SOUNDS OF THE PSALTER: ORALITY AND MUSICAL SYMBOLISM IN THE LUTTRELL PSALTER

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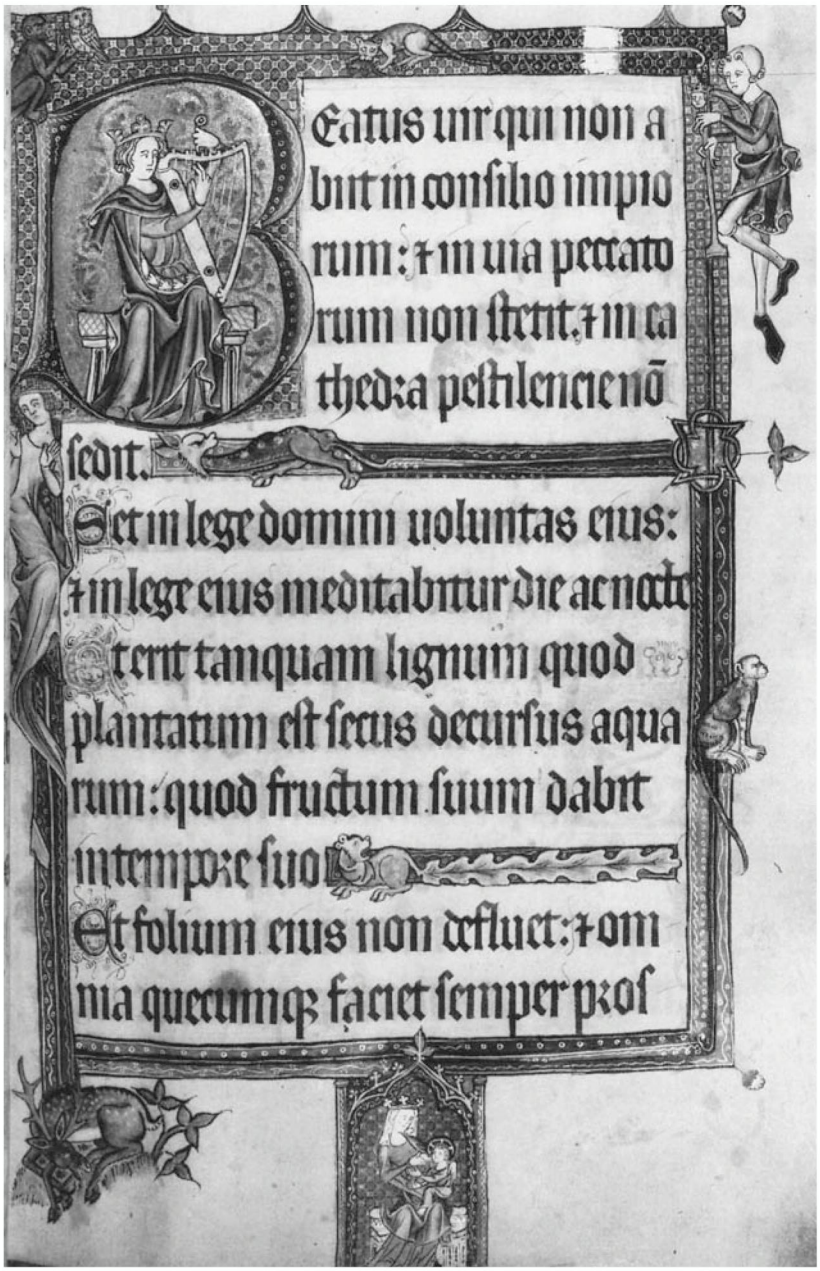
Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the god of Jacob.
Raise a song, sound the tambourine, the sweet lyre with the harp.
Blow the trumpet at the new moon, at the full moon on our festal day.
[Psalm 80 (81)]

One of the major themes in the psalms is sound, that is to say making supplication or giving thanks to God through the raised voice or music-making. The fourteenth-century English manuscript known as the Luttrell Psalter echoes and reinforces this message through the prominence within it of sounds and rhythms, the voice and music. The orality of the verbal composition and its performance is not lost through conversion into a textual form, as might be expected, but rather is maintained by means of the textuality of the written and illuminated codex. I shall begin by considering the nature of the psalms as poems, and the formal qualities of the visual schema employed in this particular psalter. I then move into an extended discussion of the role of music and its symbolism in the Luttrell Psalter, and finish with a brief consideration of how text and image on the page stand ultimately only as signs of the actual performance of the psalms.

The Luttrell Psalter (36 × 24.5 cm, British Library, Add.42130) was produced over a number of years some time between 1325 and the early 1340s.[1] This time frame and precise knowledge of its patron can be obtained thanks to the inscription above the dedication miniature on f.202v, "Dns Galfridus louterell me fieri fecit" (Lord Geoffrey Luttrell caused me to be made). Sir Geoffrey Luttrell, born 1276, was a knight whose principal property was at Irnham in Lincolnshire, in the region of East Anglia.

Although the text of the psalms was done in full and by one hand, the illumination was executed in a number of stages, and was not completed in a consistent manner. Only fourteen gatherings out of a total of twenty-six were given full illumination. Gatherings 2 through 9 (ff. 13–108) contain decorative surrounds and marginal depictions of New Testament scenes, saints and contemporary activities, while gatherings 13–18 (ff. 145–214) were completed as a unit, with foliate decoration, secular activities and a remarkable number of imaginative creations executed in vivid colors. Michael Camille suggests that the production of the Psalter was halted for a few years, and was given over to the so-called "Luttrell master" for completion, which, however, the latter was unable to carry out.[2] The calendar and only two pages in the final gatherings later received hasty attention. Although after the psalms there follow canticles, a litany and musical notation for the Office of the Dead, the last breaks off part-way through.[3]

The fragmented process of creation of the Luttrell Psalter has been reflected in its study. A full facsimile has never been published, and the 1932 black-and-white partial reproduction includes out of the 288 pages before the "master's section" only fifteen full pages, with only details from the others and one full page from after this section. Further, Camille critiques the plundering of the manuscript for supposedly "authentic"



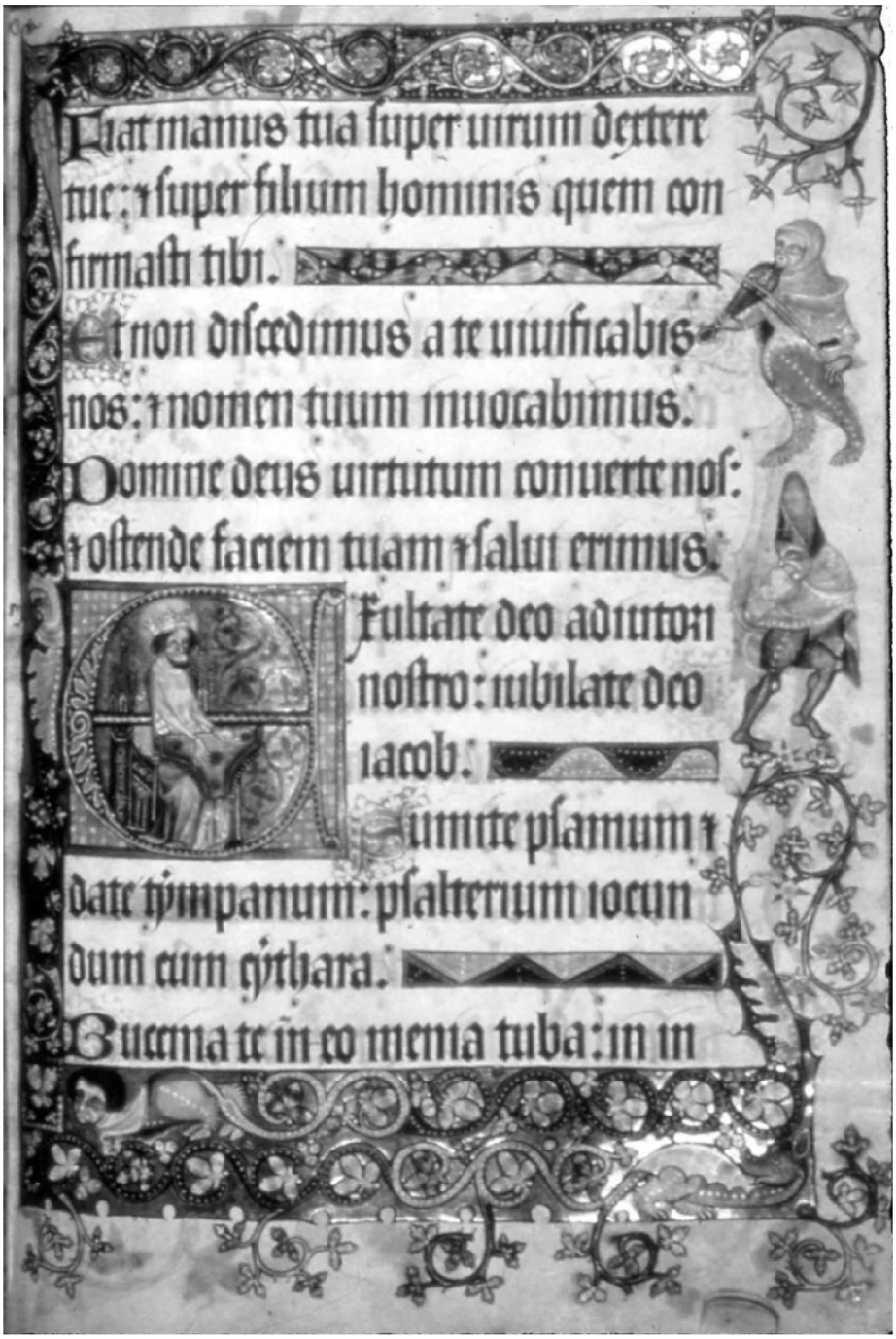
1. Luttrell Psalter, f.13r.

