

8 Haseloff 1938. 9 Gibson, Heslop and Pfaff 1992; Van der Horst, Noel and Wüstemfeld 1996.

10 Kauffmann 2003, pp. 112–39. 11 Cahn 1982; Kauffmann 2003, pp. 73–104.

12 Lambeth, ms. 3, fol. 198r; Dodwell 1954, pp. 88–90; Shepard 2007.

13 *Survey*, III, nos. 2, 5, 25, 33, 53, 65, 80.

14 *Survey*, III, nos. 79, 99 (Bodleian, ms. Auct. D.1.13; Durham Cathedral Lib., ms. A.11.19).

English monastic and cathedral libraries were stocked, generally contain only decorated initials: historiated initials are the exception, not the rule. The only patristic work to be illustrated with full-page miniatures preceding the text is the *De civitate Dei* of St Augustine.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the works of medieval theologians and commentators on Scripture, if illustrated at all, usually attracted only an author portrait and one or two historiated initials. The Prayers and Meditations of St Anselm of Canterbury provides a rare example of such a text attracting an extensive scheme of illustration. Copies of the text had been sent to Anselm's monastic and lay friends during his lifetime, but it is uncertain whether these early copies already contained pictures.<sup>16</sup> Probably the earliest surviving manuscript containing a cycle of religious narrative illustrations to have been produced after the upheaval of the Norman Conquest, and the first English example of a fully illustrated account of the life and miracles of a single saint, is a manuscript of Bede's Life of St Cuthbert, produced at Durham Cathedral Priory around 1100 and containing over fifty tinted drawings, illustrating each chapter of the text.<sup>17</sup> All over Europe, illustrated saints' lives were produced by communities which thus proclaimed the virtuous lives, miracle-working powers and continuing protection of their patrons;<sup>18</sup> only the Lives of St Cuthbert and of St Edmund survive in this form from twelfth-century England, though some Passionals contain historiated initials depicting scenes from the lives of several saints.<sup>19</sup>

Most illustrated twelfth-century secular manuscripts contain texts which have their origins in the classical world, either as Latin works or as Late Antique Latin translations of Greek works. Sometimes continuities can be identified between antique and medieval picture cycles, though the pictorial tradition in most cases seems to extend only as far back as the fourth or fifth century AD. In such instances the pictures in the twelfth-century manuscripts usually seem to have been adapted not directly from Late Antique exemplars, but from Carolingian or Anglo-Saxon intermediaries. Of literary, historical and philosophical works, only the comedies of Terence and the *Psychomachia* of Prudentius were provided with cycles of pictures.<sup>20</sup> The St Albans Terence (Bodleian, ms. Auct. F. 2. 13), with its illustrations reflecting the masks and even

15 De Laborde 1909; *Survey*, III, no. 19 (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana, ms. Plut. XII. 17).

16 Pächt 1956; *Survey*, III, nos. 31, 75 (Verdun, Bibliothèque Municipale, ms. 70; Bodleian, ms. Auct. D.2.6).

17 Oxford, University College, ms. 165; Baker 1978. 18 Hahn 2001.

19 For the Life of St Edmund (PML, ms. M. 736), see *Survey*, III, no. 34; for a Passional, see *Survey*, III, no. 17 (BL, Arundel ms. 91).

20 Jones and Morey 1931; Stettiner 1895–1905; *Survey*, III, nos. 30, 73 (BL, Cotton ms. Titus D. XVI; Bodleian, ms. Auct. F. 2.13).

perhaps the gestures of the Roman stage, represents the end of an antiquarian tradition. The other illustrated secular texts are mostly technical and scientific, including herbals, bestiaries (fig. 20.1) and treatises on astronomy and astrology. Of these, the bestiary had travelled furthest from its antique roots; the animal lore in its text was by now almost entirely in the service of Christian themes, and the picture cycles are medieval in inspiration.<sup>21</sup> The main purpose of the herbal was to identify plants and to describe their medicinal properties; illustrations were integral to the identifications, though in most cases artists did little more than copy the conventionalized pictures they found in their exemplars.<sup>22</sup> Illustrations accompanying medical tracts, such as drawings of cautery figures, were also traditional.<sup>23</sup> In one instance illustrated astronomical and astrological texts are found in conjunction with the illustrated Marvels of the East, descriptions of natural wonders and monstrous races going back ultimately to ancient Greek descriptions of the fabulous peoples of India.<sup>24</sup>

