
Volume 5 | Issue 4

76-110

2016

Books Were Opened: The Apocalypse of Margaret of York (Ms. M.484) and Spiritual Empowerment of the Laity in the Fifteenth Century

Amanda Wasielewski
City University of New York

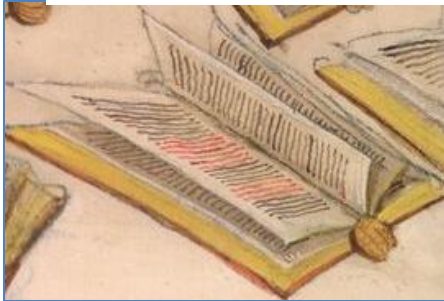
Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital.kenyon.edu/perejournal>

 Part of the Ancient, Medieval, Renaissance and Baroque Art and Architecture Commons

Recommended Citation

Wasielewski, Amanda. "Books Were Opened: The Apocalypse of Margaret of York (Ms. M.484) and Spiritual Empowerment of the Laity in the Fifteenth Century." *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture* 5, 4 (2016): 76-110. <https://digital.kenyon.edu/perejournal/vol5/iss4/4>

This Feature Article is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Peregrinations: Journal of Medieval Art and Architecture* by an authorized editor of Digital Kenyon: Research, Scholarship, and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact noltj@kenyon.edu.



Books Were Opened: The Apocalypse of Margaret of York (Ms. M.484) and Spiritual Empowerment of the Laity in the Fifteenth Century

By Amanda Wasielewski, City University of New York

The death of Duke Charles the Bold at the Battle of Nancy in 1477 spelled the demise of the Duchy of Burgundy, the last remnant of the middle French kingdom. For a region in the midst of great socio-political shifts during the latter fifteenth-century, this event effectively marked the end of the Middle Ages. In England, the death of King Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485 was a similarly symbolic endpoint. The political upheaval of the time was matched by a transformation in devotional practices. Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, sister of Richard III and wife of Charles the Bold, lived through this transitional time, amassing a collection of books that testify to these changes. Her devotion was reflected in the large number of books on religious instruction in her collection, including advanced texts not usually owned by the laity.¹ These books show that, like many women in her country, she was influenced by popular mystical practices of prayer and contemplation such as *Devotio Moderna*. Spread via the written word, mysticism in devotional practices in the fifteenth century

¹ Nigel Morgan, "Texts of Devotion and Religious Instruction Associated with Margaret of York," in *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and the Visions of Tondal: Papers Delivered at a Symposium Organized*, ed. Thomas Kren (Malibu, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1992), 69.

empowered the individual to have a more direct relationship with God. The Apocalypse of Margaret of York (New York, Morgan Library & Museum, Ms. M.484), (**Fig.1**), particularly the



Figure 1 Apocalypse of Margaret of York. New York, Morgan Library & Museum. Ms. M.484, fol. 103v. Judgment and Last Resurrection. Photo: author, Copyright Morgan Library & Museum.

miniature on fol.103v, the “Last Resurrection and Judgment,” (**Fig. 2**) signals these shifting devotional practices and concerns. Commissioned around 1475, it was one of several visionary narratives in Margaret’s collection.² The inventive composition of this Judgment miniature, with its host of heavenly books accompanying Christ in the sky, illustrates the increasing authority of

² Margaret was also in possession of *La vision de l’âme de Guy de Thurno* (Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 31) and *Les visions du chevalier Tondal* (Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 30). For the complete list of books associated with the duchess, see Kurtis A. Bartow, “Appendix: the Library of Margaret of York and Some Related books,” in Thomas Kren, ed., *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and the Visions of Tondal* (Malibu, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1992), 257–262.

books in the religious life of the laity. The prominent place of the book in this miniature as well as others in both Ms. M.484 and the Apocalypse of Charles the Bold (New York, Morgan Library & Museum, Ms. M.68) demonstrate a rising belief that a direct connection to God and

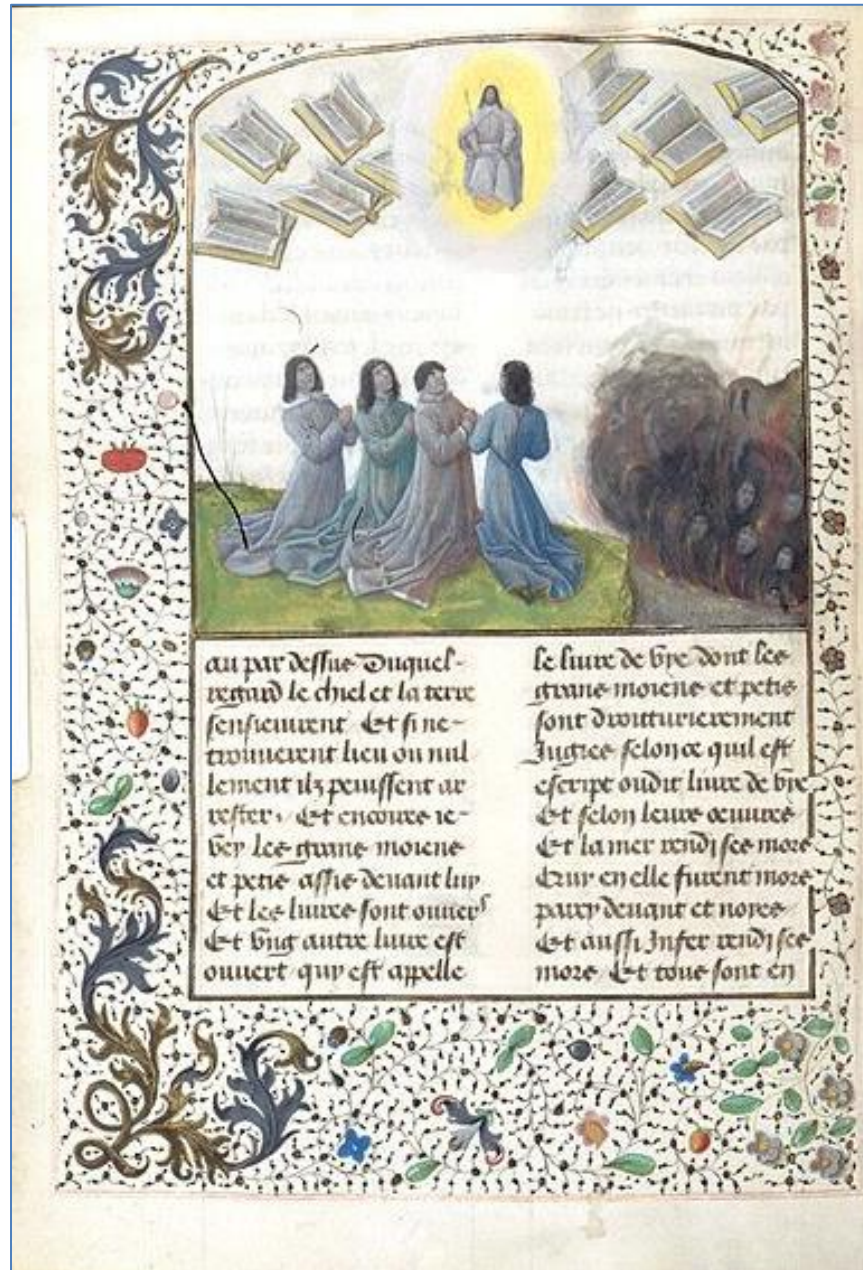


Figure 2 Apocalypse of Margaret of York. New York, Morgan Library & Museum. Ms. M.484, fol. 103v. Judgment and Last Resurrection. Photo: Morgan Library & Museum.

salvation could be obtained merely through the act of reading and the power of the book.

Margaret of York and Book Culture in the Duchy of Burgundy

Although Margaret of York's library was never inventoried, there are twenty-nine manuscripts linked to the duchess.³ While this is a small number compared to the approximately one thousand in the library of Philip the Good, the father of Margaret's husband, Charles the Bold, this was still a substantial number for a woman at that time.⁴ In contrast, Charles' second wife, Isabelle of Bourbon, did not have much interest in collecting manuscripts, though she did commission some jointly with her husband.⁵ Charles the Bold's mother, Isabel of Portugal, like Margaret, had a keen interest in manuscripts. While Isabel's collection was smaller and her influence less-pronounced than Margaret's, she still played a significant role in the book culture at the court of her husband Philip the Good.⁶ Throughout late-medieval Europe, the ruling classes commissioned books to reflect and consolidate status and political power.⁷ Burgundian rulers like Philip the Good leveraged, via their extensive libraries, the assumption of truth attributed to the written word in order to justify political decisions.⁸ Given Margaret's political involvement during the course of her life, her book commissions allowed her to portray herself as an appropriately pious and wise ruler in the eyes of the court.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Thomas Kren, Introduction to *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and the Visions of Tondal*, ed. Thomas Kren (Malibu, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1992), 15. See also Georges Doutrepoint, *Inventaire de la "bibliothèque" de Philippe le Bon (1420)* (Brussels: Kiessling et cie, 1906).

⁵ Joni M Hand, *Women, Manuscripts and Identity in Northern Europe, 1350-1550* (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013), 39.

⁶ Charity Cannon Willard, "The Patronage of Isabel of Portugal," in *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, ed. June Hall McCash (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 306–320.

⁷ Roger S Wieck, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life* (New York: G. Braziller in association with the Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, 1988), 34.; Wim Blockmans, "The Devotion of a Lonely Duchess," in *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and the Visions of Tondal*, ed. Thomas Kren (Malibu, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1992), 42.

