

COTTONIAN COLLECTION

Library - Books of Hours



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

Books of Hours were for individual prayer and devotion and were immensely popular in Medieval Europe. Manuscripts, written by hand they were comprised of religious text illustrated with miniature paintings, usually illuminated, or decorated with gold or silver to reflect light. Whilst the text was faithfully copied, the frequently highly ornate illustrations, were very much the imagination of the artist.

Time consuming and costly to produce, many Books of Hours were sold at Holy shrines and places of pilgrimage attended by devout wealthy laymen. Consequently they were in considerable demand and produced in substantial numbers by both monastic orders and secular scribes. Frequently they were commissioned by laymen who might influence the content and style of decoration, in particular how much gold leaf was used or which saints were included. By the late 15th century such books were also produced by the printing process, increasingly used during the sixteenth century which gradually saw the demise of book illumination.



French School (15th century)

Adoration of the Magi

Ref No: Bh1.1



French School (15th century)

The Flight into Egypt

Ref No: Bh1.2



French School (15th century)
St Christopher
 Ref No: Bh1.3



French School (15th century)
St. George slaying the Dragon
 Ref No: Bh1.4



French School (15th century)
The Murder of Thomas à Becket Ref No: Bh1.5



French School (15th century)
St. Sebastian
 Ref No: Bh2.1



French School (15th century)
The shepherds tending their flock
Ref No: Bh2.2