representations of everyday fourteenth-century life, and this holds too for how the images of instruments also have been taken out of context.[4]

The Psalter was one of the most frequently illustrated texts in the Middle Ages, and expenditure in order to commission a lavish volume could serve as an expression of pious devotion. In addition to its liturgical employment, however, the Psalter also came to be the prime devotional text, as the hymns of praise, the laments and the personalised appeals provided an ideal form for the individual to interpret on a personal level and employ in self-guided worship. It is for this reason that we see a relatively large number of luxury Psalters being produced for wealthy patrons during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

1a. Luttrell Psalter, f.13r. Initial B of Psalm 1. King David tuning his harp.

STRUCTURE AND RHYTHM OF THE PSALMS AS POETIC FORMS. The Hebrew Tehillim, or Songs of Praise, consist of one-hundred-and-fifty sacred poems designed originally to be sung to musical accompaniment. Though authorship was traditionally ascribed to King David by St. Augustine (354–430) among others, the collection as a whole dates from various periods in the history of Israel. Study of the psalms has produced a variety of classificatory systems, but they can be divided broadly into eight types: hymns, laments, songs of trust, of thanksgiving, of sacred history, royal psalms, wisdom psalms, and liturgies.[5] Medieval writers saw the psalms as "the direct record of David's own thoughts and feelings, manifested repeatedly through the complementary postures of praise and penance". The presence of such artistically beguiling forms within the Bible was used by poets as justification for writing verses in the face of injunctions from the Church Fathers.[6] The psalms are characterized by their rhythmic structure and parallelism. The basic rhythm depends on the expression of a single thought in a single line, with the initial part usually followed by a restatement, a contrast, or an expansion of the idea.[7] Each verse of a psalm is generally comprised of two such parts, and when performed in a liturgical context the psalm came to take the form of line and response (known as antiphon) alternating between two groups of singers.[8] As Owain Tudor Edwards explains, "the parallelism is enhanced musically through the inconclusive nature of the midway resting point, and by the finality of the ending".[9] The text of the Luttrell Psalter has clear punctuation indicating these divisions: each verse begins with a one-line high decorated initial, and a colon separates the two parts.



2. Luttrell Psalter, f.149r.

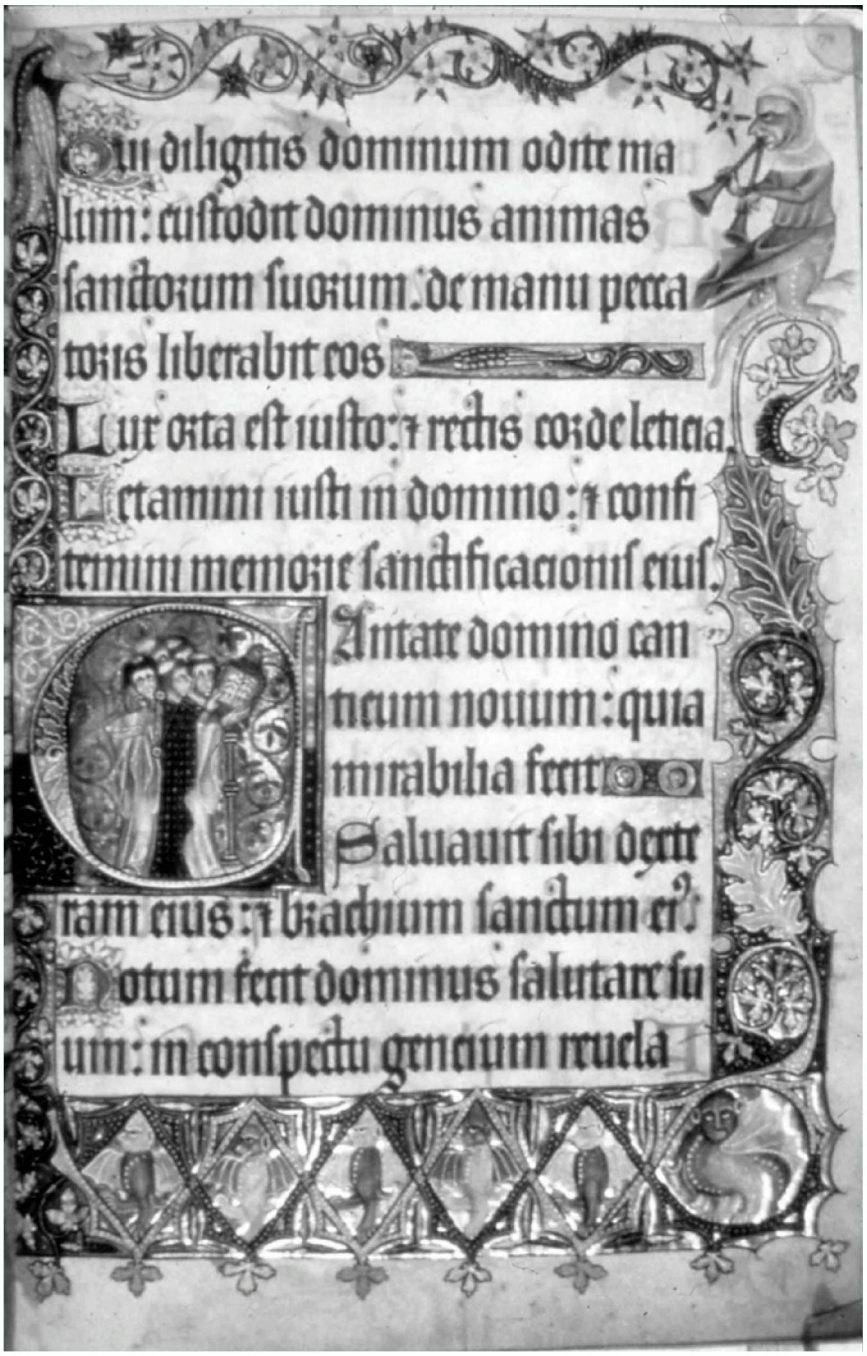
Connections are also made among the psalms themselves, with repeated phrases and ideas, examples being "Dominus regnavit" commencing Psalms 92 (93), 96 (97), and 98 (99); and the phrase "Laetentur coeli et exultet terra" (Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice) appearing towards the end of Psalm 94 (95), with "exultet terra: laetentur insulae multae" (Let the earth rejoice, let the many islands be glad) in the very first line of Psalm 95 (96). In this way a rhythm of repetition and reiteration is established through the Psalter as a whole, reinforcing the messages contained therein and sustaining a momentum.

