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FIGURE 1 (FRONTISPICE)

God the Creator of Heaven and Earth. Full folio miniature preceding Genesis of a Moralized Bible written for St. Louis (d. 1270). Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Cod. 1179, fol. i

God is shown creating and encompassing the universe. Seated on a throne and surrounded by a four-lobed aureole which is borne by angels, the Creator holds the universe in His lap. His head bends meditatively, and with the geometer's tool in His right hand He designs His creation. Above the square frame (out of the picture) an inscription appears comparing Him to the potter: "Hic orbis figulus disponit singula solus." See Alexandre de Laborde, La Bible moralisée illustrée (5 vols.; Paris, 1911-1927), Vol. IV, pl. 672; Vol. V, pp. 86-93.

The miniature precedes a narration of sacred history from Genesis through Job, in which the scene of an event of the Old Testament is coupled with an illustration of its allegorical interpretation in light of the New. Each scene is accompanied by a paraphrase of the Vulgate. Job is followed by a moralized Apocalypse of St. John.

The figure of the Creator is the same as that of Christ in the New Testament scenes, as is the case also in the Moralised Bible, Oxford, Bodleian MS 270 b. For Christ's role in the creation of the world as defined in Hebrews 1:1-3 and medieval commentary upon the text, see R. E. Kaske, "The Character 'Figura' in Le Mystère d'Adam," Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Urban Tigner Holmes, Jr., ed. John Mahoney and John E. Keller (Chapel Hill, 1965), pp. 103-10. On the subject of the Creator being represented as Christ on Chartres, see Sister Emma Jane Marie Spargo, The Category of the Aesthetic in the Philosophy of St. Bonaventure (St. Bonaventure, New York, 1953), pp. 22 ff.

FIGURE 2

The Mass, Elevation of the Host. Illuminated "T" of the first words of the Canon "Te igitur . . . ," from the Sarum Missal ascribed to Ely Cathedral, commissioned by
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Hawyse Tiptoft and her husband John Clavering, ca. 1315. New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M. 107, fol. 142 (see Fig. 4).

The priest is raising the Host over the altar while a deacon raises the veiled paten. Sprunging from out of the Tau which forms two arches over the priest and deacons is the cross on which the dead Christ hangs, the sacramental blood flowing down its stem from Christ's side, hands, and feet. Mary stands on Christ's right, the gesture of her arms expressing her grief and suggesting an attitude of prayer. The disciple John stands on Christ's left, holding the Scriptures and seeming by his attitude to be both listening and pointing towards Christ. John Clavering kneels to the left of the Tau. Out of the photograph are three other figures. On the left border just below John Clavering kneels his wife, Hawyse Tiptoft. On the right border of the folio, in larger size, are John the Evangelist and below him John the Baptist. They gaze on the Host, holding emblems to signify that Christ is the Lamb of God (John 1:29; Apoc., chaps. 5, 14, 19, 22).

The Tiptoft Missal is of particular interest, for its organization strikingly exemplifies how the liturgy reformulates sacred history, according to the divine ratio, to center on the actions of the Church in present time. The Ordinary (fols. 138-49), which contains the Canon of the Mass, has been placed, so that it interrupts the Proper of the Seasons, just after the texts recounting the passion. Here, it stands in its position of theological significance as the re-enactment of the passion in the present. The illumination of the elevation of the Host serves in the Missal as the principal image of the crucifixion. Continuing by analogy to the events of the redemption, the Ordinary of the Mass is then followed by the Easter Mass of the resurrection, and the proper texts for the Easter season. See Legg, pp. xx and 227 note 3, and also Legg's Tracts on the Mass, Henry Bradshaw Society, Vol. XXVII (London, 1904), p. xi. The two other illuminations in the Ordinary develop aspects of the Mass: one, preceding the collection of Preface texts, depicts the blessing of the chalice (fol. 139); and the other, illuminating the "Per omnia saecula saeculorum" formula preceding every Preface, portrays the sacrifice of Isaac (fol. 141*), an event traditionally interpreted to prefigure Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

The principle, furthermore, by which certain feasts in the Proper have been singled out to receive large letter illuminations reflects a consistent focus on the theme of the Church, with Mary as the main figure. These are the Annunciation (fol. 231*), Christmas (fol. 23), the Presentation (fol. 226*), the Ascension (fol. 163*), Pentecost (fol. 168*), and the Assumption (fol. 253*). Each illumination depicts the event being celebrated, and it is composed in relationship to the others as the event prefigures or develops the foundation of the Church.

Finally, the Introit for Trinity Sunday (fol. 176) has an especially beautiful illumination of the perpetuation of Christ's redemptive sacrifice in present time. Within the "B" of "Benedicta" the Father sits enthroned, holding in His outstretched arms the cross on which Christ hangs. The Father gazes out at the observer. Christ's eyes are open also, signifying His eternal life. His hands, in counter direction to those of the Father, are open wide as if to manifest Himself or to uplift the observer. In the form of a dove, His wings spread out also along the arms of the cross, the Spirit issues from the Son to the Father, representing the perpetual renewal of Christ's oblation of Himself to the Father for mankind.

