

# Society and Art: A Closer Look



## Illuminated Manuscripts

# Society and Art: A Closer Look



## Illuminated Manuscripts

### Why study Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts???

---

In order to analyze specific styles and periods of art  
in relation to prevailing cultural, social, political,  
and economic conditions

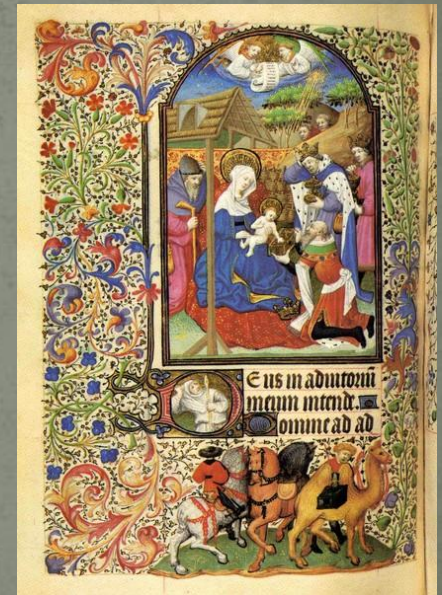
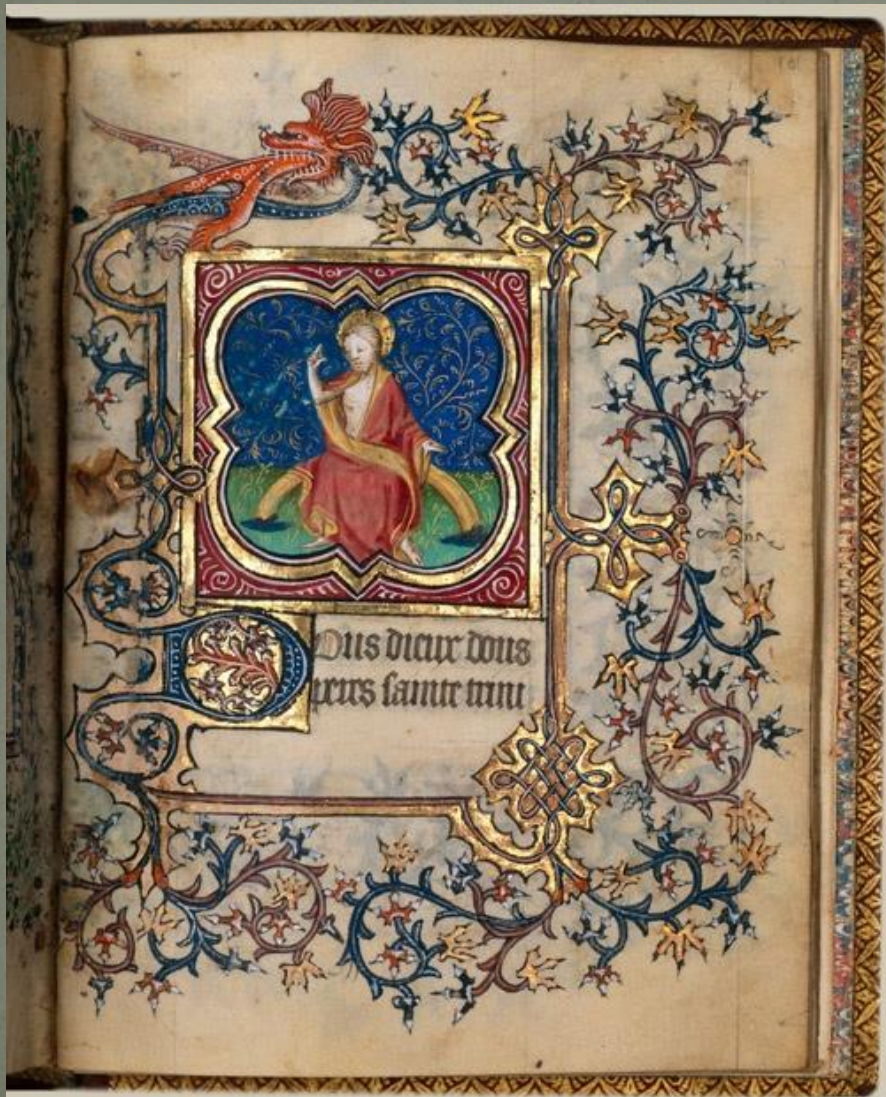
# Medieval Illuminated Manuscript Vocabulary

