

## VELLUM LEAF FROM AN ILLUMINATED MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPT

FRANCE; Late XIVth Century

Latin Text; Gothic Script

**Psalter**  
(*Psalterium*)

FROM THE COLLECTION OF OTTO F. EGE

The Psalter with its one hundred and fifty psalms is the best collection of religious lyrics which the world possesses. It is no wonder, therefore, that it forms an important part of so many medieval manuscripts. The Psalms are found not only in manuscripts of the Bible, but also in Missals, Breviaries, and Books of Hours; and, as they had to be memorized by the priests, they were also transcribed separately. In the earlier periods there was generally a harmonious unity between the spirit of the ornament and the character of the

writing. This unity is exemplified in this leaf. The three-lobed, gracefully drawn, symmetrical fronds of leaves in the ornament are usually accepted without question as representing the ivy plant. In the Middle Ages many magical and medicinal qualities were attributed to this plant.

Unfortunately, fire and water, mice and men have in the course of the centuries often left their damaging marks on manuscript leaves. Some pages of this manuscript book show the effect of having been exposed to dampness.