⁸ Bert Cardon, "Books at Court," in *Medieval Mastery: Book Illumination from Charlemagne to Charles the Bold, 800-1475*, ed. Adelaide Louise Bennett (Turnhout Brepols and Louvain: Davidsfond, 2002), 74–75.

In 1468, Margaret of York arrived in Burgundy to marry Charles the Bold. She was met with great spectacle and fanfare, and the union was labelled “the marriage of the century” by contemporary commentators.⁹ Margaret was the sister of Edward IV, King of England, and her marriage was of political importance both for establishing England as an ally against the scheming King Louis XI of France (“The Universal Spider”) and solidifying favorable trading alliances between the Flemish territories in the Duchy of Burgundy and England.¹⁰ Good relations between the two were brokered by Margaret personally on several occasions, notably during a diplomatic trip she undertook in 1480 to solicit an English alliance in their war against France on behalf of her stepdaughter Mary, Charles’s only child by his second wife Isabelle of Bourbon, and Mary’s husband, Maximilian I, the future Holy Roman Emperor.¹¹ Since Charles had no male heirs, many hoped that Margaret would prove to be as fertile as her mother Cecily Neville, who had seven children and lived well into her eighties, but Margaret ultimately remained childless.

Some have suggested that Margaret’s piousness and interest in religious books stemmed from the influence of her mother, whose religious devotion was very well documented.¹² I would venture that this was not her primary motivation, however. More likely, her exposure to the ducal libraries and those of high-ranking officials such as Louis de Gruuthuse, rather than a unique

⁹ Christine B. Weightman backs up this assertion with extensive primary and secondary sources in *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, 1446-1503* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1989), 30, n. 1.

¹⁰ Weightman, 60, 62. See, also, Paul M. Kendall, *Louis XI: The Universal Spider* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971) 28. The nickname was coined by Georges Chastelain (1405?-1475), the chronicler of the Burgundian Dukes Phillip the Good and Charles the Bold, in his work *Le Lyon Rampant* (1467) (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. Ms. 1717; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, fr. Ms. 12788). See also, Kervyn De Lettenhove, *Oeuvres de Georges Chastelain*, vol. 7, 8 vols. (Brussels: F. Heussner, 1865).

¹¹ Weightman., 134–137. See also Wim Blockmans, “Women and Diplomacy,” in *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria*, ed. Dagmar Eichberger (Davidsfonds/Leuven: Brepols, 2005), 98.

¹² Kren, introduction to *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and the Visions of Tondal*, 16.; Nigel Morgan, “Texts of Devotion and Religious Instruction Associated with Margaret of York,” 70–71.

piety, precipitated her collection. The positive reaction Margaret's brother, Edward IV, had to the libraries of de Gruuthuse provides evidence that Burgundian libraries and book culture in the region were unlike anything in England. During his exile in Burgundy (1470- 1471), Edward stayed with de Gruuthuse and was so impressed by the bookmaking he saw there that he immediately began commissioning Flemish manuscripts upon his reinstatement to the throne.¹³ It seems likely that, when she arrived in the region years earlier, his sister was similarly inspired by Flemish book culture.

While Margaret was known as a pious woman in her lifetime, the question of her piety with regard to her manuscript collection has been the subject of some debate. Wim Blockmans argues that Margaret's religious devotion and interest in religious texts derived from her unhappy marriage.¹⁴ I am not convinced this is the case since Weightman indicates that, although they did not see each other often, there was no evidence of ill will between the two even after it became clear she would not produce an heir.¹⁵ Weightman suggests that Charles and Margaret were separated for most of their marriage because of Charles' constant wars and, possibly, his misogyny and rumored homosexuality.¹⁶ Nigel Morgan argues that the religious content of Margaret's books was not unusually pious for women of her time and her piety has thus perhaps been overstated.¹⁷ It is evident that Margaret's world was consumed by activities revolving

¹³ Weightman, *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, 1446-1503*, 94.

¹⁴ Blockmans, "The Devotion of a Lonely Duchess." Blockmans softens this argument in a later text, noting that Margaret and Charles "maintained an intense correspondence," despite their disappointing lack of heirs, see Wim Blockmans, "Margaret of York: The Subtle Influence of a Duchess," in *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria*, ed. Dagmar Eichberger (Davidsfonds/Leuven: Brepols, 2005), 44.; Vander Linden, *Itinéraires de Charles, duc de Bourgogne, Marguerite d'York et Marie de Bourgogne, 1467-1477* (Brussels, 1936).

¹⁵ Weightman, *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, 1446-1503*, 72. See also, P. Wielant, *Recueil des Antiquités de Flandre*, ed. J.J. de Smete, *Recueil des chroniques de Flandre* iv (Brussels, 1865), 56.

¹⁶ Weightman, 65. See also, Luc Hommel, *Marguerite d'York ou La Duchesse Junon* (Hachette: Paris, 1959) 54-7.; Richard Vaughan, *Charles the Bold* (Longman: London, 1973) 234-5.

¹⁷ Morgan, "Texts of Devotion and Religious Instruction Associated with Margaret of York," 70-71.

around spiritual education and knowledge. Could it be, then, that Margaret's interest in religious texts stemmed partly from her own intellectual curiosity?

Upon her arrival in Burgundy, she was placed in charge of the education of her step-daughter Mary of Burgundy.¹⁸ After Mary's marriage to Maximilian I, the future Holy Roman Emperor, and the birth of Mary's two children, Phillip the Fair and Margaret of Austria, Margaret also served in an educational role in the children's lives. Margaret's library would later pass on to her goddaughter Margaret of Austria, a woman who bore a strong likeness to her godmother both in temperament and in her interest in books.¹⁹ Margaret's educational responsibilities may have extended beyond the Burgundian children, as she reportedly taught Dutch to Maximilian upon his arrival in the Flemish territories.²⁰ Even after Mary's tragic early death in a hunting accident, Margaret maintained a close relationship to Maximilian, procuring a classical text by Justinus for him in which she signed her name "Your loyal mother Margaret."²¹ Humanist texts such as this one were usually reserved for male readership, as women were rarely taught Latin.²² Cockshaw asserts that, given the exclusively religious content of Margaret's collection, she did not wish to be an intellectual or humanist, though this seems unduly limiting since Margaret was deeply involved in the realm of spiritual intellectualism available to women in her position.²³ In the context of Margaret of York's Burgundy, the first humanism often took

¹⁸ Hand, *Women, Manuscripts and Identity in Northern Europe, 1350-1550*, 38. Also, see: Weightman, *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, 1446-1503*, 76-77.; Blockmans, "The Devotion of a Lonely Duchess," 31, n.10; H. Vander Linden, *Itinéraires, 1467-1477*, 63-64.

¹⁹ Dagmar Eichberger, ed., *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria* (Leuven: Brepols, 2005).

²⁰ Weightman, *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, 1446-1503*, 76-77.

²¹ Albert Derolez, "A Renaissance Manuscript in the Hands of Margaret of York," in Kren, *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and the Visions of Tondal*, 100-101.

²² Susan Groag Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture," *Signs* 7, no. 4 (July 1, 1982): 758.

²³ Peter Cockshaw, "Some Remarks on the Character and Content of the Library of Margaret of York," in *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and the Visions of Tondal: Papers Delivered at a Symposium Organized*, ed. Thomas Kren (Malibu, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1992), 61.

on mystical characteristics, according to Danielle Gallet-Guerne. This idea is embodied in Margaret's Apocalypse, which is an expression of both mystical devotional and emergent humanism.²⁴

The Apocalypse of Margaret of York

Margaret of York's Apocalypse is a lavish, illuminated manuscript of the Book of Revelation in French with an accompanying commentary. In addition to the Apocalypse narrative, the large-format book contains some personalized additions related to the life and deeds of Saint Edmund.²⁵ The focus on Edmund reflects Margaret's English origin and her ties to the throne through her brother Edward IV. Martyred for refusing to renounce his Christianity in the face of Danish invaders, Saint Edmund, widely regarded as the first English saint and as the patron saint of England and English kings, was a popular subject of legend, literature, and hagiography.²⁶ Saints like Edmund were often included in manuscripts like this and reflected the personal life of the patron. From the late thirteenth century onward, the Dominican and Franciscan orders, as well as the Beguine movement, particularly in the Low Countries and northeastern France, emphasized the saints, as well as the Virgin, in their devotional practice in the belief that they could intercede on behalf of devotees.²⁷

²⁴ Cockshaw, 62, n. 26.; Danielle Gallet-Guerne, Vasco Fernandes de Lucena, and Poggio Bracciolini, *Vasque de Lucène et la Cyropédie à la cour de Bourgogne (1470): le traité de Xénophon mis en français d'après la version latine du Pogge: étude, éd. des livres 1 et 5* (Geneva: Droz, 1974), 19.

²⁵ Richard Kenneth Emmerson and Suzanne Lewis, "Census and Bibliography of Medieval Manuscripts Containing Apocalypse Illustrations, ca. 800–1500: II," *Traditio* 41 (January 1, 1985): 396.

²⁶ Cynthia Hahn, "Peregrinatio et Natio: The Illustrated Life of Edmund, King and Martyr," *Gesta* 30, no. 2 (January 1, 1991): 119–139.

²⁷ Walter Simons, *Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries, 1200-1565* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 87–90, 197, n 175.; William Noel, "Books in the Home: Psalters and Books of Hours," in *Medieval Mastery: Book Illumination from Charlemagne to Charles the Bold, 800-1475*, ed. Adelaide Louise Bennett (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 59–60.