---

Use advanced art/design vocabulary for  
responding to the aesthetic qualities of various  
works

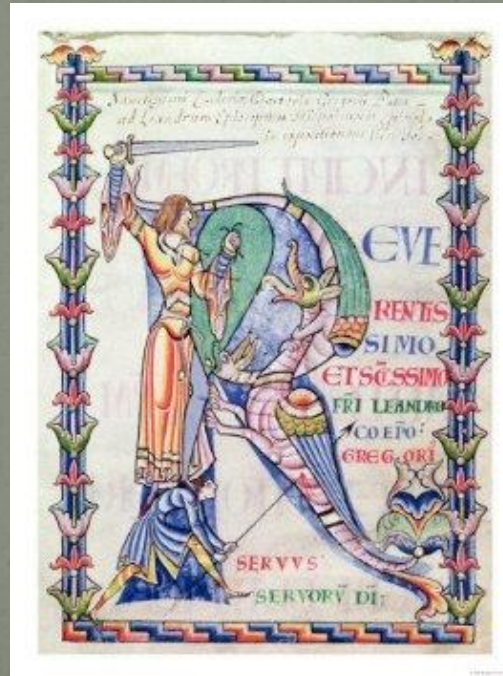
# Illuminated

Decorated with paintings and drawings, usually ornamented with gold, silver, and brilliant colors.



# Historiated Initial

- An enlarged initial containing individual figures or groups that interact; they often form narrative (story telling) scenes that illustrate or refer to the text they introduce.



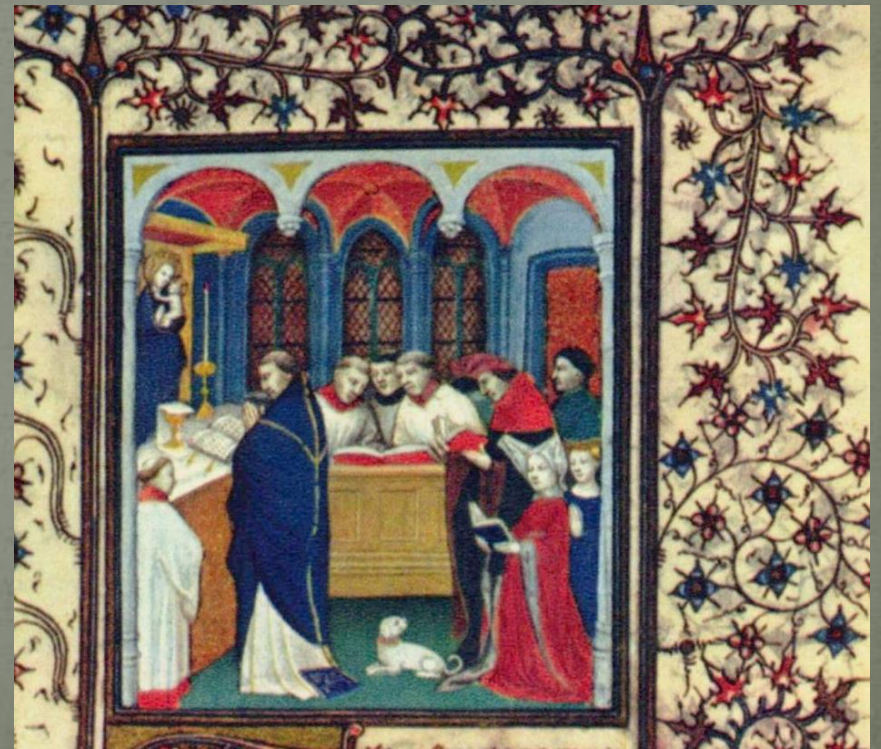
# Illuminated Initial

- An emphasized often lavishly decorated letter at the beginning of a text; used in medieval manuscripts to form breaks within a text and to prioritize the components of the text by drawing the attention of the reader