Also contained in the Tiptoft Missal are four illuminations of saints and one of the dedication of a Church. See fols. 179, 180, 181, 216, and 218.

FIGURE 3

The Annunciation. First of four miniatures preceding a Psalter written for a nun of Amesbury Abbey, Wilts, ca. 1250. Possibly from a Salisbury atelier. Oxford, All Souls College MS 6, fol. 3 (see Figs. 6 and 7).
The approaching angel remains separated from the Virgin by the central column of the two arches, his right hand raised in proclamation. The salutation, inscribed on the scroll opening from his left hand, penetrates down into the Virgin's space. At the same time, from the center of the arch above her, a dove bearing the nimbus of divinity descends to the Virgin's ear, signifying Mary's virginal conception of Christ by the Holy Spirit. In her left hand the Virgin holds the Scriptures foretelling the coming of the Messiah.

The miniatures of the Amesbury Psalter are designed in a proportionate relation to each other. A scene of Mary and Christ on earth is contrasted and alternated by a scene of Mary and Christ in glory, so that the sequence presented is: the Annunciation, fol. 3 (Fig. 3), contrasted by the Virgin and Child Enthroned, fol. 4 (Fig. 7); the Crucifixion, fol. 5 (Fig. 6), contrasted by Christ in Majesty, fol. 6.


**FIGURE 4**

The Birth of Christ and the Tree of Jesse. Illuminated "P" from first words of the Introit, "Puer natus est . . . ," Third Mass on Christmas Day. Tiptoft Missal, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M. 107, fol. 23 (see Fig. 2 and descriptive note).

The visual center, contained in the letter "P," depicts the theme of the present feast, the celebration of the birth and humanity of Christ Who is God. The reclining Mary receives the Child from a midwife, while at the foot of her couch Joseph meditates. The "P" springs as the central branch from the tree of Jesse, which, setting Christ's birth in the context of the past, reveals Christ's kingly lineage in the Old Testament. At the bottom of the page Jesse reclines, meditating. The two side branches which embrace the page support the Old Testament kings and prophets who preceded and pointed to Christ. At the branches' summit, ruling over the page, is Christ as He is in present time, Redeemer and King of Heaven, bearing the wounds of His humanity and crucifixion: on Christ's right an angel bears the crown of thorns, on His left one bears the cross. Enthroned below at the base of the tree of Jesse, in a position that corresponds to Christ's above, Mary reigns as she is in present time, Queen by virtue of her motherhood of Christ. See also below, pp. 53–54, 58.

**FIGURE 5**


The events, the nativity, the annunciation to the shepherds, the circumcision, the adoration of the Magi, the presentation in the Temple, and the flight into Egypt, are ordered from left to right by sequence of time into three groups of two panels; the corners of all the frames, knotted together by flowers, unify the events into a whole. Counter to the sequence of narrative, the scenes are also ordered into two groups of three panels by the contrast in color between the square settings, panels 1, 4 and 5, panels 2, 3 and 6. The scenes are ordered in yet a third proportion by theme. Those on
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the left, from top to bottom, depict the events that concern Christ in the Temple, those on the right depict the events that reveal Christ to the world.

The thematic proportioning is evident from the correspondences in design and meaning. The panels on the left show a similar grouping of figures in the two lower Temple scenes; there are parallels between the priest (in 3) and Simeon (in 5) in type, gesture and garment; a repetition of the lamp and altar motifs; and a repetition in Mary's gesture of offering her Child. The elements in the nativity scene can be seen to foreshadow the Temple scenes, as the figure of Joseph is developed by the figures of the priest and Simeon; the traditional iconographic parallel is made between the box-like manger and the two altars, and the motif of the star is repeated in the lamps. Finally, the cloth which covers Mary's couch in the nativity appears in the circumcision covering the altar; while in the presentation the altar is bare and a veil of respect, suggesting the veil used by a priest to handle the sacred vessels, covers the hands of Simeon. The panels on the right develop a consistent theme, beginning with the incursion of the angel who announces the Christ Child, moving through the manifestation of the Child to the Magi, and ending with the collapse of a devil before the Child as He departs into exile. The figure of the old man—the shepherd, the king, Joseph—dominates each of the compositions, and the motif of a figure upon a base is repeated in the young piping shepherd, in the mother and Child enthroned, and in the idol falling from its pedestal.