Margaret's manuscript contains rubrics and prologues before the illuminations, text and commentary Revelations, and ends with an excerpt of Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, which includes accounts of Saint John the Evangelist performing a miracle for Saint Edmund, the Danish invasion of England, and finally Edmund's death and martyrdom.²⁸ The script in the Apocalypse is credited to David Aubert or his scriptorium in Ghent.²⁹ The Apocalypse contained seventy-nine illustrated folios, the largest number found in all the books associated with Margaret of York, reflecting the manuscript's luxurious importance in her collection.³⁰

The grisaille miniatures, painted with washes of blue, green, and maroon, were originally credited to the circle of the Master of Mary of Burgundy, but this attribution has shifted over the years.³¹ The miniatures of this Apocalypse are less finely detailed and more simply composed than, for example, the manuscript closest to it spatially, temporally and topically, the Apocalypse of Charles the Bold (M.68) discussed below.³² The identity of the artist or workshop which

²⁸ The original text of *Golden Legend* contained an error because de Voragine was compiling it from many different sources. The miracle described was actually tied to Saint Edward the Confessor, not Edmund. Edward, not Edmund, was particularly devoted to John the Evangelist, who appeared to him disguised as a beggar and was given a ring as alms. This ring was later returned to Edward by a pilgrim with a message from Saint John. Jacobus de Voragine. (c.1229-1298), *Legenda aurea*. c. 1260. See, Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013), 555.

²⁹ Scholars agree that this manuscript was executed either by David Aubert or an assistant in the style of Aubert, although the manuscript is unsigned by the scribe. See Thomas Kren and Scot McKendrick, eds., *Illuminating the Renaissance: The Triumph of Flemish Manuscript Painting in Europe* (Los Angeles, CA: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2003), 158-159.

³⁰ Two other narrative texts in her collection, *The Visions of Tondal* and *The Life of Saint Catherine*, contain the second and third largest number of illustrated folios at twenty and thirteen, respectively. Blockmans, "The Devotion of a Lonely Duchess," 40. See: *Les visions du chevalier Tondal*, Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 30. And see also: *La vie de Sainte Catherine*, location unknown, according to Kurtis A. Bartow, "Appendix: The Library of Margaret of York and Some Related books," in Thomas Kren, ed., *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and the Visions of Tondal* (Malibu: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1992), 261.

³¹ The catalog notes at the Morgan Library & Museum maintain the attribution to the circle of the Master of Mary of Burgundy. The only other miniature that deviates from the colorful blue and green compositions seen in the rest of the manuscript is the scene of the slaying of the two witnesses on fol. 56v. See: Curatorial Description, M.484, 1.

³² The catalog notes for M.68 claim its illustrations are from the Ghent-Bruges school and are related to those of Loyset Liedet, though executed in a "mediocre manner." I am not quite sure what is mediocre about them since I found their rainbow-colored, finely detailed scenes quite striking after viewing the monotonous green and blue of M.484. See: Curatorial Description for Apocalypse of Charles the Bold, New York, Morgan Library & Museum, M.68, accessed Dec 6, 2013. (<http://corsair.morganlibrary.org/msdescr/BBM0068.htm>) 1.; Apocalypse of Charles the Bold, New York, Morgan Library & Museum, M.68. There is no definitive text on this Apocalypse, although it appears in *Flanders in the Fifteenth Century, Art and Civilization* (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1960).

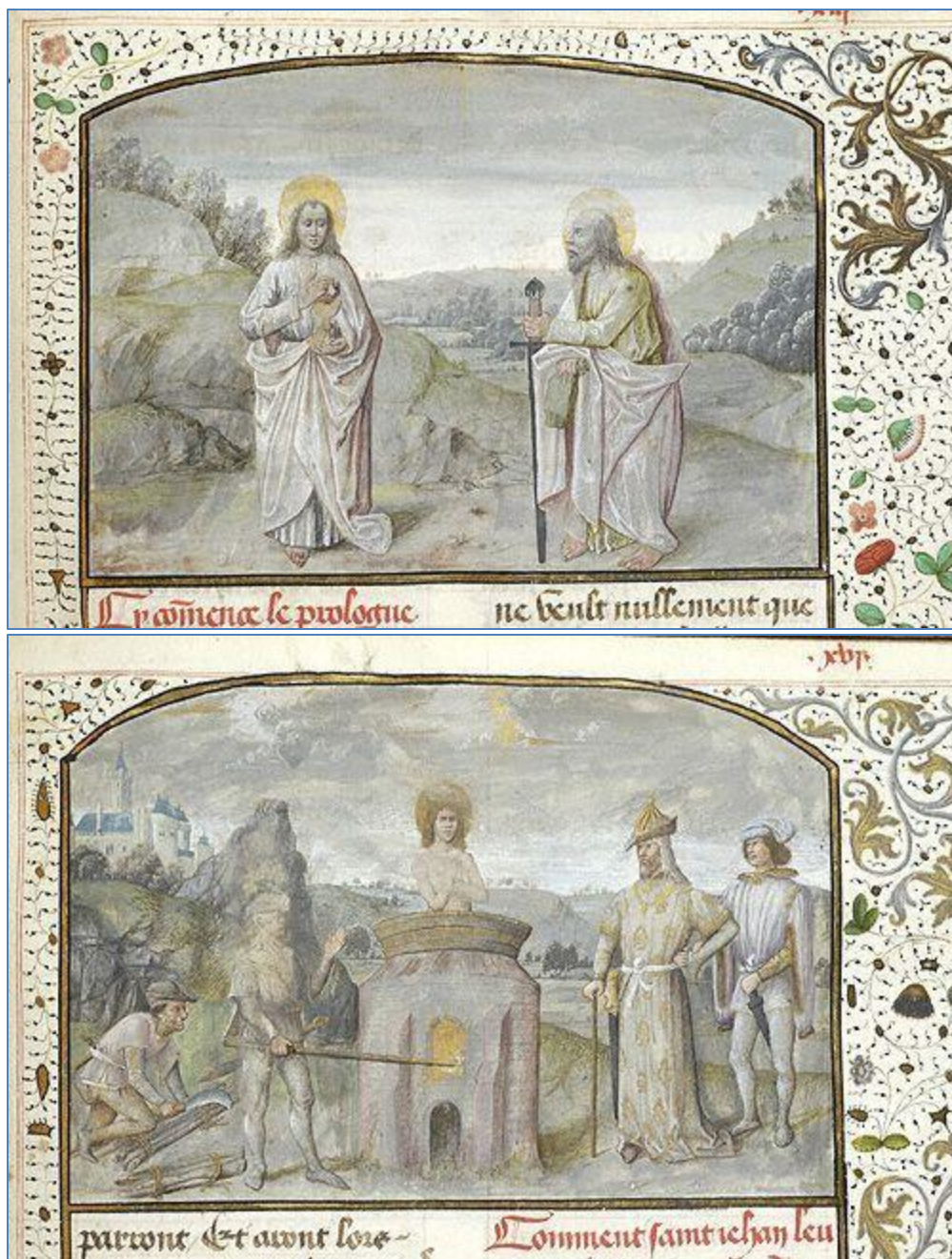


Figure 3 Apocalypse of Margaret of York. New York, Morgan Library & Museum. Ms. M.484, fol. 10r. St. John Evangelist and St. Paul (above); fol.13r. St. John in Cauldron of Oil (below). Photo: Morgan Library & Museum.

produced the images has been a matter of debate. Although all of the miniatures in the manuscript are grisaille, the majority feature bright green grass and blue-washed skies.

According to Meta Harrsen's 1948 work, the first two miniatures of this manuscript (**Fig. 3**),

which are less colorful, are by a different and “more superior” artist than the subsequent miniatures.³³ Otto Pächt, in 1949, countered, proposing that Margaret’s Apocalypse was executed by a single artist.³⁴ Subsequent scholarship has followed Pacht, attributing all of the miniatures to a single master or workshop.³⁵ Pächt attributed the manuscript to an early style of the Master of Mary of Burgundy, though it was based on photographs alone, so subsequent scholars, who have had direct access to the manuscript, amended this attribution to the circle or school of the Master of Mary of Burgundy.³⁶ Suzanne Lewis notes that the figures resemble those of the Master of the Moral Treatises and bear stylistic similarities with four tinted grisaille miniatures made for Margaret’s Bible moralisée (Brussels, Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, Ms. 9030-37) previously attributed either to the Master of the Moral Treatises or an imitator of Alexander Bening.³⁷

More recent scholarship by Thomas Kren and Anne-Marie Legaré, definitively attributes Margaret’s Apocalypse to the Master of the Moral Treatises.³⁸ Looking at the miniatures which

³³ Curatorial Description, M.484, 2; Otto Pächt attributes this curatorial description to Meta Harrsen in *The Master of Mary of Burgundy*. (London: Faber and Faber, 1948), 63.

³⁴ See: Pächt, *The Master of Mary of Burgundy*.

³⁵ Thomas Kren in Kren and McKendrick, *Illuminating the Renaissance*, 158–159.