# Miniature

- A picture, frequently narrative, used as illustration in a manuscript



# Drollery

- Animal and human hybrids that inhabit the initials and foliate (leafy) borders of Gothic manuscript leaves.





➤ Directions: Label the following pictures with the best term.



Drollery



Illuminated  
Initial



Miniature



Historiated  
Initial

# Medieval Art

- Art in Medieval times reflected their societal values
- What did they value the most? (Think back to our notes!)
  - RELIGION
- This can even be seen in their manuscripts, or handwritten texts.



# What are Illuminated Manuscripts?

- Scholars refer to the hand-made books of the Middle Ages as manuscripts.
- Books that contain artistic decoration are called illuminated manuscripts.



- More medieval books survive from the Middle Ages than any other artistic medium.
- Manuscripts that survive from the European Middle Ages are generally religious books that reflect the canon, doctrine and practices of Christianity



though there are Jewish and Muslim books and other types of books that survive from this time period as well.

# Manuscripts: major works of art

Watch the video and answer the following questions:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/medieval-world/medieval-europe/v/manuscripts>

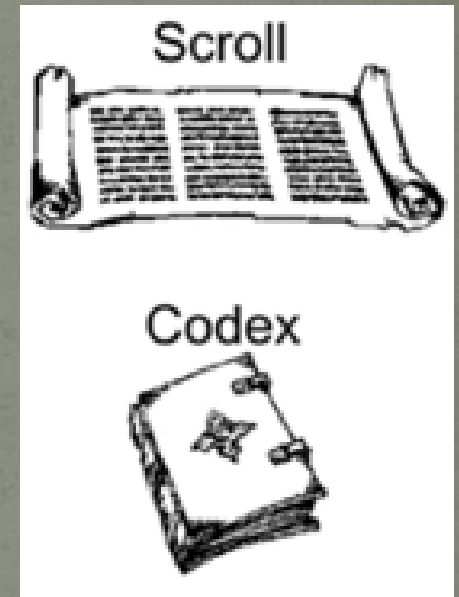
*“The earliest great illuminated manuscripts were of **liturgical** use. They were used in celebration of divine services.”*

Based on the quote from the video, the word **liturgical** most nearly means...

- A. condemnation to eternal punishment in hell
- B. denoting something done with great precision
- C. holding an opinion at odds with what is generally accepted
- D. of or relating public religious worship

# Codex vs Scroll

- A medieval manuscript is a codex (pl. codices), meaning a book made of pages bound between two boards.
- Ancient scribes wrote on scrolls that were stored in boxes. These ancient scrolls only survive in occasional fragments, as a scroll is especially vulnerable to physical degradation.
- The pages of codices, on the other hand, are protected by their covers and have a much greater chance for survival. Thus, medieval books survive in large numbers.



# What's in the books?

- As a reflection of society, most Medieval texts are religious in nature.
- Original manuscripts of the Bible, along with the works of Aristotle and Plato and other ancient writers did not survive.
  - They are known today because medieval scribes diligently copied them.

# A slow and laborious process

- Recording and disseminating information is quick and easy today, but in the Middle Ages this process was slow and laborious.
- Monastery libraries housed most books and all books were copied by hand, usually by monks.
  - This process of copying and disseminating books was essential to the preservation of knowledge.



