

Robert Miller

Medieval illuminated manuscripts

Online images and resources

With their rich representation of medieval life and thought, illuminated manuscripts serve as primary sources for scholars in any number of fields: history, literature, art history, women's studies, religious studies, philosophy, the history of science, and more.

But you needn't be conducting research to immerse yourself in the world of medieval manuscripts. The beauty, pathos, and earthy humor of illuminated manuscripts make them a delight for all. Thanks to digitization efforts by libraries and museums worldwide, the colorful creations of the medieval imagination—dreadful demons, armies of Amazons, gardens, gems, bugs, birds, celestial vistas, and simple scenes of everyday life—are easily accessible online.

Digitized manuscripts

Below are some portals where you can explore digitized illuminated manuscripts directly. Many sites will link you to collection highlights, providing quick access to masterpieces of manuscript art. To search a collection, you can usually bring up interesting images with keywords pertaining to medieval life: saint, devil, dragon, queen, battle, city, etc.

Of course, if you want to reproduce an image via social media or other venue, consult the website's terms of use. And if you do use

an image, always try to cite it for your readers. A citation may include the institution's name, the shelf mark (a unique identifier for the manuscript, like a call number), the folio (page number), and a URL. A citation for an item from the British library, for example, may look like this: BL Harley 4431 f. 4 <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/ILLUMIN.ASP?Size=mid&IllID=28575>.

- **British Library.** You can browse, search by keyword, limit by date, as well as access the *British Library Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts*. There are also links to collection highlights, such as the St. Cuthbert Gospel, the oldest intact European book. *Access:* <https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/>.



DIGITISED MANUSCRIPTS

British Library Digitised Manuscripts. Permission: © British Library Board

- **Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts.** A direct way of searching for medieval illuminations in the British Library. Try the "Simple search," limit to images, and enter keywords like rose, rabbit, etc. *Access:* <http://www.bl.uk>

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/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/welcome.htm.

- **Enluminures.** A French-language gateway to manuscript collections in Parisian libraries other than the Bibliothèque nationale de France. *Access:* <http://www.enluminures.culture.fr/documentation/enlumine/fr/>.

- **Free Library of Philadelphia.** A helpful introduction to medieval manuscripts together with a highlights tour and search engine. *Access:* <https://libwww.freelibrary.org/collections/medieval/>.

- **Index of Christian Art.** Based at Princeton University, the Index makes several digital image collections available to the public, including thousands of manuscript images. *Access:* <https://ica.princeton.edu/>.

- **J. Paul Getty Museum.** Explore the Getty collection by clicking on “Manuscripts,” then entering a keyword or doing an advanced search. *Access:* <http://www.getty.edu/art/collection/>.

- **Mandragore.** A portal to the illuminated manuscript collections of the Bibliothèque nationale de France. The interface is in French only. *Access:* <http://mandragore.bnf.fr/html/accueil.html>.

- **Morgan Library & Museum.** Browse the Morgan’s collection of medieval and renaissance manuscripts, search by keyword, and see collection highlights. *Access:* <http://ica.themorgan.org/default>.

- **National Library of the Netherlands.** View highlights or, for a deeper dive, search by keyword, author, miniaturist, place of origin, and more. *Access:* <http://manuscripts.kb.nl/>.

- **Vatican Library.** An extensive digitization project is putting manuscript treasures of the Vatican online. As of this writing, the number of digitized manuscripts exceeds 13,000. *Access:* <http://digi.vatlib.it/mss/>.

- **Walters Art Museum.** The Walters provides high-resolution images of many of its more than 900 illuminated manuscripts. *Access:* <http://art.thewalters.org/browse/category/manuscript-and-rare-books/>.

#MedievalTwitter

A vibrant community of manuscript schol-

ars and amateur enthusiasts keeps Twitter feeds well stocked with striking illuminations, many of them captioned for comic effect or chosen as wry comments on current events. The #MedievalTwitter community is warm and welcoming: as a mere dilettante in the world of manuscripts, I’ve connected with and learned from professional scholars on Twitter. Here are some accounts to follow:

- **Damien Kempf.** A historian at the University of Liverpool, Kempf is the coauthor, with Maria L. Gilbert, of the illustrated book *Medieval Monsters* (British Library Publishing, 2015). *Access:* <https://twitter.com/DamienKempf>.

- **Eleanor Parker.** Parker is a scholar who brings the medieval world alive in her blog and in stories for *History Today*. *Access:* <https://twitter.com/ClerkofOxford>.

- **Emily Steiner.** Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, Steiner tweets manuscript images, often adding apposite quotations from medieval literature. *Access:* <https://twitter.com/PiersatPenn>.

- **Erik Kwakkel.** Book historian and Scaliger chair at Leiden University, Kwakkel uses social media to popularize the oddities and wonders of medieval manuscripts. *Access:* https://twitter.com/erik_kwakkel.