2a. Luttrell Psalter, f.149r. Initial E to Psalm 80. King David playing the psaltery.

Although we view the Luttrell Psalter today in the form of a written text, it is important to remember that the psalms were experienced primarily in an oral form. Edwards stresses the dynamic and dramatic quality of the medieval liturgy, listing "the ambience, the kind of actions, the subject matter and the kind of music, all of which constitute a literary/liturgical creation affording aesthetic satisfaction". He stresses the need when studying medieval liturgical texts for the reader to develop "his inner ear".[10]

Around 526 A.D. St. Benedict had prescribed in the Rule for his own monastic community the complete performance of the psalms over the course of a week, and this practice came to be widely adopted in both monasteries and churches.[11] The psalms were sung in monophonic chant, and when recited during an individual's devotions they would have been read aloud, if only *sotto voce*, constituting another kind of oral performance. As van Dijk explains, "the medieval reader understood by listening to himself. Hence in his mind the differences between *legere* and *cantare*, in so far as the voice was concerned, were only differences of degree, i.e. of vocal intensity and intonation".[12] Even today when read off a printed page silently, as poetic forms structured by stanzas, lines, and phrases, the psalms necessitate a particular kind of rhythmic reading in order to be intelligible.

FORMAL RHYTHMS ON THE PAGE. The appearance of the text itself in the Luttrell Psalter is worthy of remark. Completed by a single scribe in lower-case letters as was standard by this time, it is beautifully written in a bold, extremely regular "precissa" script, with delicate curled rising embellishments on nearly every line.[13] A number of contemporary Psalters share the same format of single-column text, decorated initials for each verse opening, and line-fillers; for example the Ramsey Psalter (Lavanthal), the Barlow Psalter of 1321–38 (Bodleian Library, Oxford), and the Tenison Psalter (British Library).[14] There is extreme clarity and boldness in the lines of text in the Luttrell Psalter, which can perhaps be seen as the equivalent of the raised voice used in the recitation of the psalms. Although the marginal decoration is indeed profuse, it never threatens to overwhelm the text proportionately. The multiple line-fillers on every page contribute to the impression of a solid block of text, which is reminiscent of staves of music, a form of notation that was in use from the thirteenth century.[15]



3. Luttrell Psalter, f.174r.

Knowledge of the psalms, as we have seen, was gained through both oral and textual channels, and when we consider the illustration of an early fourteenth-century manuscript we must bear this in mind. In what is unanimously considered to be the finest section of the manuscript, ff. 145r–214v, with marginal imagery executed by the illuminator termed "the master", the basic decoration consists of a mixture of more geometrical marginal "bars" and the curlicue foliate borders, for example the opening ff. 172v–173r. The illuminator supplements the richness of sound that the psalms themselves create by providing luscious natural growth

4. Luttrell Psalter, the bottom section of f.87v.

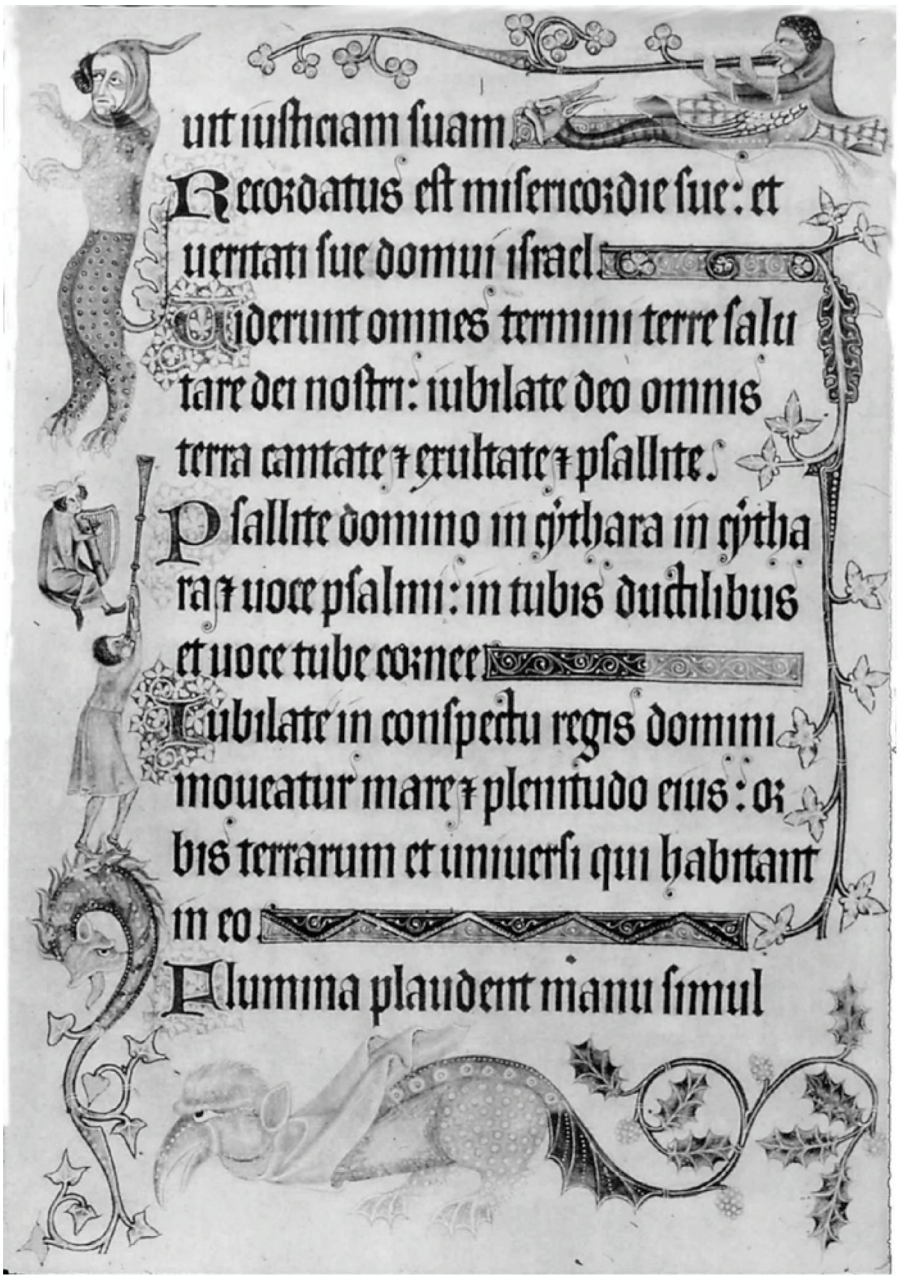
around three sides of the text. Only the pages where the main divisions of the Psalter fall have a more rectilinear, enclosed border design. Although such foliage is to be seen earlier in the Psalter, it is often thinner and less elaborate, such as in f.62v. In the "master's section" on the other hand it is insistent and, we may say, rhythmical in its repeated patterning, as for example in the opening ff.178v–179r. The outer margins, as is customary, are always wider, allowing space for the endlessly diverse and fantastical "babewyns", or hybrid creatures, from whose body parts the plant forms often originate. The inner margins have narrower detailing, which nonetheless retains the sense of a rhythmic progression down the page, and catches the eye as it reaches the end of each line. The rhythms of the line-spacing and of the foliage as it tumbles down the page are sometimes very closely aligned, as for example in ff. 181v–182r, the famous carriage depiction, where in the very left margin the spacing of the blossoms and the lines of text concur.

Randall, in her landmark 1966 study of marginalia, spoke of the effect produced when repeated motifs occur through a coherent program of illumination by a single artist, likening it to "a reiterated musical note giving unity and alleviating uniformity".[16] Carruthers, too, explains that "movement within and through a literary or visual piece is performed, as it is in music".[17]

The overall impression of the appearance of the folios in this section by the master, then, regarding text and images as an integral whole, is one of structure, consistency, and order, as in a well-performed musical composition. An illuminator would have been familiar with the rhythmic and musical qualities of the psalms, and I suggest there are parallels between the structure of the text passages, and that of the marginal decoration.