The twelfth-century love of classification found its pictorial expression in diagrams whose balanced and elegant construction could be used to depict the harmonious relations between microcosm and macrocosm in the constitution of the universe according to Christian cosmology: the four seasons, elements, humours and ages of man, for instance, or the seven planets, sacraments and liberal arts.<sup>25</sup> Such diagrams were designed to impress the relations between different parts of a subject on the memory of the reader. Indeed, the organization of space in many Romanesque illustrations may reflect the same purpose, with geometric or architectural forms providing a grid within which images, often identified by inscriptions, are grouped hierarchically around a central motif or figure.

## The thirteenth century

In the twelfth century the majority of illuminated books were made for religious institutions, especially monastic houses, whether for liturgical or library use. The thirteenth century is the first in which we can identify a considerable number of illuminated books as being commissioned by the upper ranks of lay

21 Baxter 1998; *Survey*, III, nos. 36, 104–6 (Bodleian, ms. Laud. Misc. 247; Cambridge, Corpus Christi Coll., ms. 22; BL, Add. ms. 11283; New York, PML, ms. M.81).

22 Collins 2000; *Survey*, III, nos. 10, 11 (Bodleian, Ashmole ms. 1431; Bodleian, Bodley ms. 130).

23 MacKinney 1965; *Survey*, III, nos. 12, 27 (BL, Sloane ms. 2839; Durham, Cathedral Lib., ms. Hunter 100).

24 James 1929; Saxl 1957, pp. 96–110 and pls. 52–61; *Survey*, III, no. 38 (Bodleian, Bodley ms. 614).

25 Saxl 1957, pp. 58–72 and pls. 34–42; Evans 1980.

society, both male and female – mostly members of the royal family or of the high aristocracy – for their own personal use.<sup>26</sup> This did not immediately cause a radical change in the types of text most likely to receive illustration. Patronage of illuminated books by Benedictine monks and nuns and Augustinian canons did continue, though it accounts for a decreasing proportion of the total as the century progresses. The number of illuminated books made for the secular clergy increases; but the number associated with the Franciscan or Dominican friars remains lower than might have been expected, given the impact made by the mendicant orders on English spiritual and cultural life. Lay professional scribes and illuminators were now probably responsible for producing the bulk of illuminated books, either peripatetically or in established workshops, most prominently in London, Oxford, Winchester, Salisbury, Cambridge and Norwich. There is little evidence for the production of illuminated books within the royal court, which seems instead to have commissioned books from existing London workshops.

The most commonly illuminated book was still the Psalter. It now has a full set of historiated initials at the liturgical divisions, with decorated initials at the beginning of ordinary Psalms and sometimes smaller ornamental initials to every verse. As the century progresses, the traditional English range of ‘historical’ subjects at the liturgical divisions gradually gives way to the Parisian tradition of more literal illustrations, just as English artists were influenced by Parisian early Gothic stylistic models.<sup>27</sup> The number of Old and New Testament scenes in prefatory cycles of full-page miniatures, placed before or after the calendar, varies enormously, with the ninety miniatures of the Munich Psalter at one extreme.<sup>28</sup> Whilst the emphasis in the first half of the century is still on narrative illustration, in the second half the prefatory cycles tend to become shorter, and an increasing stress is placed on subjects from the life of Christ which could convey a more intense devotional meaning, such as the Crucifixion, Christ in Majesty or the Virgin and Child. The intimate relationship between the Virgin and Child, or the suffering of Christ on the Cross, were essentially human subjects whose dramatic emotional appeal, sometimes underlined by the responses of onlookers depicted within the picture, was designed to lead the viewer to an empathetic response. This response was not conceived as an end in itself but as an avenue to a deeper understanding of the religious significance of the scene; it corresponds to the development of

26 The best introduction to English illumination of the period is *Survey*, iv. For women’s patronage of illuminated books, see Gee 2002.