- **Johan Oosterman.** Professor of Medieval Literature, Radboud University, Oosterman leads a team to preserve and digitize the prayer book of Mary of Guelders, a manuscript with its own Twitter account, @mariavgelre. *Access:* <https://twitter.com/JohanOosterman>.

- **Julian Harrison.** Harrison is curator of Medieval Manuscripts at the British Library and a driving force behind the British Library’s outreach efforts to bring their digitized manuscripts to a worldwide audience. *Access:* <https://twitter.com/julianpharrison>.

- **Miranda Bloem.** A scholar at Radboud University, Bloem is one of the many manuscript experts who brings a wealth of knowledge and a sense of humor to #MedievalTwitter. *Access:* https://twitter.com/Zweder_Masters.



Dr. Zweder Masters
@Zweder_Masters

Ready to Parteh!! #PartyAnimal

@MorganLibrary M.1004 fol. 79r



Owl tweet. Permission: Miranda Bloem and The Morgan Library and Museum. MSM. 1004. Purchased on the Fellows Fund with the special assistance of Mrs. Vincent Astor, Mrs. Charles W. Engelhard, Mr. Haliburton Fales, 2nd, Miss Alice Tully, and Miss Julia P. Wightman, 1979

• **Robert Miller.** I have been tweeting illuminations from the British Library's online collection for about five years. I've been fortunate to have made a pilgrimage to the British Library, meeting curator Julian Harrison and seeing priceless manuscripts in person, in the Sir John Ritblat Treasures of the British Library Gallery. *Access:* <https://twitter.com/robmmiller>.

• **Sarah Laseke.** A doctoral student at Leiden University, Laseke tweets illuminated manuscripts and founded Hug a Medievalist Day. *Access:* <https://twitter.com/SarahLaseke>.

• **Sarah Peverley.** Professor of English at the University of Liverpool, Peverley broadcasts on the BBC and is a noted public speaker on the Middle Ages. *Access:* https://twitter.com/Sarah_Peverley.

Blogs, guides, traditions, hugs

Following are informative and entertaining blogs; guides for understanding arcane aspects of illuminated manuscripts; manuscript collections from traditions other than western, Christian culture; and your chance to hug a medievalist, at least virtually.

• **British Library Glossary.** Illustrated explanations of the specialized word-*hoard* employed by manuscript scholars, from acanthus to marginalia to zoomorphic ini-

tial. *Access:* <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/glossary.asp>.

• **British Library Medieval Manuscripts Blog.** British Library staff and guest bloggers share their expertise and, not infrequently, their sense of humor. The 2012 "Unicorn Cookbook" April Fools' post prompted at least one group from a culinary school to visit the British Library, asking to examine the "long-lost medieval cookbook" containing a recipe for unicorn. *Access:* <http://blogs.bl.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/index.html>.

• **British Library Online Gallery: Sacred Texts.** An excellent introduction to manuscripts beyond the Christian tradition. View texts sacred to Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism. *Access:* <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/sacredthemespage.html>.



Medieval Manuscripts Blog. Permission: © British Library Board

• **DMMap: Digitized Medieval Manuscripts App.** An interactive map that links you directly to the manuscript collections of more than 500 institutions worldwide. From the Sexy Codicology team. *Access:* <http://digitizedmedievalmanuscripts.org/app/>.

• **Hug a Medievalist Day.** March 31, 2018, will be the eighth international celebration of this August event. *Access:* <https://twitter.com/hugamedievalist>.

• **InScribe.** Learn the fundamentals of paleography in this open access course from the Institute of Historical Research, School of Advanced Study, University of London. *Access:* <http://www.history.ac.uk/research-training/courses/online-palaeography>.

• **Islamic Manuscripts.** The Walters Art Museum provides a handsome interface to explore its collection of Islamic manuscripts, dating back to the 9th century. The site also

includes an online exhibition, Poetry and Prayer, featuring Islamic illumination and calligraphy. *Access:* <http://art.thewalters.org/browse/category/islamic-manuscripts/>.

- **Manuscript Art.** A wide-ranging and well-organized look at manuscript art by scholar Jesse Hurlburt. *Access:* <http://jessehurlbut.net/wp/mssart/>.

- **Medieval Bestiary.** Creatures mundane and mythical populate the pages of illuminated manuscripts, and this illustrated website, based on ancient and medieval texts, provides essential information should you ever encounter a bonnacon or want to harvest a mandrake. *Access:* <http://bestiary.ca/>.

- **Metropolitan Museum of Art, Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History.** Search for “illuminated manuscripts” to discover essays and illuminations covering a range of centuries and cultural traditions. *Access:* <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/>.