Music in the Middle Ages. The Luttrell Psalter, in common with other examples of the period, contains many representations of music-making. Millar lists in his index a total of seventeen different types of musical instruments.[18] The marginal images of music-making in the Luttrell Psalter usually appear in response to relevant words in the psalms, but the instruments portrayed are not necessarily the same ones as are mentioned. Although, as Christopher Page details, there was interest on the part of medieval scholars in gaining a more accurate understanding of biblical instruments, the music-making we see here is neither a historical rendering of the performance of the psalms from the time of their composition nor a depiction of contemporary performance from the period when the Psalter was produced.[19] As Tillman Seebass expresses it, the instruments help represent "the idea of music where its symbolic power has clearly reached beyond the musical reality of the time".[20] We must acknowledge the marginal images as iconographic forms within both religious and social contexts, and investigate the messages they contain.

These choices of imagery do not constitute neutral renderings, either, as the instruments carry a variety of meanings, according to their associations of social rank, their evaluation in learned thought, the symbolism of their formal appearance, the etymology of their name, their appearance in or absence from the Bible, and their worth in exegesis.[21]



5. Luttrell Psalter, f.174v.

The relationship between music and Christian beliefs was not a simple one during the first half of the fourteenth century. Clerical attitudes towards music in the later Middle Ages saw two distinct levels of engagement. On a conceptual, theoretical level, scholars regarded music as a science, having a place among the liberal arts. It was believed that a study of the numerical proportions of harmonies could reveal truths about the order and structure of the cosmos. "Musica" thus held an important place within medieval philosophy as well as theology, offering a means of comprehending God's creation. These principles, of Greek origin and attributed ultimately to Pythagoras, were codified and recorded by Boethius (470?–525) in his treatise *De institutione musica*, which provided the main source for later interpretations.[22] Such esoteric considerations were a long way from

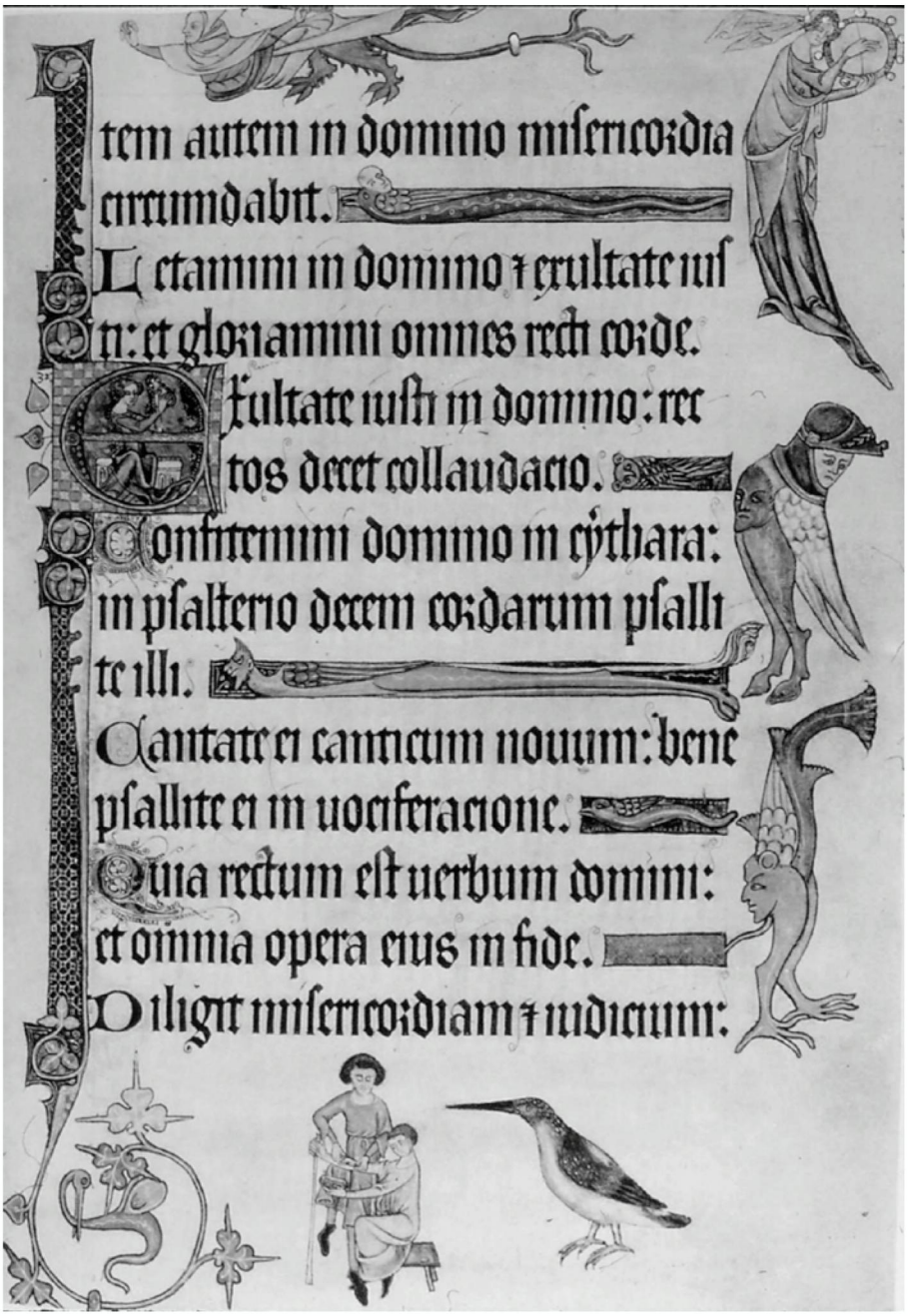
6. Luttrell Psalter, f.40r. Initial E to Psalm 19. King David in prayer; at the top of the initial is a man playing a shawm.

the practical performance of music, which was relegated to an inferior position. Religious doctrine went so far as to condemn instrumental music and minstrelsy in general as lewd and corrupting, and a social stigma attached to actors, singers, instrumentalists and *jongleurs*.[23] A sharp distinction could be drawn between the *cantor* who performed music for his own and others' sensual enjoyment, and the *musicus*, who understood the philosophical basis of such pleasure.[24]

The metaphysical underpinnings of music, however, legitimized it as a suitable form in which to worship God, and it therefore played an essential role in the liturgy. Music was mainly found in the form of plainchant, unaccompanied singing, but there has been much dispute among scholars over whether and to what extent musical instruments were employed in the medieval service.