27 Haseloff 1938, pp. 8–18, 60–4, 100–1, 118–19.

28 Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm. 835: *Survey*, iv/1, no. 23; Morgan 1992.

the literary genre of the meditation on biblical events, especially the Passion, which was so characteristic of later medieval spirituality.

The Apocalypse, produced as an independent book, often including the commentary of Berengaudus, attracted intensive illustration in the thirteenth century, especially in its third quarter.<sup>29</sup> The most common layout is to have a rectangular miniature, either fully painted or in tinted drawing, occupying the top half of each page, with the text and commentary (either in Latin or in Anglo-Norman French) in two columns beneath. Many of the manuscripts have closely related picture cycles; in some, scenes of the life of St John the Evangelist (identified as the author of the Book of Revelation) are placed before and after the Apocalypse illustrations. Scholars have attempted to find reasons for this upsurge in production. Prophecies of the end of the world and the signs of the times which would indicate its approach, such as those of the late twelfth-century monk Joachim of Fiore (who prophesied that the world would come to an end in 1260), were discussed and elaborated in terms of contemporary events, such as the conflict between the Emperor Frederick II and the Pope. At the same time, the story of the Apocalypse must have appealed in its own right, as an allegory of the experience of the believer enduring the tribulations of the world but arriving finally at the vision of the heavenly city, or even as a biblical parallel to the heroic and turbulent events of Arthurian romances.<sup>30</sup>

Some other biblical and religious texts also received decoration, though there are few surviving illuminated books for the public liturgy. The one-volume portable Bible was commonly illustrated with a small historiated initial at the beginning of each book and a small decorated initial for the corresponding prologue, though not as many examples survive from England as from Paris and northern France, where the format had been developed. Texts used for the teaching of biblical history could also be illustrated. The *Compendium historiae in genealogia Christi* of Peter of Poitiers is often presented in the form of a roll, as befits its genealogical presentation, with the drawings in medallions – a format which could even allow it to be hung on the wall of a classroom.<sup>31</sup> The main decoration of the Missal is a full-page Crucifixion miniature facing the beginning of the Canon prayer. The middle to second half of the century sees the beginning of the Book of Hours as an independent book; previously the main elements, such as the Hours of the Virgin and the Office of the Dead, had

<sup>29</sup> Lewis 1995.

<sup>30</sup> The context for this popularity of illuminated Apocalypses is discussed in Morgan and Brown 1990, pp. 17–37.

<sup>31</sup> *Survey*, iv/1, nos. 43, 79, 90 (Cambridge, Corpus Christi Coll. ms. 83; BL, Cotton ms. Faustina B.VII; Cleveland, Museum of Art, CMA 73.5; Liverpool, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside, Mayer 12017; Eton, College Lib., ms. 96).

appeared in conjunction with the Psalter. No clearly established pattern of illustration appears for the Book of Hours until the following century; the full-page miniatures and historiated initials of the de Brailes Hours are exceptional for their date (fig. 8.1).<sup>32</sup> A group of illustrated Saints' Lives, with texts in Anglo-Norman French, is linked with Matthew Paris, the monk and chronicler of St Albans, either as author or illustrator or both (figs. 4.2, 20.2). They share the same layout as the largest group of Apocalypses, having tinted drawings at the head of each page above the columns of text; they are also one of several kinds of illustrated book at this period to employ captions or *tituli* to mediate between texts and picture cycles.<sup>33</sup> Though the twelfth century had largely satisfied the need for copies of the Church Fathers, the works of more recent theologians and commentators on Scripture, such as St Anselm of Canterbury and Hugh of St Victor, were occasionally illustrated in the thirteenth. In Canon Law, copies of Gratian's *Decretum* and subsequent decretal collections were sometimes given a historiated initial for each case, illustrating the relevant offence or dispute, but most copies circulating in England appear to have been imported from France or Italy (fig. 11.2).<sup>34</sup>