- **Polonsky Foundation Catalogue of Digitised Hebrew Manuscripts.** This British Library project allows you to explore featured content and themes in an extensive collection, as well as read articles and watch videos. *Access:* <https://www.bl.uk/hebrew-manuscripts>.

- **Sexy Codicology.** Giulio Menna and Marjolein de Vos, both of Leiden University, maintain

this informative and beautifully illustrated blog. *Access:* <https://sexcodicology.net/blog/>.



Sexy Codicology

A World of Illuminated Manuscripts and Medieval Books

Sexy Codicology. Permission: Giulio Menna and Marjolein de Vos

- **The Iris: Behind the Scenes at the Getty.** Search for “illuminated manuscripts” to uncover blog posts and podcasts about items from the Getty collection. *Access:* <https://blogs.getty.edu/iris/>.

- **Treasures of Islamic Manuscript Painting from the Morgan.** An online exhibition showcasing beautiful illuminations, many from the Middle Ages. *Access:* <http://www.themorgan.org/collection/treasures-of-islamic-manuscript-painting>.

- **YouTube.** Search for “medieval manuscripts” to retrieve a host of videos by institutions like the Getty and renowned experts like Christopher de Hamel. Many videos demonstrate the painstaking process of creating a manuscript as it was done in the Middle Ages. *Access:* <https://www.youtube.com/>. *~*

(“Academic libraries serving . . .,” continues from page 301)

Academic librarians could also invite public librarians to share with library staff and others in the university community the work they are doing and see if there are ways to collaborate and provide support. Where appropriate, they might provide refugees access to needed information that the public library does not have available, such as books in a variety of languages. Academic libraries might also collaborate with community organizations to be certain that relevant information about local activities is being preserved and archived for future researchers.

The authors in this column provide some examples of research and good practices that academic libraries can undertake to support refugees and asylum seekers. While much of

this is similar to what libraries do to support all users and potential users, the needs of refugees and asylum seekers can be challenging and require commitment, collaboration, and creative thinking.

Notes

1. Project Welcome, <https://publish.illinois.edu/projectwelcome>.

2. <https://diversityinfoneeds.wordpress.com>.

3. K. Starbird, “Digital volunteerism: Examining connected crowd work during mass disruption events,” in Proceedings of the Computer Human Interaction Conference 2012, May 5–10, 2012, in Austin, Texas.

(continues on page 338)

A farewell message from Emily Sheketoff, executive director of ALA's Washington Office

2017 has been a very different year in many ways. A new kind of president. A chaotic budget process in the U.S. Congress. My departure from ALA. Not that these conflate, but that is the world we're inhabiting.

What is not different is the dedication of library advocates. When President Trump released his "skinny budget" devoid of details in March, his proposal to eliminate the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)—and with it the library funding that went through the agency—was enough to set library advocates from around the country into action. Together, we convinced one-third of the entire House of Representatives, from both parties, to sign letters to the House Appropriations Committee in support of two federal library programs—the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL).

Advocates worked tirelessly in their home districts, and they came to Washington, D.C., in record numbers. National Library Legislative Day in the first week of May had 25% more participants than last year, pushing the fire marshal's limit by 10! The 530 participants in Washington, D.C., and more than 1,000 participants in Virtual Library Legislative Day, asked their senators to sign a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee requesting \$186.6 million for LSTA and to reauthorize the Museum and Library Services Act.

The same week, Congress passed an omnibus spending bill, which will fund the government through September. Congress added \$1 million to IMLS's budget—a poke in President Trump's eye.

As I write this last Washington Hotline during my last week at ALA, it is easy to

focus on library funding concerns and the many policy challenges that lay ahead: active efforts by the FCC chairman to roll back network neutrality, threats to fair balance in copyright policy, and increasing surveillance and privacy risks, to name a few.

At the same time, increasing public needs and decreasing public funding makes this a ripe moment for educating Congress on the many ways that libraries provide economic opportunity to people across the country. Right now, major corporations worth billions of dollars—publishers, data aggregators, and other companies who do business in libraries—are joining forces to advocate for federal funding for libraries.

As evidenced by House support for federal library funding, library advocates have allies in Congress. We just need to keep up our pressure for funding for libraries and information policies that serve the public interest.

I am satisfied that my 17 years at ALA have been well-spent. I have played a part in helping library patrons in this country get better library services, and that makes me feel both proud and profoundly grateful. Farewell, and keep up the fight—our communities are counting on us. ♪

("Academic libraries serving . . .," continues from page 337)

4. Standby Task Force, standbytaskforce.org.
5. Internews, internews.org.
6. United Nations, "High-level UN Event Tackles Biggest Refugee and Migration Crisis since Second World War," UN News Centre, September 30 2015, accessed March 23, 2017, www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=52074-Vs6MNJMrLUo.
7. The 1947 Partition Archive, www.1947partitionarchive.org. ♪

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