³⁶ G.I. Lieftinck argues that the early works that Pächt attributes to the Master of Mary of Burgundy, including M.484, were not by the Master himself, arguing that the originality of composition and refinement of figural representation do not match the style of the Master. G.I. Lieftinck and D.M. Rogers, *Boekverluchters uit de omgeving van Maria van Bourgondië. c. 1475-c. 1485* (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1969), XXII–XXIV. M. Goosens places the miniaturist in the Ghent school, rejecting the direct association with the Master of Mary of Burgundy. Goosens also finds evidence that the work of Hugo van der Goes was known to the artist. M. Goossens, *Gent, duizend jaar kunst en cultuur* (Gent: Stad Gent, 1975). George Dogaer returns to Otto Pächt’s categorization of the Apocalypse as an early example of the Master of Mary of Burgundy’s work, although he allows for the manuscript’s inclusion in the Master’s school if not the Master himself. Georges Dogaer, James H Marrow, and Friedrich Winkler, *Flemish Miniature Painting in the 15th and 16th Centuries* (Amsterdam: B.M. Israël, 1987), 145–149.

³⁷ Suzanne Lewis, “The Apocalypse of Margaret of York,” in *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and the Visions of Tondal*, ed. Thomas Kren (Malibu: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1992), 77–78.

³⁸ Thomas Kren in Kren and McKendrick, *Illuminating the Renaissance*, 158–159.; Anne-Marie Legaré, “Les Bibliothèques de deux princesses: Marguerite d’York et Marguerite d’Autriche,” in *Livres et lectures de femmes en Europe entre Moyen Âge et Renaissance*, ed. Anne-Marie Legaré (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007), 256–257.; Anne-Marie Legaré, “‘La Librairie de Madame’: Two Princesses and Their Libraries,” in *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria*, ed. Dagmar Eichberger (Leuven: Brepols, 2005), 210.

define the work of the Master of Mary of Burgundy such as “The Virgin and Child Worshipped” from the Hours of Mary of Burgundy (Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Codex Vindobonensis 1857) and “The Burial of the Dead” from the Hours of Engelbert of Nassau (Oxford, Bod, Ms. Douce 219-20), it is indeed difficult to link Margaret’s Apocalypse directly to the Master of Mary of Burgundy.³⁹ The level of detail, the attention to trompe l’oeil, and the



Figure 4 Apocalypse of Margaret of York. New York, Morgan Library & Museum. Ms. M.484, fol. 10r. Escutcheon bearing Heraldry of Margaret of York. Photo: Morgan Library & Museum.

³⁹ Hours of Mary of Burgundy, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Codex Vindobonensis 1857. Hours of Engelbert of Nassau, Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ms. Douce 219-20.; See: Erik Inglis, *The Hours of Mary of Burgundy: Codex Vindobonensis 1857*, Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (London: Harvey Miller, 1995) and J.J.G. Alexander, *A Book of Hours for Engelbert of Nassau, the Bodleian Library, Oxford* (New York: G. Braziller, 1970).

interest in perspectival devices found in these other manuscripts is nowhere to be seen in Margaret's Apocalypse. The border decorations of this manuscript consist of uniform, two-dimensional motifs of black and gold acanthus and rinceaux with flowers and strawberries that are typical of the Master of the Moral Treatises. Although these designs are perspectively flat, the creative depiction of Margaret's heraldry, hanging by a strap from the bottom border of the miniature on fol.10r (**Fig. 4**) provides a notable deviation, demonstrating the artist's interest in *tromp l'oeil*.⁴⁰

The Judgement Scene

The miniature of particular interest here, the "Last Resurrection and Judgment" (fol.103v), shows four penitential figures kneeling in prayer on a plain patch of grass, looking up

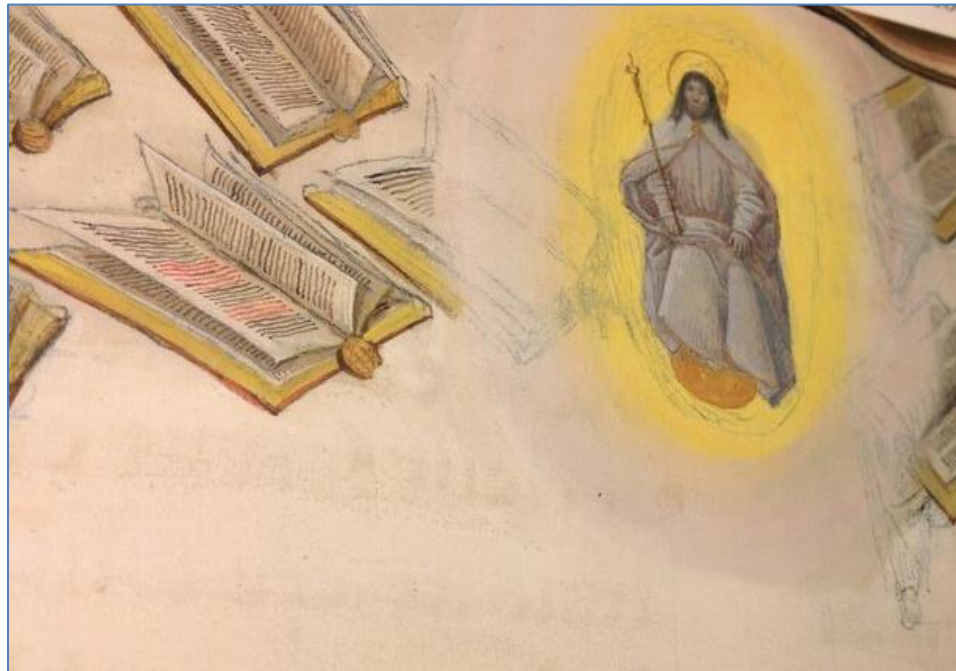


Figure 5 Apocalypse of Margaret of York. New York, Morgan Library & Museum. Ms. M.484, fol. 103v (detail). Judgment and Last Resurrection. Photo: author, Copyright Morgan Library & Museum.

⁴⁰ Thomas Kren in Kren and McKendrick, *Illuminating the Renaissance*, 159.

to the heavens towards Christ, who is surrounded by an ethereal yellow and white glow, flanked by five open books on each side of him.⁴¹ (**Fig. 2, Fig. 5**) The figure of Christ is rather small and, notably, about the same size as each individual book which appear in a variety of formats, both one and two columns, some with outlines for chemise bindings, some with visible red rubrics. Whether they are bibles, books of hours, or chronicles,⁴² the pages are in motion and the narrative of Revelations 20:11-13 proceeds:

And I saw a great white throne, and one sitting upon it, from whose face the earth and heaven fled away, and there was no place found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing in the presence of the throne, and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and hell gave up their dead that were in them; and they were judged every one according to their works.⁴³

The passage refers to two traditional Jewish judgment books, which tally the righteous and the wicked. This passage of Revelation references the vision in the book of Daniel 7:10 which reads, “the judgment sat, and the books were opened.”⁴⁴ Here they are joined by a third book, the Christian “book of life,” representing Christian salvation.⁴⁵ The many books may simply be a literal rendering of the text (which does not specify the number of books opened). At

⁴¹ This is the only unfinished miniature in the manuscript, as evidenced by the unpainted sky including visible underdrawing around several of the books. These outlines were intended to portray chemise bindings, used to protect the book or, if the book was small enough, was used to tie up the book so it could be worn on a belt. Roger Wieck surmised that the artist opted for a neater design later by leaving out the chemise bindings. If the artist intended to paint in a sky, the underdrawing would have been obscured; however, it is also possible that these chemise bindings would have been painted in along with the sky and that the artist, for whatever reason, never finished the miniature. Roger Wieck (Curator of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts, Morgan Library & Museum), in discussion with the author, November 2013.

⁴² Lewis, 81 refers to them as “chronicles.”

⁴³ Rev 20:11-13 DR

⁴⁴ Daniel 7:10 DR

⁴⁵ Stephen S Smalley, *The Revelation to John: A Commentary on the Greek Text of the Apocalypse* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 515–518.

the right (the left hand of Christ), souls are damned to hell in a smoky pit, while a hellmouth at the left side of the miniature swallows up the damned.

The Morgan curatorial notes propose that this Apocalypse was based on an earlier English model similar to the Douce Apocalypse (Oxford, Bod. Douce 180).⁴⁶ The Douce manuscript belongs stylistically to the Anglo-French or English Apocalypses made in England in the thirteenth century. First categorized into two families in 1901 by Léopold Delisle and Paul Meyer,⁴⁷ subsequent research by George Henderson, Peter Klein, and Suzanne Lewis have revised and expanded these original categories.⁴⁸ Looking at the Douce Apocalypse miniature of the judgment, (**Fig. 6**) we see John sitting to the left of the central scene, Christ in a mandorla at the center holding a book, and two additional books below the mandorla where the souls crowd around either awaiting judgment or being sent to the hellmouth. It seems that the artist of the Douce Apocalypse has iconographically fused the three books implied in the text of Revelation in his depiction of the judgment. These books are blank except for ruling lines and so cannot be categorized as any particular type of book.

The conventional representation of the Last Judgment scene typically shows Christ in a mandorla with one or two books in his hands, sitting above groups of penitents (to his right) and,

⁴⁶ Curatorial Description, M.484, 1; Further reading on The Douce Apocalypse: Nigel J Morgan, *The Douce Apocalypse: Picturing the End of the World in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2006).

⁴⁷ Léopold Delisle and Paul Meyer, *L'Apocalypse en français au XIIIe siècle* (Paris: Firmin Didot et cie, 1901).