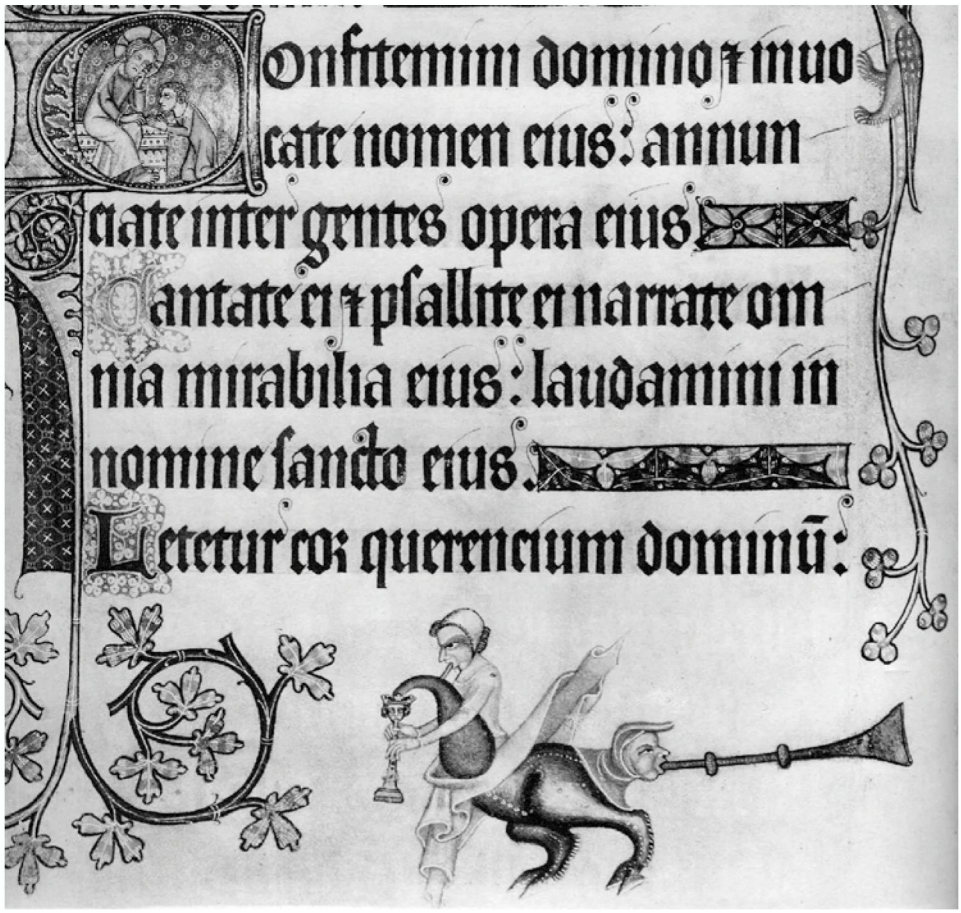
The early Church Fathers opposed instrumentation for its associations with paganism, and their condemnation has been cited as the guiding factor in medieval opposition. Upon hearing psalmody, that is the singing of psalms, St. Augustine in his *Confessions* described himself as being "firmly entangled and subdued [by the] delights of the ear". He stated it were safer if "the reader of the psalm utter it with so slight inflection of voice, that it was nearer speaking than singing".[25] His warning against the dangers of the sensuous enticements of music influenced thought throughout the Middle Ages. Within Christian doctrine the Word had absolute priority, and therefore text-driven music (song) was valued over text-less (instrumental) forms.[26]

Edmund Bowles asserts that the prohibitions remained in place and that they were in the main part observed, with instruments being excluded from services. Richard Pestell, on the other hand, is among several who argue that "the frequent occurrence of texts condemning the use of instruments in church can really only be taken



7. Luttrell Psalter, f.61r.

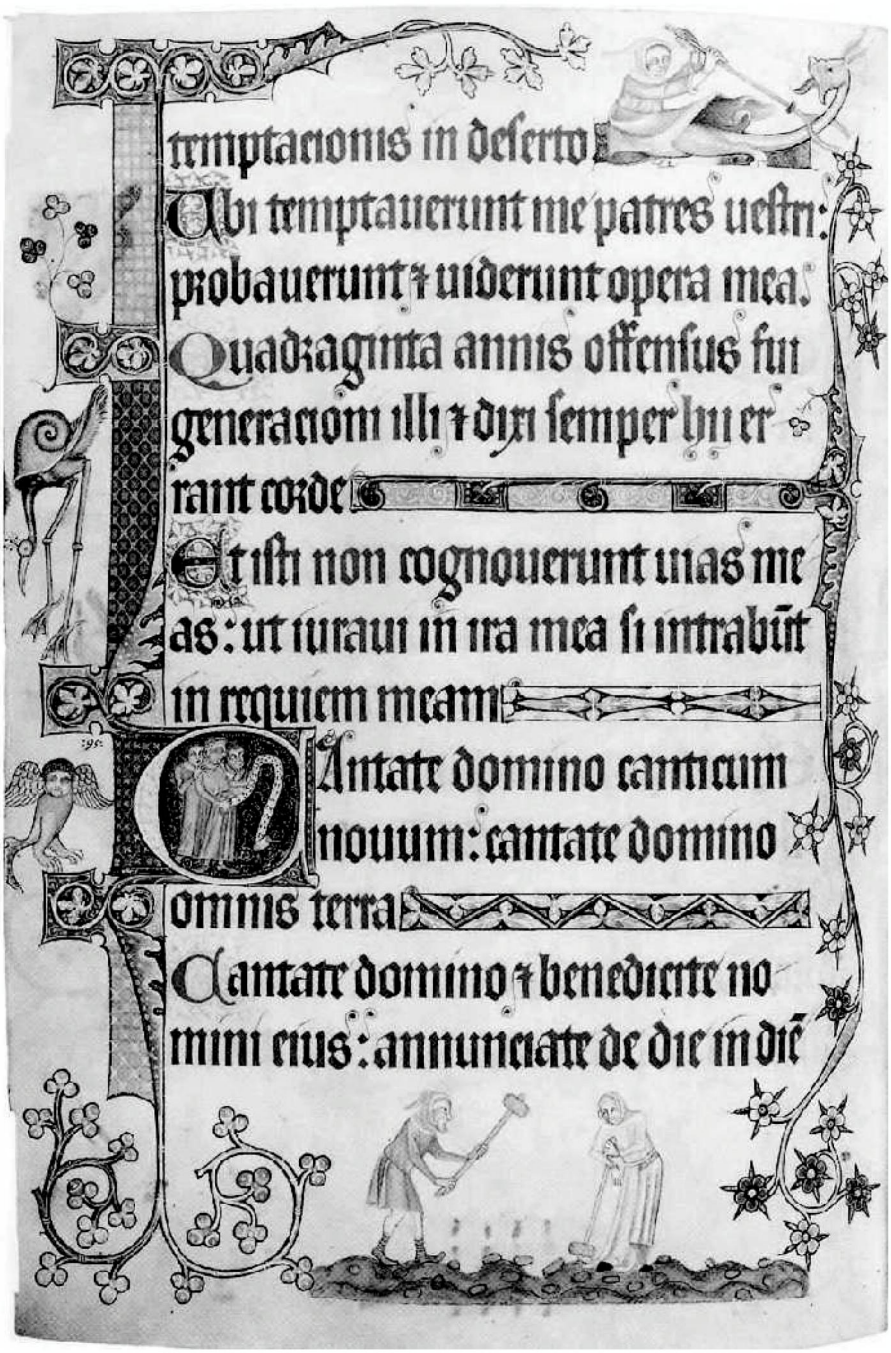
as evidence of their prevalence".[27] Richard Rastall quotes several instances of minstrels performing in churches, explaining that here and in monasteries the music was justified as being a real enactment on earth of the divine minstrelsy of the angels: "Instrumental music was symbolic of divine order and hence of God's kingdom itself."[28] In a similar way the church was able to condone musicians who performed Christian songs, and pieces in praise of saints and heroes. Pestell points out that "the distinction … is not between two different types of musician but between two different types of activity of the same performer, one acceptable to God and the other not". The question of context was crucial in deciding whether instruments carried positive or negative associations.[29]



8. Luttrell Psalter, the bottom section of f.185v.

Bowles suggests (quoting Smoeck) that the performance of music during the Middle Ages can be divided into four types: religious, ceremonial, courtly, and popular, each with its associated instruments.[30] He asserts that just as there was a belief in a divinely ordained social structure, there was also a hierarchy of musical instruments, wherein each type was limited to a specific class of players, be it noble, clerical or common, and had fixed status associations. Although many instruments found favor in a variety of contexts and do not admit of such fixed classification, the use of some was indeed regulated.