In panels 3 through 6 there is an interplay between the Child's humanity and His divinity. In the circumcision scene the Child is naked, His nimbus bears no rays, and He draws back with a gesture of pain. By contrast, in the presentation He is robed, crowned by a rayed nimbus, and, holding His mother's veil, He reaches towards Simeon's welcoming veiled hands. In the adoration of the Magi, dressed in a full-sleeved garment, crowned by a rayed nimbus and standing on His mother's lap (with Mary herself shown as a crowned queen), He blesses the king and takes the gift of gold which signifies His kingship. In the flight into Egypt, the Child again is robed and bears a rayed nimbus as Mary carries Him into exile, led by Joseph. Turned entirely back towards the shelter of His mother, the Child reaches to her to be nourished.


FIGURE 6

The Crucifixion. Third of four miniatures preceding a Psalter written for a nun of Amesbury Abbey, Wilts, ca. 1250. Possibly from a Salisbury atelier. Oxford, All Souls College MS 6, fol. 5 (see Figs. 3 and 7).

Although the artist has chosen different iconographic elements to reveal the death of Christ as the moment of mankind's redemption, certain aspects of the portrayal can be compared to stanzas one and two of "Pe milde Lomb isprad o rode" (see above, pp. 103 ff.). The harsh violence of the event is minimized and its significance is revealed both by the elements and the artist's handling of the composition. The scene is proportioned geometrically into four sections by the cross, which, rising out of the hill, is backed by a plain crosspiece set into the rectangular border of the miniature. Christ hangs in the center, dead, His body bowed to the right, the blood flowing from His right side and from the wounds of His head, hands and feet. Symmetrically, under the arms of the cross, Mary stands on Christ's right and John stands on His left, both
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bowed meditatively by grief. On either side above the arms of the cross are the darkened sun and moon. Slanting over the top of the cross is the placard reading “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” (John 19:19). But the symmetrical, still-seeming figures also reveal life. Christ’s head bears the rayed nimbus of divinity, His garment is richly decorated, the knotted end blows, His blood pours abundantly. The cross itself bears stumps of branches to signify that it is in fact the Tree of Life, and its placard, tilting precariously, joins the cross with heaven above. The garments and limbs of Mary and John are caught in motion, and all the figures break out beyond their borders.

The fact that the moment of crucifixion is the moment of redemption is embodied here in the actions of the figures represented in the framing borders. At the four corners in circular medallions incensing angels kneel, perpetually adoring the Divine Redeemer. Into the center of each of the frame’s sides, four other arch-like medallions are woven. In the medallion above Christ, between two other adoring angels, is God the Father. Crowned by a rayed nimbus and gazing out of the frame at the observer, He holds the Spirit to His breast, Who in the form of a dove appears to have just ascended to Him from His Son (see the Tipsoft Missal, fol. 176). In the corresponding medallion below Christ, thrusting up into the hill of the cross, is Adam who rises out of his grave with two other souls, having been redeemed by Christ’s blood which is flowing down from the cross upon them. On the right side of the frame, towards which Christ leans, and just beyond Mary (who is herself a figure of the Church), the triumphing Church is represented. She bears her standard of victory and holds the sacramental chalice of Christ’s blood. On the left, beside John (who is traditionally a figure of the Synagog), the Synagog swoons, her standard breaking, her vessel turned down and spilling out its contents.

FIGURE 7

The Virgin and Child Enthroned. Second of four miniatures preceding the Psalter written for a nun of Amesbury Abbey, Wilts, ca. 1250. Oxford, All Souls College MS 6, fol. 4 (see Figs. 3, 6).

The enthroned Virgin and Child are seated in the center of the frame, within an arch suggestive of a church or the heavenly Jerusalem. According to the promise of power to those who trust in the Lord (Compline Psalm 90, verse 13), the Virgin treads underfoot the lion and the dragon. With the head and body of a boy or young man and crowned by the rayed nimbus of divinity, the Child relaxes on His mother’s knee and is nourished by her. The Virgin bends over Him, supporting Him with her left hand and with her right offering Him her breast; yet it is the Child Who lifts and guides His mother’s hand.

Within the arch kneels the figure of a praying nun. Her prayer, issuing from her hands on a scroll, repeats the angel’s salutation at the annunciation (see Fig. 3), adding the incomplete syllables “bene” of “blessed.” As the angel’s words descended from heaven to earth then, so the nun’s words ascend from earth to Mary in heaven. But in the context of present time, this salutation sounds as a prayer confirming Mary’s blessedness and an invocation of Mary’s power in virtue of her closeness to her Son. Above the arch, penetrating down through it with their censors, are two adoring angels. All eyes, even those of the infernal lion and dragon, contemplate the mother and Child, while the Virgin contemplates the Child. With the eternal gaze of God, the eyes of the Child stare out of the miniature at the observer, drawing the observer’s eyes to Himself, and through His hand, to His mother’s breast, to her inclining head, which bends down over her Child, leading the observer’s gaze back to the eyes of the Child.