⁴⁸ See: George Henderson, "Part I: Stylistic Sequence and Stylistic Overlap in Thirteenth-Century English Manuscripts," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 30 (January 1, 1967): 71–104; George Henderson, "Part II: The English Apocalypse: I," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 30 (January 1, 1967): 104–137; George Henderson, "Part III: The English Apocalypse; II," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 31 (1968): 103; Peter K. Klein, "Introduction: The Apocalypse in Medieval Art," in *The Apocalypse in the Middle Ages*, eds. Richard Kenneth Emmerson and Bernard McGinn (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 159–200; Lewis, *Reading Images* in its entirety for in-depth discussion.



Figure 6 The Douce Apocalypse. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Douce 180, p.089. The Judgment. Photo: Oxford Bodleian Library.

often, (to his left) a hellmouth swallowing the souls of the damned. Examples include: the St. Louis Bible (New York, Morgan, Ms. M.240), (**Fig. 7**) a Bible moralisée dated around 1226-1234, another moralized Bible in the ducal libraries (Bibl. Nat. Mss. fr. 167) (**Fig. 8**), and the Anglo-French Trinity Apocalypse (Ms. R.16.2) (**Fig. 9**) from 1242-1250 which shows Christ in mandorla without any books. Instead, a few of the penitent figures in the top left register hold up the open books.⁴⁹ Copies of older English models like the Douce Apocalypse would have been available to artists in the Flemish Burgundian territories.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ See David McKitterick et al., *The Trinity Apocalypse* (London: British Library, 2005).

⁵⁰ Morgan, "Texts of Devotion and Religious Instruction Associated with Margaret of York," 62, n. 42.



Figure 7 Moralized Bible. New York, Morgan Library & Museum. Ms. M.240, fol. 003v. Last Resurrection and Judgment. Photo: Morgan Library & Museum.

Figure 8 Bible moralisée. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. Mss. fr. 167, fol. 338v. Last Resurrection and Judgment. Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France.



There were three Apocalypses in the library of Phillip the Good: an older Anglo-French Apocalypse (Dresden, Ms. Oc. 49) -- unfortunately damaged significantly in World War II; a section of a Bible moralisée, containing the Apocalypse (Bibl. Nat. Mss. fr. 167); and the

Apocalypse of Isabelle of France (Bibl. Nat. Ms. fr. 13096).⁵¹ The Apocalypse of Charles the Bold was also added to the ducal libraries shortly before Margaret's Apocalypse was produced. The artists could have also made use of Louis de Gruuthuse's library, which contained another thirteenth-century Anglo-French Apocalypse (Bibl. Nat. Ms. fr.403) at this time.⁵²



Figure 9 The Trinity Apocalypse. Cambridge, Trinity College Library. Ms. R.16.2, fol. 24v. Last Judgment. Photo: Trinity College Library, Cambridge. time.⁵³

Lewis has argued that Margaret's Apocalypse, in particular, has a kinship with the latter,⁵⁴ (Fig. 10) especially with the French prose gloss used in each manuscript, and how

the limited color palette in the half-page tinted miniatures of Ms. fr. 403 might have served as a

⁵¹ Lewis, "The Apocalypse of Margaret of York," 79. Apocalypse, Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, Ms. Oc. 49; Apocalypse, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. fr. 403; Apocalypse of Isabella of France, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Ms. fr. 13096.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 77. See also: Suzanne Lewis, "The Enigma of Fr. 403 and the Compilation of a Thirteenth-Century English Illustrated Apocalypse," *Gesta* 29, no. 1 (1990): 31.

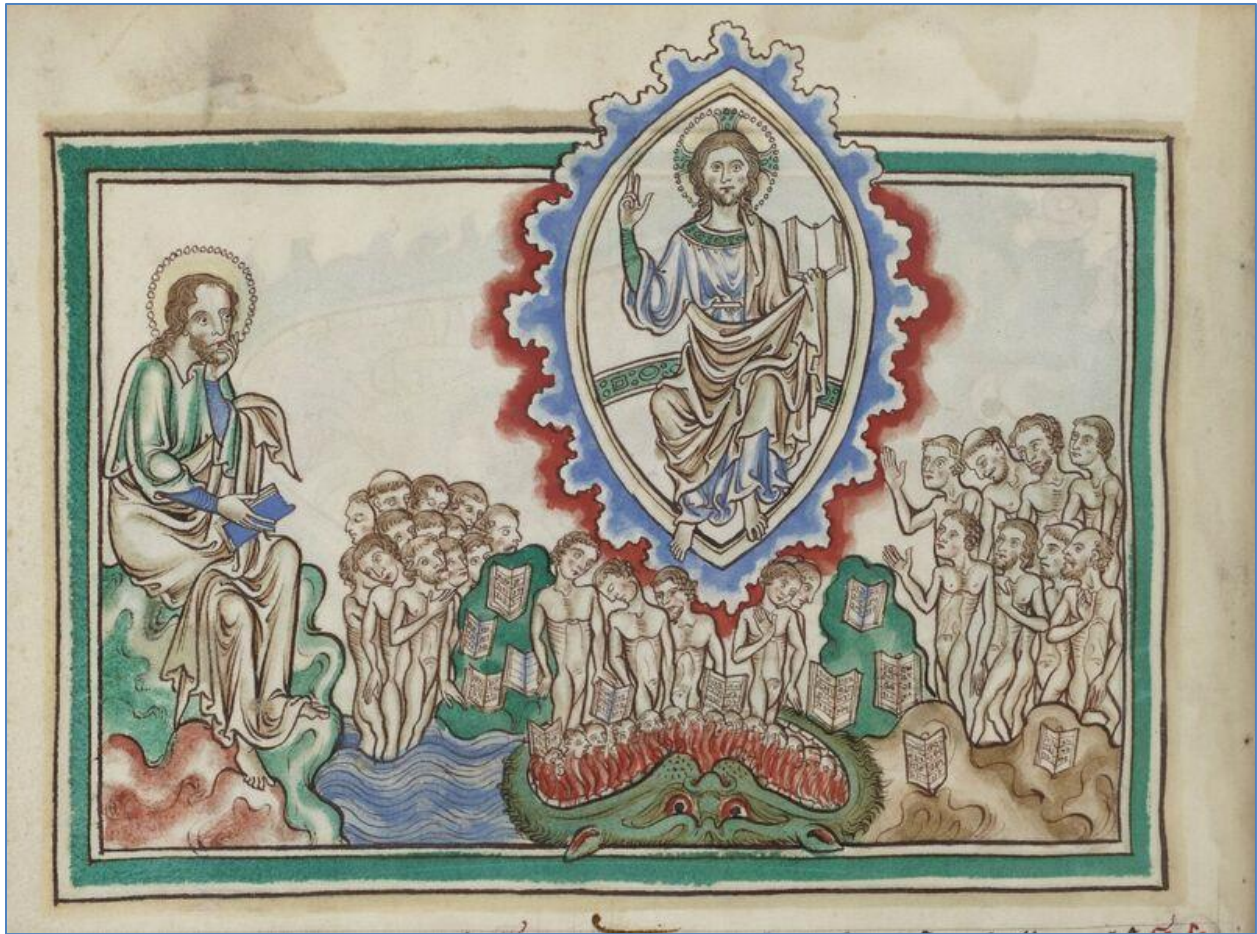


Figure 10 Apocalypse. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. Ms. fr. 403, fol. 24v. Last Judgment and Resurrection (above); Last Judgment and Resurrection Detail (below). Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France.

model for the desaturated palette of the first two grisaille illustrated folios of Margaret's Apocalypse.

Ms. fr. 403 is notable in that the open books seem to have multiplied significantly compared to conventional judgment scenes or relative contemporaries such as the Douce Apocalypse. John sits in observation at the left side of the page and holds what appears to be a closed book in his hands, while Christ is seated in a large mandorla holds open a blank book in the center. Below, people wait to be judged. Twelve books with ruled lines and numbers tallied float down toward the hellmouth. Here the open books are counting ledgers of the good and the wicked, not religious devotional books as seen in M.484. Depicted as such, the narrative of the deeds of either the good or the wicked was brought to mind as the reader also turned the pages of the manuscript.⁵⁵

Fifteenth-century Burgundian manuscript production was characterized by great variation and invention in the iconography and composition of miniatures. Consequentially, the Apocalypse of Margaret of York does not adhere to the programmatic iconography of older Apocalypse manuscripts. In Gothic Apocalypses of the Anglo-French variety, the text was often in Latin, sometimes with a vernacular gloss, and the imagery followed a standard format that was copied from one book to the next with relative faithfulness. Artists of these earlier miniature

⁵⁵ Other Anglo-French Apocalypses show similar iconography to the Morgan Apocalypse (New York, Morgan, Ms. M.524) from circa 1255-1260 where a few books, undistinguished as any particular type of book, are pictured floating down toward the hellmouth. Likewise, the Cloisters Apocalypse (acc. no. 68-174) from around 1330 shows a number of books on the ground as well as in the hands of the judged, though the depiction of Christ holding up a book, conforms to traditional iconography. A manuscript commissioned for Philip VI, the Valois King of France, circa 1334-1337 (British Library, Royal 19 D. iii) contains excerpts of a Bible Historiale, including an Apocalypse. The artist depicting the Last Judgment utilized an English model similar to the Lambeth Apocalypse (Lambeth Palace Library, Ms. 209), although the books in this case are more naturalistically depicted than their thirteenth-century models. See, for example, Lambeth Apocalypse, London, Lambeth Palace Library, Ms. 209. For M.524, see: Lewis, *Reading Images* in its entirety.; N. J Morgan and Michelle Brown, "The Lambeth Apocalypse: Manuscript 209" in *Lambeth Palace Library: A Critical Study* (London: Harvey Miller, 1990).



