



Leaves of Gold: Manuscript Illumination from Philadelphia Collecti

James Tanis

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This volume records a remarkable collaborative exhibition that assembles for the first time eighty illuminated manuscripts of great quality, drawn from collections of eleven institutions in the greater Philadelphia area. Almost every artistic centre in medieval and Renaissance Western Europe is represented in this wonderfully diverse group of images, as well as almost every major known type of early illuminated book: Psalters, Bibles, Books of Hours, a wide variety of liturgical manuscripts, and many types of literary and secular texts. The delicate miniatures in these manuscripts did not appear alone; they were surrounded by words and are therefore invaluable historical objects, not only commenting on the texts that they decorate, but also revealing the art, customs, and styles of the times. The works that are to found in this magnificent book range from the religious to the moralising to the romantic and include such treasures as a superb Book of Hours once owned by the Earl of Pembroke, an elegantly illuminated copy of Saint Augustine's City of God. With their jewel-like colours, intimate scale, and often whimsical marginalia, illuminating manuscripts provide an especially engaging glimpse into the past.

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