These associations were based largely on a division of instruments according to volume and therefore context, a classification that supposedly arrived with the older forms of the instruments themselves as they were brought from the Middle East. Wind instruments such as horns, reed pipes, trumpets, bagpipes, together with drums and cymbals were 'loud' or high (*haut*), and were used out of doors, in processions and on ceremonial occasions. Stringed (harp, lute, psaltery, rebec, hurdy-gurdy, rote) or keyboard instruments, as well as flutes, flageolets and crumhorns, on the other hand, were 'soft' or low (*bas*), and suitable for smaller, indoor ensembles. McGowan stresses that the distinction went beyond questions of mere volume, with the spatial and class associations providing a means whereby the powerful could reinforce the existing hierarchies of rank. As Bowles points out, however, sociological associations cut across both groups, for while trumpets might be restricted to aristocratic, heraldic use, the bagpipes were a lowly instrument. Similarly, the harp and psaltery had biblical and courtly associations, but the rebec and hurdy-gurdy were the province of minstrels and *jongleurs*.[31] Although instruments of both categories could be found in some contexts, such as mystery plays, the division was generally maintained according to grandeur/extravagance, or intimacy/ solemnity.



9. Luttrell Psalter, f.171v.

TEXTUAL MENTION OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS IN THE PSALMS. The Book of Psalms contains many references to instruments and music, and places great emphasis on the need to praise God with song and a variety of instruments. The Latin word *psalterium* can refer to both the stringed instrument, the psaltery, as well as to the Psalter itself, giving an etymological indication of the historical basis of the psalms as hymns of praise. There are repeated exhortations such as "Praise the Lord with the lyre (*cithara*), make a melody to him with the harp of ten strings (*psalterium decem chordarum*) [Psalm 32 (33)]. These two instruments occur the most frequently,

10. Luttrell Psalter, f.170v.

but Psalm 150 invokes trumpet, lute, harp, tambourine, dance, strings, pipe, and cymbals as forms of worship. Fifteen psalms in all make mention of musical instruments, in addition to the frequent commands of *psallite*, *exultate*, or *jubilate*, all of which can translate to song or praise.

In their assiduous study and interpretation of the scriptures, medieval commentators were forced to confront this biblical approbation of instrumental music that was apparently at odds with their own carefully worked out beliefs. Complex forms of biblical exegesis had developed since the early centuries and the writings of

11. Luttrell Psalter, the bottom section of f.101v.

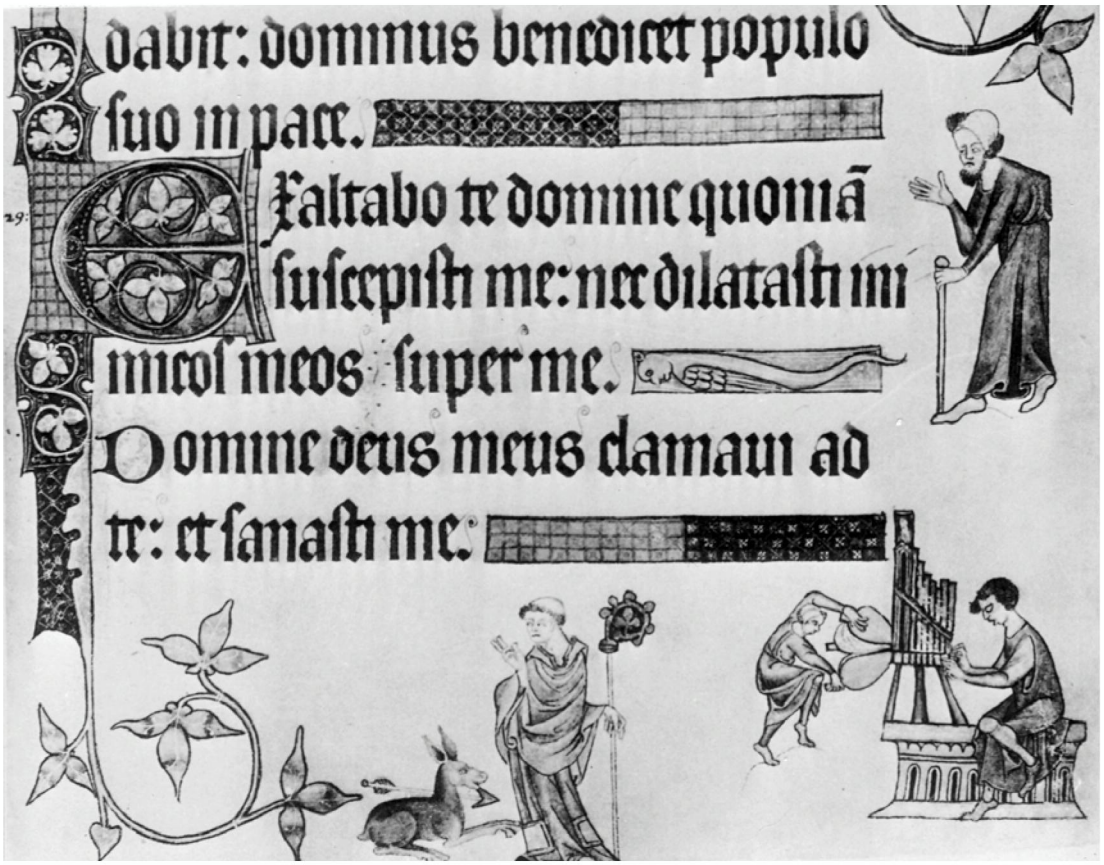
the Church Fathers, which understood and explained the contents of the Old Testament as foreshadowings of Christian truths. For example, King David was generally interpreted as a prefigurement of Christ (*figura Christi*), whose words and actions were indicative of events that were to occur in the life of Jesus. For many, such allegorical interpretations held the clue to understanding the musical references also. McKinnon gives as an example the explanation of Pseudo-Athanasius, that in the verse "Awake psalterium and cithara" the former represents the soul and the latter the body: the cruciform cithara symbolized the Passion and therefore the human nature of Christ, whereas the psaltery stood for the divine nature of Christ and the spirit trying to raise itself upwards because the descant had the most resonance.[32]

These allegorical explanations were established relatively early in the Church's history, and were transmitted in their basic forms unchanged down to the Middle Ages.[33] McKinnon points out that the symbolism of musical instruments worked out in the psalm commentaries bore little relationship to the practical medieval hierarchy of instruments, which depended rather on the sociological associations of their employment.[34]

Although the textual references to music-making meet with neither literal rendering in contemporary performance of the psalms, not with direct pictorial representation in the illuminations, they nonetheless are an important means by which music remains present in the psalter, even if only on a metaphorical or symbolic level.

Musical symbolism. Having examined as background the attitudes towards music during the Middle Ages, we can now turn to the actual depictions in the Psalter under examination. Although music was viewed as a potentially seductive and corrupting force, we shall see how it was co-opted in order to transmit a doctrinal message. As Møller states, "musical instruments were not added as a random detail in a decorative whole. They are as important as other ingredients in the overall images, and require an explanation".[35] McKinnon asserts that "virtually all medieval references to instruments can be classified within well-defined literary and iconographical categories".[36] However, rather than examining individual motifs in isolation from each other, it is only by taking a folio as a whole, by considering its parts in their inter-relationship that the religious symbolism becomes clear.