Figure 11 Apocalypse of Margaret of York. New York, Morgan Library & Museum. Ms. M.484, fol. 33v. Seal I, White Horse. Photo: Morgan Library & Museum.

cycles were generally not reading or responding to the text in the images they created, but rather copying from an established model.⁵⁶ In contrast, Suzanne Lewis argues that the miniatures in M.484 were created by someone who could read the vernacular French text, based on the artists' faithful rendering of deviations and transcription errors.⁵⁷ For

example, fol. 33v. shows the first horseman of the Apocalypse on a white horse, emerging from the pages of a book reflecting the text that reads “a white horse is coming out of the book,”⁵⁸ even though this miniature should depict Revelation 6:2, which reads, “And I saw: and behold a white horse, and he that sat on him had a bow.”⁵⁹ (Fig. 11) Rather than a transcription error, this

⁵⁶ Suzanne Lewis, *Reading Images: Narrative Discourse and Reception in the Thirteenth-Century Illuminated Apocalypse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 44.

⁵⁷ Lewis, “The Apocalypse of Margaret of York,” 81.

⁵⁸ “ung tout blanc cheval... ussir du livre” See: Lewis, 79.

⁵⁹ Rev. 6:2 DR

deviation may be an intentional conflation of Rev. 6:1 and Rev. 6:2 that reflects the importance of books and book-imagery throughout the manuscript. Given the volume of accurate source imagery and text available to both scribes and artists during this period, it is hard to believe that this reference to the book in M.484 was a simple error. Whether the alteration of the text was intentional or not, the image clearly shows the harbinger of the Apocalypse coming directly from an open book. Just as the reader's salvation emerges through the pages of the open book – M.484 – sitting in front of her,

Figure 12
Apocalypse of Charles the Bold. New York, Morgan Library & Museum. Ms. M.68, fol. 175r. Seal I, White Horse. Photo: Morgan Library & Museum.



the coming of the Apocalypse issues forth symbolically from a book in the imagery. The power and prominence of the book was greater in illuminated manuscripts of fourteenth-century Burgundy than it had been in earlier manuscripts.

There is also textual and iconographic deviation in the Apocalypse of Charles the Bold on fol. 174r (**Fig. 12**) where the horseman is shown holding a bow, emerging from the top, right

corner of the composition. Lewis sees the first horseman emerging from the cloud where the lamb turns the leaves of a book, arguing that the apocalyptic horsemen in these two manuscripts both emerge from a book.⁶⁰ I contend, however, that the composition is ambiguous in this regard. The horseman in M.68 is not as explicitly tied to the book as those of M.484, both textually and iconographically.

The focus on the book also appears in the Apocalypse of Isabella of France (Ms. fr. 13096), executed around 1313, part of the ducal libraries in Burgundy during Margaret's time. This manuscript includes a second illustration for the Last Judgment, (**Fig. 13**) depicting Mary and John kneeling before an open book that sits upon a throne, surrounded by symbols of the Passion.⁶¹ Christ has been replaced by the book, an object that is privileged as a stand-in or symbol of him, sitting in judgment in his place. This image is the closest ideologically, if not iconographically, to fol.103v of the Apocalypse of Margaret of York, where the prominently placed books floating around Christ appear to be sitting in judgment alongside Christ or even sitting in judgment as a symbol of Christ. Looking at the Apocalypse of Charles the Bold (M.68), from a few years before Margaret's Apocalypse, we can see that the artist of M.68 chose a completely different iconographic program. While books undoubtedly play an important role in this earlier manuscript, their role is relatively modest in comparison this judgment scene. The shift towards reading rather than vision is reflected in the way in which John is depicted over time in Apocalypse manuscripts. In Anglo-French Apocalypses, such as the Morgan Apocalypse (M.524), John accompanies the reader as she works her way through the vision.

⁶⁰ Lewis, "The Apocalypse of Margaret of York," 79.

⁶¹ Suzanne Lewis, "The Apocalypse of Isabella of France: Paris, Bibl. Nat. MS Fr. 13096," *The Art Bulletin* 72, no. 2 (June 1990): 231.

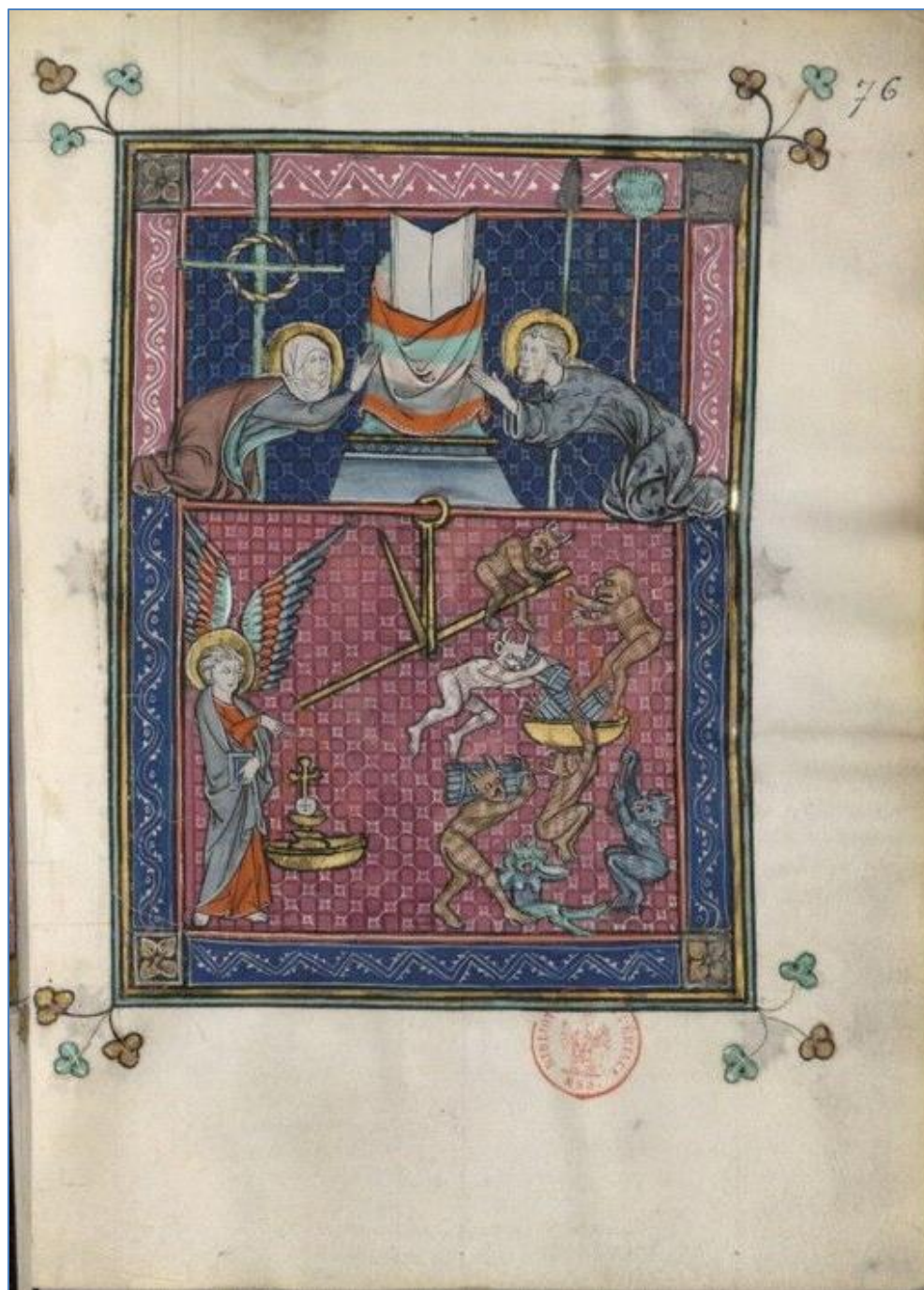


Figure 13 Apocalypse of Queen Isabella. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France. Ms. fr. 13096, fol. 76. Last Judgment. Photo: Bibliothèque nationale de France.



Figure 14 Morgan Apocalypse. New York, Morgan Library & Museum. Ms. M.524, fol. 20r. Last Resurrection and Judgment. Photo: Morgan Library & Museum.

(Fig. 14) Suzanne Lewis characterizes the particular emphasis on vision in these thirteenth-century manuscripts as a medieval “ocularcentrism,” an epistemological framework mediated by sight, juxtaposing it with “logocentrism” or the mediation of the word. M.524 eschews lines of text altogether, incorporating the text as a gloss within the miniatures. By contrast, in the Apocalypse of Charles the Bold, John is shown either reading or situated next to an open book with turning pages in almost every single miniature. (Fig. 15) For example, Christ and Candlesticks (fol. 159v) shows the book with turning pages on the ground to the right of John, while in fol.178v and fol. 223v, John holds the book as its pages continually leaf over. In the Apocalypse of Margaret of York, John does not consistently accompany his visions but,

when he does appear, he is usually pictured with a book in hand. (**Fig. 16**) Further emphasis on the book in these two manuscripts can be seen in their inclusion of miniatures showing

Revelation 10:9-10:

And I went to the angel, saying unto him, that he should give me the book. And he said to me: Take the book, and eat it up: and it shall make thy belly bitter, but in thy mouth it shall be sweet as honey. And I took the book from the hand of the angel, and ate it up: and it was in my mouth, sweet as honey: and when I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.⁶²

This scene is usually only alluded to or not depicted at all in Anglo-French manuscripts. In both the Apocalypse of Charles the Bold (**Fig. 17**) and the Apocalypse of Margaret of York (**Fig. 18**), however, the artists have chosen to render this scene quite vividly. The book is shown as something endowed with beatific or healing powers, taken up as if it were the communion host, imbued with the promise of salvation offered up by Christ at the Last Supper. Kathryn Rudy argues that painting on parchment, a material made from the flesh of animals, acted as proxy for the Eucharist in the Netherlands during Margaret's life.⁶³ the vellum material of the manuscript was symbolically linked to the body of Christ.