The finest illumination of a secular text in the thirteenth century, especially popular in the first half, is to be found in the bestiary – if it is right to call this Christianized version of ancient natural history, in which the animals are really actors taking on roles to dramatize Christian themes, a secular text. Unlike the drawings of most twelfth-century examples, the illustrations of the animals are now fully painted and framed, often with heavily burnished gold grounds, but they are still set within the text.<sup>35</sup> Apart from the occasional domestic genre scene, the touches of naturalism are few: most of the animals were either fabulous, or at least not native to this country. The presence of Creation scenes at the beginning of some manuscripts accompanies the textual shift towards the exegesis of the Genesis accounts of Creation. Other secular texts to receive illustration include herbals, medical treatises, legal texts, chronicles and topographical works, romances and Aristotelian texts – though the number of surviving examples in most of these categories is small. The medical function of the herbal is emphasized by the presence in some manuscripts of pictures of medical operations. An illustrated manuscript of Roger of Salerno's *Chirurgia*, showing the preparation of medicines as well as operations (fig. 18.3), and a late

32 Donovan 1991.

33 *Survey*, iv/1, nos. 61, 85 (Wormsley Coll. Sir Paul Getty; Dublin Trinity Coll., ms. 177); *Survey*, iv/2, no. 123 (CUL, ms. Ec. 3.59).

34 Melnikas 1975; L'Engle and Gibbs 2001.

35 *Survey*, iv/1, nos. 13, 17, 19, 64; *Survey*, iv/2, nos. 98, 144, 171, 172.



thirteenth-century manuscript containing anatomical drawings, are rarities at this date.<sup>36</sup> The richness of illustrations to chronicles and historical accounts in the thirteenth century is not matched either in the preceding or in the succeeding centuries; the chronicles of Matthew Paris, and the descriptions by Gerald of Wales of his journeys in Ireland and Wales, are especially notable for placing their illustrations of events in the margins.<sup>37</sup> Few illustrated romances survive: those that do usually have framed miniatures or tinted drawings set within the columns of text. From the middle of the century onwards, as Aristotelian texts and commentaries appear and grow in importance for the university curriculum, Aristotelian manuscripts are occasionally found illustrated with historiated initials (fig. 10.1).<sup>38</sup>

### The fourteenth century

In the fourteenth century a significant number of illuminated books were produced not only for members of the royal family and aristocracy, but also for members of wealthy and upwardly mobile county families.<sup>39</sup> In the case of the Bohuns, earls of Hereford, Essex and Northampton, a whole group of illuminated books, most of them Psalters and Books of Hours, can be associated with a single family through textual, pictorial and heraldic references. Several of these books were illustrated by a single group of artists, and are closely related to each other in their design and decorative programme.<sup>40</sup> Monastic patronage is also still significant in the fourteenth century, though monastic illuminated books seem mostly to have been made by lay professional artists, working both within and outside the cloister. The mendicant orders and the universities play a relatively minor role in the patronage or production of illuminated books.

The most striking feature of fourteenth-century illuminated manuscripts is the enlivening of the whole text page with decoration. This more complex *mise-en-page*, whose early development is already evident in the previous century, is especially to be observed in Psalters, Bibles and Books of Hours.<sup>41</sup> Whether scattered through the text block as in Books of Hours, or aligned down the

<sup>36</sup> *Survey*, iv/1, no. 78 (Cambridge, Trinity Coll., ms. 0.1.20); *Survey*, v/2, no. 19 (Bodleian, Ashmole ms. 399).

<sup>37</sup> Lewis 1987.

