Fragmentarium

VELLUM LEAF FROM AN ILLUMINATED MEDIEVAL MANUSCRIPT

ENGLAND; Late XIIIth Century — Latin Text; Angular Gothic Script

Psalter

(Psalterium)

FROM THE COLLECTION OF OTTO F. EGE

Illuminated Psalters occur as early as the VIIIth century, and from the XIth to the beginning of the XIVth century they predominate among illuminated manuscripts. About 1220 A.D., portable manuscript volumes supplanted the huge tomes favored in the preceding century. This change in size caused the creation of a more angular and compact script. In general, smaller initial letters were used, and writing was done in double columns.

At this time the pendant tails of the initial letters are rigid or only slightly wavy, with a few leaves springing from the ends. Later, they became free scrolls, with luxurious foliage, and were extended into all the margins. The blue and lake (orange-red) color scheme with accents of white is a carry-over from the Westminster tradition which prevailed in the previous century. The solid line-filling ornaments at the ends of the verses were a new feature added in the second half of the XIIIth century. Silver and alloys of gold are used on this leaf.

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