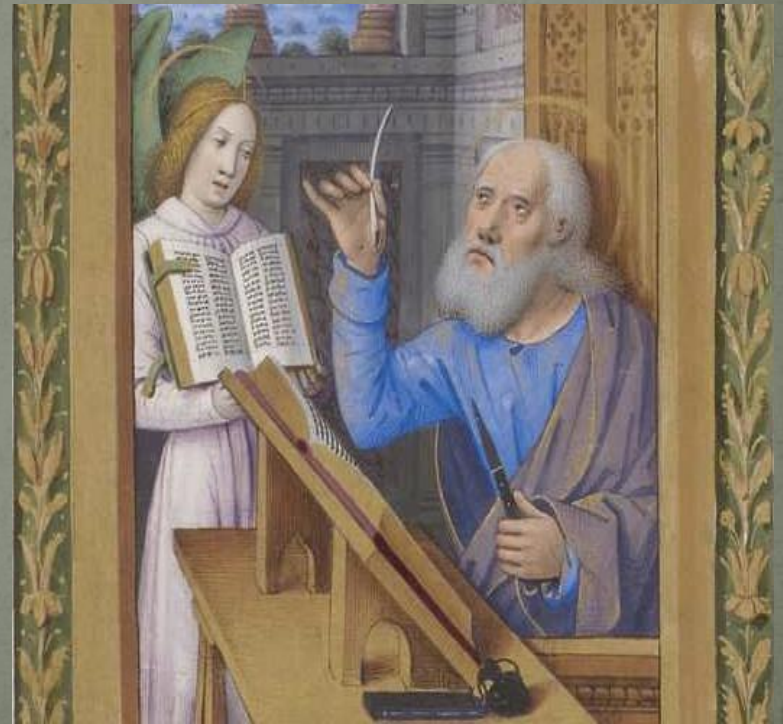


# A slow and laborious process

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/medieval-world/medieval-europe/v/making-manuscripts>

Why was making an illuminated manuscript such a long process? Describe that process.

Relate the time it took to make an illuminated manuscript to the value of an illuminated manuscript.



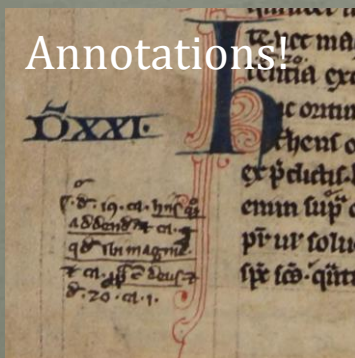
# Illustrations

- The illustration of books was functional as well as decorative. Illuminated initials and painted miniatures marked the beginnings of important sections in the text and allowed readers to navigate the book.
- Introductory image cycles prepared the mind of the reader to engage with the text. Some illustrations elaborate doctrines, record events, or simply tell stories. Even readers' doodles are intriguing to contemporary scholars.



# Word & Image

- In illuminated manuscripts, words and images worked together to inform the medieval reader and occasionally these readers left their own mark.
- These books are highly interactive. Nearly all medieval manuscripts provide ample space in the margins for readers' notes and comments.



Annotations!

- In this way, illuminated manuscripts are different from other types of media in that they provided spaces for readers to record their reactions to image and text.

# REVIEW

- During the Middle Ages, most people could not read. Only very wealthy or scholarly people owned books, which were hand-written and illustrated. While many books were for religious use, there were also books of music, literature, and legends.
- Book manufacture involved a number of steps. Pages were made from parchment, a sturdy material produced from treated and cleaned animal skin. Lines were lightly drawn as guides to keep the writing neat. A quill from a large bird would be used for large text, while a quill from a sparrow might be used for fine writings. Areas were reserved for the illuminations, or illustrations. These might include a border decoration (marginalia), enlargement of the first letter of the text decorated with a scene relating to the topic (historiated initial), or a miniature painting filling either a quarter, half, or a full page.