<sup>38</sup> Camille 1985; Camille 1995; *Survey* iv/2, nos. 145, 146, 156 (BL, Harley ms. 3487; Vatican City, BAV, ms. Urb. lat. 206; Oxford, Merton Coll., ms. 269; BnF, ms. lat. 6323A; Berlin, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, ms. Phill. 1781; BnF, ms. lat. 6505.)

<sup>39</sup> The best introduction to English illumination of the period is *Survey*, v.

<sup>40</sup> James and Millar 1936; Sandler 2004.

<sup>41</sup> For the beginnings of these features in the thirteenth century, see Morgan 2002.

left-hand edge of the text as in some Psalters, small initial letters are decorated with penwork flourishing, or fully painted with a coloured or patterned field (the area enclosed by the letter form) and contrasting background panel (which may be squared or may follow the approximate shape of the initial). Line endings fill the space between the last word of a verse text and the edge of the text block. Their degree of ornamentation ranges from penwork patterns to fully illuminated and gilded blocks, incorporating animals, grotesques and even human figures as in the Clifford-Pabenham Hours (fig. 20.3). Penwork flourishing, developed out of the decoration of 'arabesque' initials which had marked secondary divisions of the text in Romanesque manuscripts, but increasingly characterized by foliate rather than abstract motifs, begins to shoot into the margin from verse initials or the last line of text. Penwork flourishing was probably the province of the scribe, whilst small painted initials would have been executed by artists, though probably not the same artists who were responsible for major schemes of decoration or illustration. In the later Middle Ages it seems to have been common for different individuals, sometimes working at different times and in different places, to be employed in executing script, rubrics, penwork initials, borders and miniatures.

The frame of a fourteenth-century illuminated page frequently consists of an extension of the tail or finial of an initial letter which takes foliate or vegetal form as it 'grows' down the side margin and across the top or bottom of the page. Such frames are often tied to further marginal decoration and illustration (fig. 20.3). Sometimes marginal figures, instead of using these frames as ground lines, inhabit the *bas-de-page*, the rectangular space created within the area between the bottom line of the text and the marginal framework. The marginal world, inhabited not only by human and animal figures but by a variety of hybrids, is characterized by inversions of scale, with human figures often no bigger than plants or insects or birds. The range of relationships of marginal figures and scenes – to other marginal components on the same page, to marginal depictions on other pages, to initials and miniatures or other 'central' illustrative components and to the text itself – is extremely wide. Marginal scenes may illustrate the main text directly; they may parody or satirize the main text or illustrations; or they may form separate narrative series of religious or secular scenes.<sup>42</sup> In many cases the marginal illustrations constitute the chief decorative interest of a manuscript. An extreme example is the *Smithfield Decretals*, which contains just five miniatures illustrating its Canon Law text, but over

42 Randall 1966; Camille 1992; Sandler 1997.

six hundred marginal illustrations, filling the bottom of every page with scenes of animals, birds, hybrids and daily work or play, as well as whole cycles drawn from the Bible, miracles of the Virgin and of saints, animal fables, fabliaux and chivalrous tales.<sup>43</sup>

As in the previous century, the vast majority of illustrated texts are in Latin, and the most common type of illuminated book is the Psalter. Though the prefatory cycle of miniatures is still found – sometimes of extraordinary length, as in the Queen Mary Psalter<sup>44</sup> – other sites for illustration within the text are more prominent: historiated initials or miniatures at the liturgical divisions, decorated or historiated initials at the beginning of each Psalm, and scenes in the lower margins. Even within a single manuscript, the relationship of illustration to text can be complex and varied: for instance, the Isabella Psalter contains one Old Testament cycle in the main historiated initials and their accompanying lower margins, another Old Testament cycle in the ordinary Psalm initials and their respective lower margins, and a cycle of bestiary scenes in the lower margins of the alternate pages which contain the French text of the Psalms.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time the Book of Hours was gaining in popularity.<sup>46</sup> A variety of illustrative programmes was applied to its central text, the Hours of the Virgin: a cycle of scenes from the infancy and public life of Christ is common, situated at the beginning of each Hour, either in a miniature or an initial. Some manuscripts contain scenes from the infancy and Passion of Christ, which may represent the influence of the Short Hours of the Cross, which are often found adjacent to, or interspersed with, the Hours of the Virgin. The margins of Books of Hours are frequently used for further illustrations, either scenes from the Old or New Testament or other relevant material such as the miracles of the Virgin. Some manuscripts display extremely rich and sophisticated illustrative schemes. In the Taymouth Hours, the scenes which appear in the initials and miniatures at the main subdivisions of the Hours of the Virgin and the Short Hours of the Cross are connected to one another by representations of intermediate scenes from the Christological narrative in the margins of the text of each Hour.<sup>47</sup>