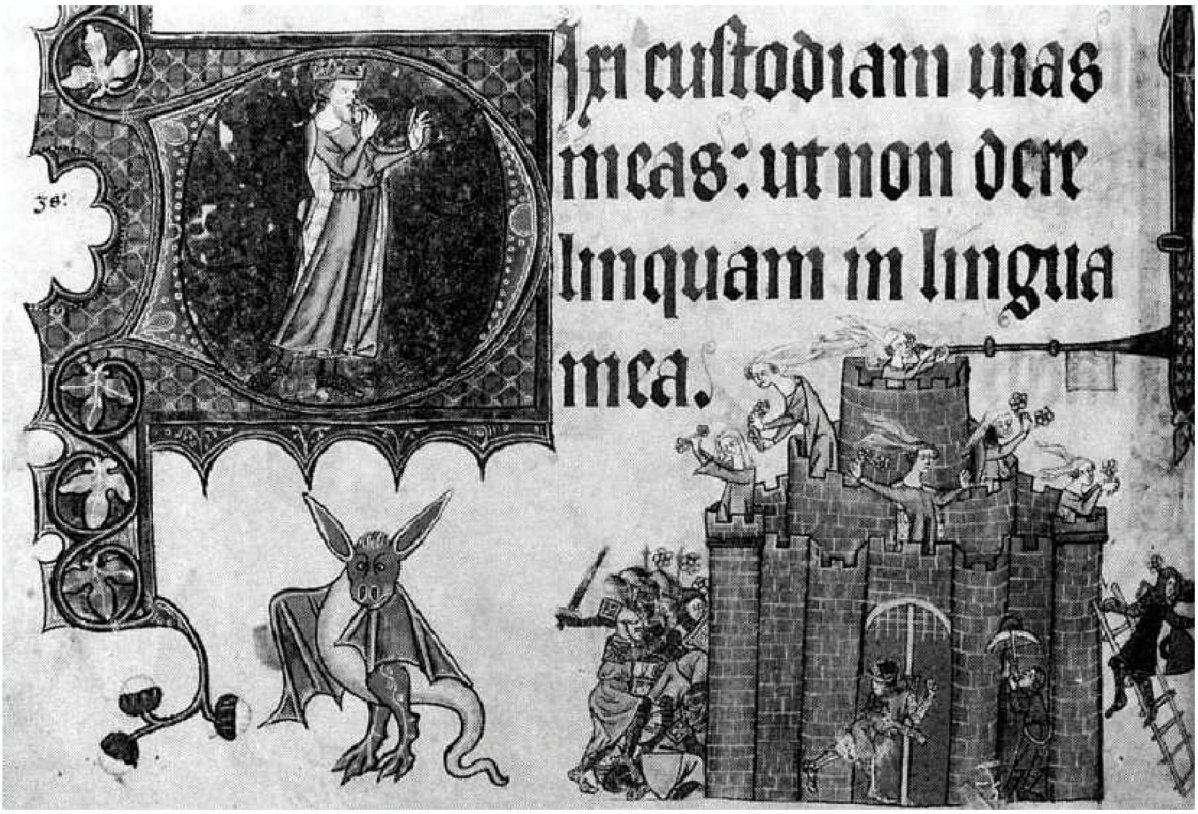
At the very beginning of the psalms we find in the historiated B of 'Beatus", the first word of Psalm 1, a representation of King David tuning a harp [fig. 1–1a]. Authorship of the psalms was customarily ascribed to David, and the psalmist's voice is in many cases understood to be his. David is described in the Old Testament as having played music himself and directed musical performances, and the practice of portraying him with an instrument began as far back as the eighth century, and lasted throughout the Middle Ages. Teviotdale suggests the motif "may well ultimately reflect the ancient *topos* of the poet accompanying himself on a stringed instrument". The figure of David with the harp not only presents him as poet and singer of the Psalms, constituting a kind of author-portrait, but also contains a symbolism deriving from biblical exegesis.[37]



12. Luttrell Psalter, the bottom section of f.55r.

As mentioned above, King David was understood within exegetical interpretations as the prefigurement of Christ, and the events surrounding him were likewise regarded as prophecies of Christian truths. This association may well be alluded to by the inclusion in the bas-de-page of f.13r of an image of the Virgin holding the Christ-child.[38] Based on the biblical text of I Samuel 16:23, where David is described as playing the harp to calm Saul's angry spirit, he was believed to perform the harmonious arrangement of music, which equated in contemporary theology with the ordering of the cosmos, and in this he foreshadowed Christ. The Beatus initial which shows David with a harp resting on his knee, his left hand holding the tuning key and his right plucking the strings, can thus be interpreted as symbolic of this imposition of harmony on the whole of creation. Van Schaik points out that the vertical placement of the tuning peg is erroneous for harps of the time, and argues that it "serves exclusively to clarify the tuning symbolism".[39]

But we also find on this page another representation of music, the young man in the opposite margin who plays a bagpipe as he dances, and this is no chance 'decorative' element. In their postures the two figures face each other, and the positions of their arms are somewhat mirrored. Psalm 1 contrasts the blessed man "who walks not in the counsel of the wicked" with the wicked and the sinners, and the two types of music on f.13r can be seen as reflecting this opposition of the righteous and the godless. The harp was one of the instruments that could be used to demonstrate the mathematical theory of music which revealed the harmony of the cosmos, and was thus suitable for praising the Lord. The bagpipe, on the other hand, lacked regularity and served only sensual performance. Wind instruments in general (*fistula*) had negative connotations in the later Middle Ages, being absent in any form from the Psalter, and among them bagpipes were "the devil's instrument *par excellence*", having clear phallic associations and being reminiscent of the fool's bauble, as seen in the initial on f.98v. The crowned head at the top of the chanter on the bagpipe here is a common feature of the instru-



13. Luttrell Psalter, the bottom section of f.75v.

ment, but there is also a suggestion of the perversion of the real crowned head – of King David – at the left, a form of appropriation and inversion commonly employed to suggest demonic forms. Just as Hammerstein traces through a series of Beatus initials, there is here too an opposition established between the liturgical sphere of King David within the initial and the devilish world of players outside.[40] The distinction between the two is thus presented clearly at the very top of the very first page of the psalms, emphasizing the sacred nature of the Word that exists within the borders of the illumination, and the profanity of the world outside.

Van Schaik explains that the trio of initials for Psalms 1, 80, and 97 almost universally featured music – originally King David playing harp (*cithara*), chime-bells (*cymbala*), and organ (*organum*) – in a schema which reflected the medieval classification into stringed, percussion, and wind instruments. These three instruments were associated respectively with the concepts of measure, number, and weight through which the proportions of musical intervals could be understood.[41] In time, singing of clerics was substituted by the organ (the human voice also being acknowledged by the eleventh century as possessing the necessary properties), and on f.149r of the Luttrell Psalter King David is depicted with a psaltery instead of chime-bells [fig. 2–2a]. He holds it on his lap, plucking the strings with his fingers, in the only instance where an instrument actually mentioned in the psalm is pictured. Although the psaltery does not fit within the schema explained above, it was invested with symbolic meaning, the triangular shape seen here being regarded as expressive of the Trinity.

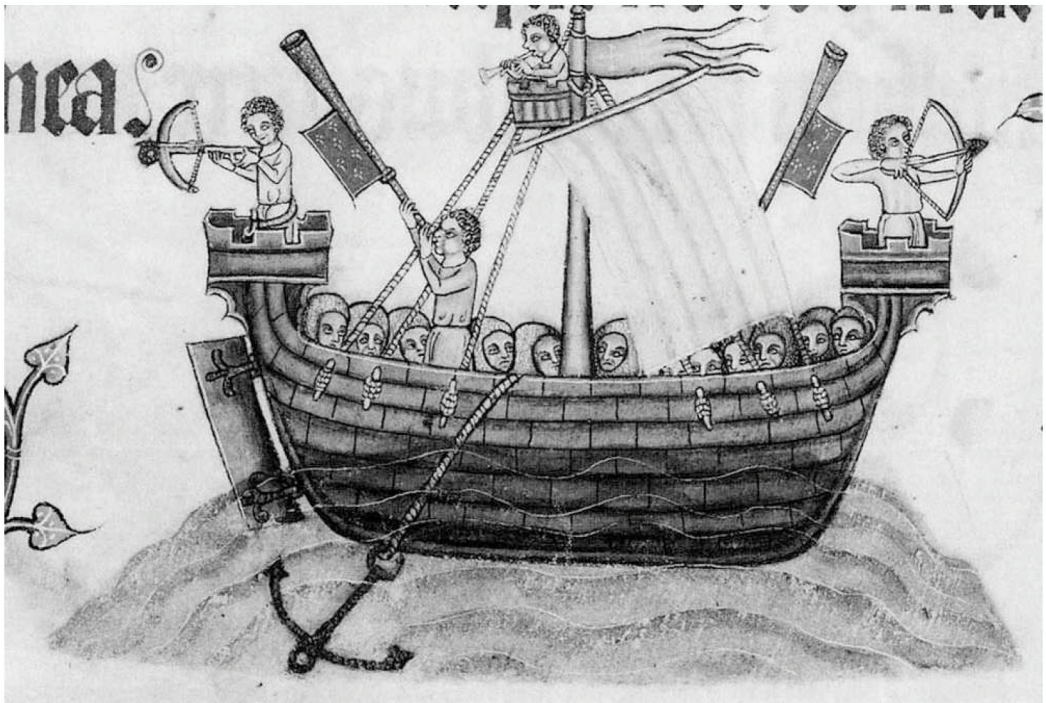
The same symbolism seems to be present here as on the opposite side of the page from King David in the initial there is a hybrid playing a rebec. This stringed bowed instrument with a rounded back, was closely associated with minstrels and lower-class music.[42] Fittingly, in all the instances of this dynamic musical juxtaposition of sacred and profane occurring within the master-illuminator's section, the players of the unholy music take the form of babewyns.