Importance of the Book in Devotional Practices

During this period, personal devotional practices were increasingly popular among the lay aristocracy, particularly women. Starting around the thirteenth-century, books that had previously been read almost exclusively by the clergy were finding a greater and greater audience amongst the laity.⁶⁴ This marked the first time since classical antiquity that more books

⁶² Rev. 10:9-10 DR

⁶³ Kathryn M Rudy, *Postcards on Parchment: The Social Lives of Medieval Books* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 225–266.

⁶⁴ Brigitte Buettner, "Profane Illuminations, Secular Illusions: Manuscripts in Late Medieval Courtly Society," *The Art Bulletin* 74, no. 1 (March 1, 1992): 78-79.; See also M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England, 1066-1307*, 3rd ed. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013); Michael T. Clanchy, "Learning to Read in the Middle Ages and the Role of Mothers," in *Studies in the History of Reading* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984), 33–39.

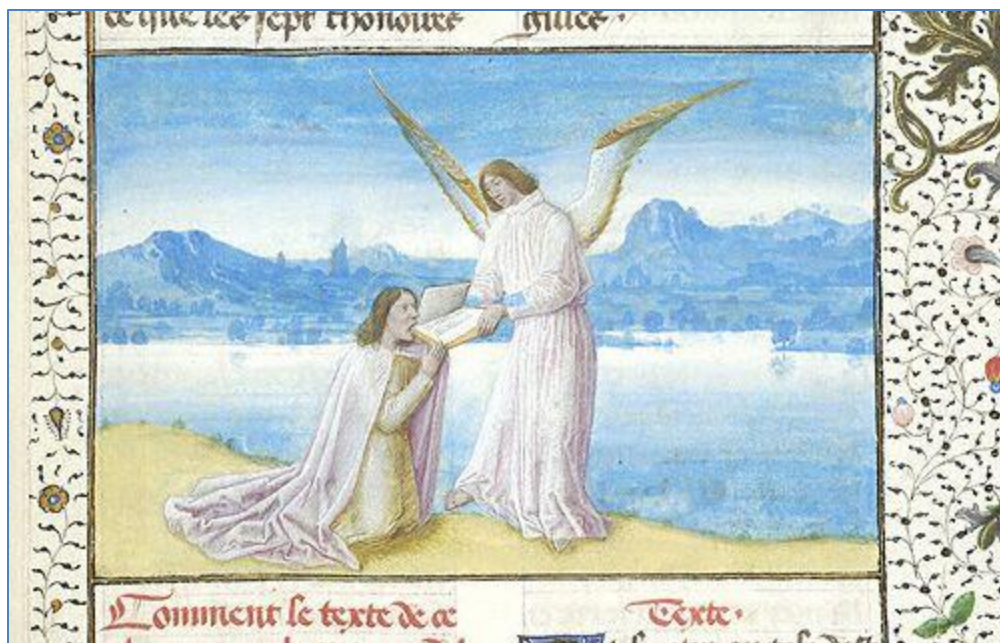


Figure 17
Apocalypse of
Margaret of
York. New
York, Morgan
Library &
Museum. Ms.
M.484, fol.53r.
John Eating
Book. Photo:
Morgan Library
& Museum.



Figure 18
Apocalypse of
Charles the
Bold. New
York, Morgan
Library &
Museum. Ms.
M.68, fol. 189v.
John Eating
Book. Photo:
Morgan Library
& Museum.

were produced for the laity than the clergy.⁶⁵ Pierre Cockshaw notes the re-emergence of individual collectors in the fourteenth century, and asserted that women's libraries often more clearly reflect the intellectual interests of people of the time period.⁶⁶

One book in Margaret of York's library, a guide to the pilgrimage churches of Rome (Yale, Ms. 639), provides a great example of the power vested in books at this time. Walter Cahn describes how the act of reading this particular guidebook would have taken the place of a physical pilgrimage to Rome;⁶⁷ essentially, one could gain all the spiritual benefits of a pilgrimage by just reading the text and meditating on the imagery, lending the book a hefty religious authority.⁶⁸ Just as a physical pilgrimage could have earned the pilgrim a certain number of years of indulgence, the reader of this book might earn something similar by completing a mental or virtual pilgrimage. It is not hard to imagine that Margaret read the Apocalypse (M.484) in a similar manner to her pilgrimage books. Both M.484 and pilgrimage guidebooks emphasize illustrations in order to aid an imagined journey. Because such books and their pictures held the power of redemption and salvation, the Last Resurrection and Judgment scene of M.484 prominently features images of books, reflecting their important role in devotional practice.

Devotional reading in the Low Countries and Germany in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries was spurred on by *Devotio Moderna*, a reformist religious practice that developed from

⁶⁵ Wieck, *Time Sanctified*, 33.

⁶⁶ Peter Cockshaw, "Some Remarks on the Character and Content of the Library of Margaret of York," in *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and the Visions of Tondal*, ed. Thomas Kren, 57.

⁶⁷ Walter Cahn, "Margaret of York's Guide to the Pilgrimage Churches of Rome," in *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and the Visions of Tondal*, ed. Thomas Kren (Malibu: J. Paul Getty Museum, 1992), 89–98.; See *Guide to Pilgrimage Churches of Rome*, New Haven, Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscript Library, Yale University, Ms. 639.

⁶⁸ Katheryn M. Rudy, "Women's Devotion at Court," in *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria*, ed. Dagmar Eichberger (Davidsfonds/Leuven: Brepols, 2005), 231–239.; Kathryn M Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent: Imagining Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

teachings of the Flemish deacon and preacher Geert Groote (1340-1384). The *Devotio Moderna* movement began with a focus on women, as Groote founded a house in Deventer for poor women, similar to the Beguine houses, but not as restrictive.⁶⁹ Their practice emphasized personal meditation techniques and self-projection onto Biblical imagery.⁷⁰ This private study encouraged self-education and piety, empowering the individual in spiritual matters and de-emphasizing the mediation performed by members of the clergy. *Devotio Moderna* and mysticism were practiced by members of all classes, including highly placed religious officials who influenced the religious practice of the aristocracy. Delassé suggests that the greater individuality seen in books of hours produced in the Low Countries, as opposed to France, might reflect *Devotio Moderna*,⁷¹ and aristocratic women of Margaret's social standing, such as Catherine of Cleves (1417-1479), used their devotional books for personal religious meditation in a way that parallels Groote's teachings.⁷²

While the degree of personal involvement Margaret of York had with *Devotio Moderna* is unclear, she was familiar with its teachings and owned the most popular text of the practice, Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ*, as well as several other devotional texts focusing on prayer and meditation.⁷³ Margaret's interest in mystical Christianity is evidenced by her

⁶⁹ Bernard McGinn, *The Varieties of Vernacular Mysticism, 1350-1550* (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co., 2012), 97.

⁷⁰ As noted, the most important text associated with *Devotio Moderna* was *De Imitatione Christi*, written as a series of pamphlets by Thomas à Kempis in the 1420s. Geert Groote also wrote a number of texts which can be found in English translation in John H Van Engen, *Devotio Moderna: Basic Writings* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 65–118. See McGinn, 96–124.

⁷¹ L.M.J. Delaissé, “The Importance of Books of Hours for the History of the Medieval Book,” in *Gatherings in Honor of Dorothy E. Miner.*, eds. Ursula E. McCracken, Lilian M. C Randall, and Richard H Randall (Baltimore: Walters Art Gallery, 1974), 204.

⁷² Joni Hand writes that Catherine of Cleves, the cousin of Margaret's husband Charles through her uncle Philip the Good, used her book of hours (Morgan Library & Museum, M.917 and M.945) in line with the teachings of *Devotio Moderna*. See Hand, *Women, Manuscripts and Identity in Northern Europe, 1350-1550*, 73-74.

⁷³ Cahn, “Margaret of York’s Guide to the Pilgrimage Churches of Rome,” 94.; Morgan, “Texts of Devotion and Religious Instruction Associated with Margaret of York,” 69-70.; Lewis, “The Apocalypse of Margaret of York,” 85.; Weightman, *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, 1446-1503*, 198. The content of her manuscripts is not, however, directed specifically toward the *Devotio Moderna*. See Legaré, “‘La Librairie de Madame’: Two

commission of the devotional writings of Jean Gerson (Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, Ms. 9305-06), a conciliarist who became Chancellor of the University of Paris in 1395 and engaged in a wide range of philosophical debates with other mystical writers of the time.⁷⁴ She also commissioned *La dialogue de la duchesse de Bourgogne à Jésus Christ* (British Library, Add. Ms. 7970) from her almoner, Nicolas Finet, shortly after she arrived in Burgundy. The instructional manuscript would have familiarized Margaret with the spiritual practices of her new home and emphasized a personalized form of contemplation predicated on direct interaction with the book.⁷⁵ The reforms espoused by Groote and the *Devotio Moderna* movement helped usher in an era of lay religious reform in which Margaret of York was particularly active in her later years, after the death of her husband.⁷⁶

While a great deal of mysticism may be found in the meditative practices of *Devotio Moderna* as well as the visionary subject matter of Margaret's books, it should not detract from the humanist value of individual human agency that Margaret's devotional books also embody. The open books in Margaret's Apocalypse illuminations can be seen as a mystical humanist representation of judgment, where Christ and salvation are found through direct interactions with

Princesses and Their Libraries," 209. There is an additional link between Margaret and *Devotio Moderna* to be found in the presence of her Yorkian rose in a Flemish panel, which belongs to the aesthetics of *Devotio Moderna*, see Hans J. Van Miegroet, "The Sign of the Rose: A Fifteenth-Century Flemish Passion Scene," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 27 (1992): 77–84.