The decline in the number of illuminated Bibles in the fourteenth century probably reflects the fact that the large number produced in the thirteenth continued to be sufficient to satisfy demand. The taste for luxury illuminated

43 BL, Royal ms. 10 E. IV: *Survey*, v/2, no. 101. 44 BL, Royal ms. 2 B. VII: Warner 1912.

45 Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, ms. gall. 16: *Survey*, v/2, no. 27.

46 For a study of three examples see Smith 2003.

47 BL, Yates Thompson ms. 13: *Survey*, v/2, no. 98.

Apocalypses evidently also declined by the mid-century; where they were produced, they often have miniatures interspersed into the text, rather than following the thirteenth-century format of miniatures occupying the upper half of each page above the text. A new trend is the variety of manuscripts containing tailored versions of all or part of the biblical narrative, accompanied by extensive cycles of illustration. In these cases the pictorial content clearly often provided the impetus for the creation of the whole book. The foremost example is the Holkham Bible picture book, whose opening page shows a Dominican instructing the artist in a book intended for 'riche gent'. It is dominated by over two hundred miniatures, whilst the vernacular text is reduced to a commentary; the vividness and coarseness of the pictures, which include illustrations of non-canonical stories such as the trials of Joseph and scenes from the apocryphal infancy of Christ, have been related to contemporary vernacular literature and drama.<sup>48</sup> Examples are also found of illustrated versions (in Latin or French) of the Life of Christ, and in one case of a whole apocryphal Infancy Gospel.<sup>49</sup> Richly illustrated biblical commentaries are rare, though one manuscript of William of Nottingham's commentary on the Gospels contains hundreds of historiated initials of the author writing or lecturing and of New Testament scenes.<sup>50</sup>

Once again, illuminated Breviaries and Missals do not survive in large numbers, though the century ends with a group of richly illuminated Missals: the Litlington Missal made in 1383–4 for Westminster Abbey, whose Abbot's Treasurer's roll provides valuable information about the production of the manuscript (fig. 3.1);<sup>51</sup> the Carmelite Missal, illustrated around 1398, now in fragments;<sup>52</sup> and the Sherborne Missal dating from c.1399–1405, which is one of the most spectacular of all English illuminated manuscripts, both for the splendour of its decoration and the complexity of its illustrative programme.<sup>53</sup> Illustrated copies of patristic texts are rare. A more popular vehicle for illustration is the burgeoning genre of the book of religious instruction. Most examples are vernacular texts aimed at the pious laity, such as Peter of Fitcham's *La lumere as lais*, composed in the thirteenth century to provide answers to questions about the faith, and found decorated or illustrated in the fourteenth (fig. 14.3).<sup>54</sup> An unusual example in a related genre is the set of instructions

48 BL, Add. ms. 47682: Hassall 1954; *Anglo-Norman Holkham Bible*.

49 Boulton 1983. 50 Bodleian, ms. Laud. Misc. 165: *Survey*, v/2, no. 125.

51 London, Westminster Abbey, ms. 37: *Survey*, v/2, no. 150.

52 BL, Add. mss. 29704–5 and 44892: Rickert 1952; *Survey*, vi, no. 2.

53 BL, Add. ms. 74236: Backhouse 1999; *Survey*, vi, no. 9.

54 Pierre d'Abernon of Fitcham: *Lumere as lais*.

for the Mass, illustrated by a series of text miniatures, each showing the priest, server and congregation in various stages of the service.<sup>55</sup> As in previous centuries, theological, moral and scientific beliefs could be presented in diagrammatic form. The set of pictorial diagrams found in the Psalter of Robert de Lisle includes the wheels of the twelve attributes of human existence and of the ten ages of man, the trees of virtues, of vices, and of life, and the tables of the ten commandments, of the twelve articles of faith, and of the seven acts of the Passion.<sup>56</sup> The explanatory texts of these memorable frameworks might be said to illustrate the visual components, thus reversing the ordinary relations between texts and pictures.

The range of secular texts illustrated differs somewhat from the previous century. Lavishly illustrated bestiaries are not so common; where they do occur, they follow older compositional and iconographical formulas.<sup>57</sup> The outstanding example of an illustrated encyclopaedia is the *Omne Bonum* of James le Palmer, a heroic individual compilation which includes over 750 historiated initials and a series of over a hundred tinted drawings of biblical scenes.<sup>58</sup> A small group of coronation orders contain miniatures of royal coronations and funerals; it is unclear whether these were designed as books of instruction for participants in the ceremonies, or as mementos of the events.<sup>59</sup> Of illustrated books of advice for princes, a pair of manuscripts prepared by Walter of Milemete for King Edward III stand out.<sup>60</sup>

What can be said about the function of decoration and illustration which is common to illuminated books throughout these centuries? The idea that pictures are a substitute for the written word, provided for those who are unable to read for themselves, has a long pedigree, going back at least as far as the two letters written by Pope Gregory the Great in 599 and 600 to Bishop Serenus of Marseilles, who had destroyed the pictures in his church to avoid the superstitious worship of images.<sup>61</sup> Gregory tells Serenus that the uneducated may read in pictures the stories which would teach them what to believe. But this is hardly an argument which could work as a justification for pictures in books, whose audience is unlikely to have been composed of the illiterate – though it does

55 BnF, ms. fr. 13342: *Survey*, v/2, no. 58. 56 BL, Arundel ms. 83 pt. II; Sandler 1983.

57 *Survey* v/2, nos. 20, 23, 39, 49 (Canterbury, Cathedral Lib., ms. Lit. D.10, Cambridge, Corpus Christi Coll., ms. 53; Oxford, St John's Coll., ms. 178; Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Mus., ms. 379).

58 Sandler 1996.

59 *Survey*, v/2, nos. 103, 155, 157 (Cambridge, Corpus Christi Coll., ms. 20; London, Westminster Abbey, ms. 38; Pamplona, Archivo General de Navarra, ms. 197).

60 James 1913; *Survey*, v/2, nos. 84, 85 (Oxford, Christ Church, ms. lat. 92; BL, Add. ms. 47680).

61 Gregory the Great: *Registrum epistularum*, 9:209, 11:10.

recur in this context.<sup>62</sup> Rather we should note the importance of visual images as hooks or cues for the memory. In the preface to his *Li Bestiaires d'Amours*, the thirteenth-century author Richart de Fournival explains that memory has two gates of access, sight and hearing, which are served by 'painture' and 'parole' respectively.<sup>63</sup> 'Painture' here includes the mental images created by reading or listening to a text; medieval treatises on memory and composition emphasize the need for people to 'see' their thoughts in their minds as organized schemata of images. Just as letters make present the voices and ideas of those not present, so pictures act as signs which make things present to the mind by acting on memory. Thus the pictures found in books at this period were designed not so much to imitate things as to recall them; they made their appeal to the eye of the mind as much as to the physical eye.

<sup>62</sup> For instance, Gregory's justification is included in the twelfth-century St Albans Psalter (Hildesheim, Dombibliothek, ms. St. Godehard 1, p. 68): Pächt, Dodwell and Wormald 1960, pl. 37.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in Carruthers 1990, p. 223.