⁷⁴ McGinn, 86–95.

⁷⁵ Andrea G. Pearson, "Gendered Subject, Gendered Spectator: Mary Magdalen in the Gaze of Margaret of York," *Gesta* 44, no. 1 (2005): 47–66.

⁷⁶ Margaret spent a great deal of time founding and re-founding convents and monasteries who sometimes resented her intrusion into their sphere. At the Victorine convent of Blydenberg near Malines, Margaret pushed, as she often did, for Augustinian rule. She fought the abbess Mathilde Lobs for three years before prevailing and hand-selecting a reform-minded abbess to replace Mathilde. The former abbess was demoted to a simple Carmelite nun and forced to move out of the convent with the rest of her supporters. The Augustinians seem to have been particularly receptive to modern devotional practices. For example, Thomas à Kempis was an Augustinian. See Weightman, *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, 1446-1503*, 199-202.

religious texts. The praying practitioners below gaze up at the multitude of books, which offer a pathway toward Christ for those empowered to read it.

Margaret of York and the Printed Book

The Apocalypse of Margaret of York, produced between 1475 and 1479, is situated at an interesting juncture of book-making technologies.⁷⁷ The emphasis on the book seen in the Judgement scene reflects not only the abundance of manuscripts produced in the Low Countries, but also the concurrent arrival of printing to Burgundy. Johannes Gutenberg introduced his movable type printing press around 1450 and it spread to the Low Countries and France by the early 1470s.⁷⁸ The block book, or xylographic book, too, proliferated after Gutenberg's early movable type printing press, from about 1450 to 1510, often imitated the look and format of manuscripts.⁷⁹ Many block book Apocalypses looked back to older thirteenth-century models for their iconography.⁸⁰ In addition to manuscripts, the ducal libraries of Burgundy contained and collected both printed books and manuscripts during this time.⁸¹ William Caxton, known primarily for producing the first printed books in English, started his career as a merchant and diplomat in Burgundy in the 1440s.⁸² He was party to the negotiations for Margaret's marriage to Charles the Bold in 1467 and maintained a close connection to the court and the duchess through

⁷⁷ The manuscript has been dated based on the overlapping dates between which both Margaret and David Aubert lived in Ghent. Kren and McKendrick, *Illuminating the Renaissance*, 159.

⁷⁸ The British Library, "Incunabula Short Title Catalogue," Database, (December 6, 2013), <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/istc/index.html>.

⁷⁹ Leila Avrin, *Scribes, Script, and Books: The Book Arts from Antiquity to the Renaissance* (Chicago; London: American Library Association; The British Library, 1991), 334, 337.

⁸⁰ Gertrud Bing, "The Apocalypse Block-Books and Their Manuscript Models," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 5 (January 1, 1942): 143–158.

⁸¹ Weightman, *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, 1446-1503*, 198. Martin Lowry, "Sister or Country Cousin? The Huntington Recueyell and the Getty Tondal," in Kren, *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and the Visions of Tondal*, 106.

⁸² Lotte Hellinga, *William Caxton and Early Printing in England* (London: British Library, 2010), 13.

his role as Governor of the English Nation in the Low Countries, representing the Mercers' Company.⁸³

In 1468, Caxton began working on his translation of *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* from French, which, in 1473, would become the first book printed in the English language. According to Caxton's elaborate dedication included in the book, Margaret commissioned the work in 1468 and aided Caxton in translating the text and correcting his English. Caxton most likely inflated Margaret's early role in the project as a form of flattery. Nevertheless, it demonstrates that she was one of the earliest patrons of printed books in English and that she encouraged the spread of books in vernacular languages through translation.⁸⁴ Caxton spent time in Cologne in 1471 while working on the translation and it was there that he began printing books.⁸⁵ He returned to Flanders at the end of 1472 and visited the court of Margaret of York in Ghent. While reconnecting with the Burgundian court, Caxton encountered David Aubert, who was serving as a court official at the time. Aubert would go on to create several of Margaret's manuscripts, including the Apocalypse, after 1475. Before taking up these manuscript commissions, however, Aubert entered into a business partnership with Caxton to facilitate the printing of books on paper in English and French, between 1472 and 1475. The font they created and used for these books was designed to look like Aubert's style of script.⁸⁶ The *Recuyell* was

⁸³ William Blades, *The Life and Typography of William Caxton*, vol. 1 (London: Joseph Lilly, 1861), 14–19.; Hellinga, *William Caxton and Early Printing in England*, 13–14.

⁸⁴ Hellinga, *William Caxton and Early Printing in England*, 23–25; Lowry, “Sister or Country Cousin? The Huntington Recuyell and the Getty Tondal,” 104–105.; Bell, “Medieval Women Book Owners,” 751.; Anne-Marie Legaré, “‘La Librairie de Madame’: Two Princesses and Their Libraries,” in *Women of Distinction: Margaret of York, Margaret of Austria*, ed. Dagmar Eichberger (Davidsfonds/Leuven: Brepols, 2005), 207.; Weightman, *Margaret of York, Duchess of Burgundy, 1446–1503*, 210–212.

⁸⁵ The book was not published in Cologne, as evidenced by the difference in paper seen in several other books Caxton printed while in the city. See Lotte Hellinga, “William Caxton, Colard Mansion, and the Printer in Type 1,” *Bulletin Du Bibliophile*, no. 1 (2011): 88.

⁸⁶ Hellinga, *William Caxton and Early Printing in England*, 50.

published shortly before Margaret's most active period of manuscript commission, and her patronage of the printed book is thus linked to her patronage of illuminated manuscripts through her dealings with both Caxton and Aubert.⁸⁷ Arriving on the heels of the first printed books in the Low Countries, the emphasis on books in the Apocalypse manuscript reflects the focus of the Burgundian court on book production, both print and manuscript.

While Margaret was not personally involved in commissioning religious texts in print, ties between the reform movement and the printing press were established early on. For example, David of Burgundy (c.1427-1496), Bishop of Utrecht and illegitimate half-brother of Charles the Bold, supported education-minded reforms by encouraging the use of the printing press to help better educate the clergy.⁸⁸ The early years of printing, between 1470 and 1520, leading up to the Protestant Reformation, saw the radical expansion of lay religious texts written in the vernacular. Vernacular illuminated manuscripts were initially written for readers, often women, who were not literate in Latin. By Margaret's time, Burgundy was an established production center for vernacular literature, which encouraged a wide readership of both humanist and religious texts.⁸⁹ David Aubert, as noted, personally bridged the gap between religious manuscripts and printed books, court patronage and commerce. The Reformation accelerated the translation of religious texts into vernacular languages, which bolstered the reformer's cause since Luther's detractors were forced to write arguments in the vernacular.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Lotte Hellinga, "William Caxton's Dedication to Margaret of York," in *Across the Narrow Seas: Studies in the History and Bibliography of Britain and the Low Countries*, ed. Susan Roach (London: The British Library, 1991), 3.

⁸⁸ Weightman, 198.

⁸⁹ Paul Saenger, "Colard Mansion and the Evolution of the Printed Book," *The Library Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (October 1, 1975): 406.

⁹⁰ Andrew Pettegree and Matthew Hall, "The Reformation and the Book: A Reconsideration," *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 4 (December 1, 2004): 790.

While the lavishly decorated illuminated manuscript such as the Apocalypse of Margaret of York had an aura of originality and, as a unique personally commissioned object, a redemptive potency tailored to its owner, it was also a tool for individual meditation on redemption and salvation. For others, though, the main type of book produced for religious meditation during Margaret's time, the book of hours, was unmatched in its dissemination after the advent of printing.⁹¹ According to the accounts of book owners described by Eamon Duffy, the printed book of hours was no less personal than the hand-written variety. Printing technology merely allowed people from lower social classes to access the religious devotional techniques that the aristocracy had long enjoyed.⁹²

The iconographic emphasis on books and reading in the Apocalypse of Margaret of York, particularly in the miniature on fol.103v depicting the Last Judgment and Resurrection, reflects the vibrant book culture in the Burgundian court at the end of the fifteenth-century. New methods and new technologies, combined with a new interest in translating and accumulating humanist and personal devotional texts, signaled the rising authority of the book as a source of both religious and secular knowledge. The books that sit in judgment in Margaret's Apocalypse challenge the authority and necessity of the clergy as mediators between an individual and their salvation. Under the influence of the *Devotio Moderna*, private lay devotion and reformist activities allowed lay aristocrats like Margaret of York to achieve religious empowerment through the act of reading. This direct connection to God through the book forms part of a shift in attitude and religious practice that culminated in 1517 with Martin Luther's powerful critique of the Church. 📖

⁹¹ Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers 1240-1570* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2006), 25–28.

⁹² Duffy, 23–52.