14. Luttrell Psalter, the bottom section of f.164v.

In the Luttrell Psalter the third initial in this trio, that of Psalm 97 on f.174r, portrays a group of five monks singing before a book on an eagle lectern [fig. 3]. The words "Cantate domino canticum novum" (Sing to the Lord a new song), which occur frequently in the psalms, may well have directly inspired this theme. According to Christopher Page, this iconography began in the second half of the twelfth century and was used till 1500. He goes on to explain how the words and notation visible on the roll of music in the Psalm 97 initial in the fourteenth-century Howard Psalter (British Museum) are from a motet, one type of the polyphony that was gaining ground at the time, and they therefore represent the "canticum novum" of the first line.[43] The notation in the book on the lectern may similarly represent the new polyphonic song, and the monk at the left is cupping his hand to his ear perhaps in order to establish the intonation.

Against this sacred singing a profane version is again achieved on this folio by the inclusion of a hooded hybrid supported at the top of the margin by the curling foliage, who plays a double pipe. The sound of this strident, "loud" instrument is to be understood as an unholy cacophony compared with the holy chant of the monks below. We see the same instrument earlier in the psalter in an associative rather than symbolic form. In the bas-de-page of f.87r where the angel announces the Nativity each shepherd has a double pipe slung from his waist, and over the page (f.87v, fig. 4) when the Magi appear, one shepherd plays his pipe. There was a long tradition linking shepherds with music, and the pipe here is used as a symbol of their identity.

The composition on f.174r can be analyzed structurally in three divisions: the chanters of the holy music are confined within the rather claustrophobic space of the initial, and around them on three sides there is the Word, but beyond this the margins are filled with an unholy jangle of visual interruptions such as the piper-babewyn discussed, the creature in the top-left corner who is either emitting or consuming a strand of foliage, and the lozenges at the bottom that echo the heraldic motifs on f.203r. Camille, in his *Image on the Edge*, argues that neither center nor margin exists independently but rather that the two are inextricably linked and must be considered as an integral unit.[44] Perhaps, then, we can conceive of the surrounding embroidery of foliage and creatures as the mental detritus that has been siphoned off from the text. Profane elements that conflict with the message of holy scripture and present the opposite are pushed to the edges, but are never completely excluded, in a combined acknowledgment of their continued existence and abject status. The New Testament teaches that the Word was made flesh, but that this is an inherently fallen state given towards sin. In this context the lines of text form the bare bones of spirituality, which however cannot exist without the fallen flesh-



15. Luttrell Psalter, the bottom section of f.161v.

liness of the luxuriant imagery, just as religious belief cannot exist in isolation, but is embedded within a world or corporeal experience.

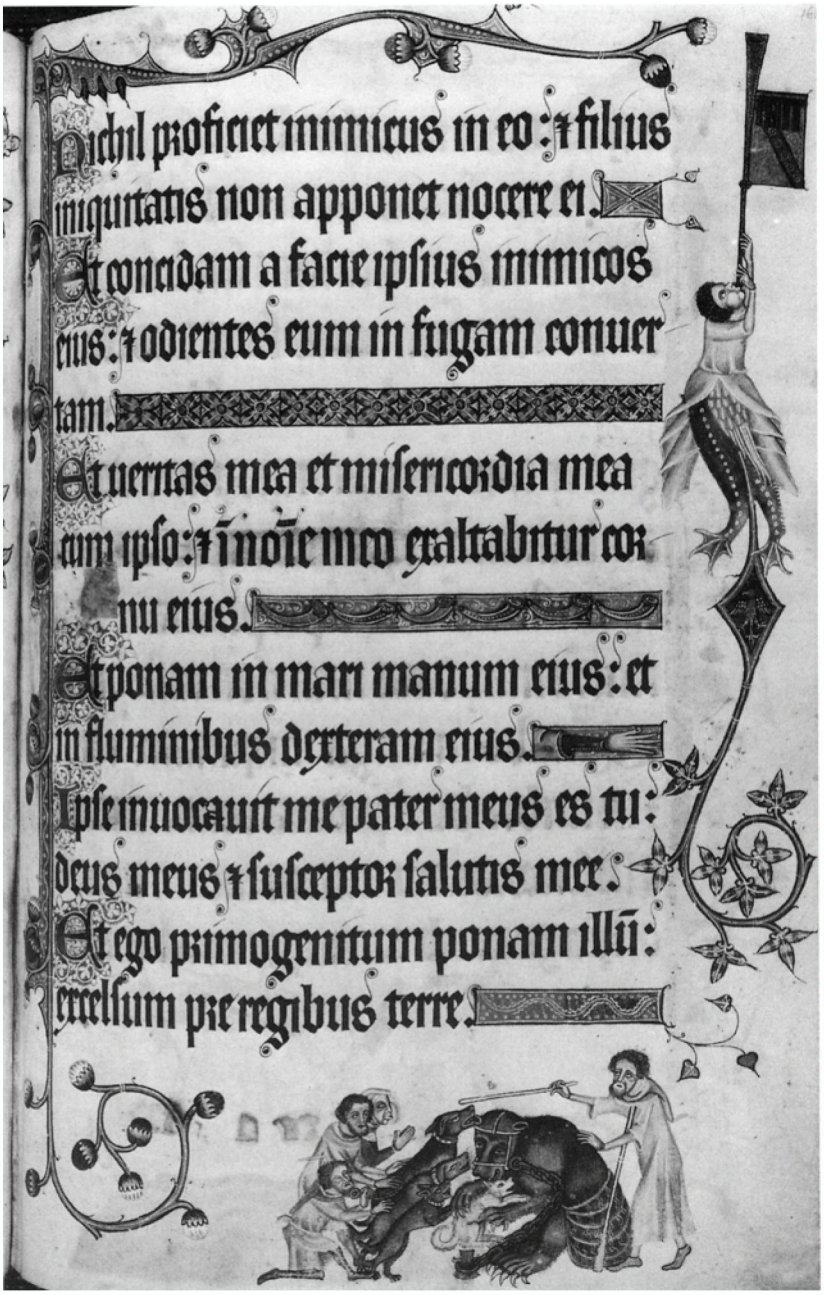
The continuation of the musical theme in Psalm 97 (98) appears to have prompted the imagery on the following page (f.174v), where vv5-6 read "Sing praises to the Lord with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of the melody. With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the king, the Lord". Next to these lines a small seated figure plucks a harp, and a man standing on the back of a serpentine babewyn raises a trumpet up the left-hand margin [fig. 5]. Again in the top-right corner there is a hybrid form with foliage sprouting from his mouth. He holds the stem as if it were a trumpet, and maybe produces his own response to the sounds of the figures in the opposite margin.

On f.40r a perversion of the sacred forms occurs through echoes in the formal structure of the illuminated initial [fig. 6]. In the initial to Psalm 19 (20), which begins "The Lord answer you in the day of trouble!", and continues on the Lord responding to cries for help, a man is kneeling in prayer. Standing on the form of the historiated initial, meanwhile, and towering more than three lines high, is a figure playing a shawm, a conical double-reed instrument. His position as he holds up his fingers to the holes of the instrument echoes that of the man below, but rather than being engaged in communication with God, he is producing music on a "loud" wind instrument strongly associated with dance and therefore sensuous enjoyment.[45]

This theme of the sacred music-making which is an expression of praise to God set against the worldly music which delivers sensual pleasure can be found at least twice more. On f.61r, Psalm 32 (33), v2 reads "Praise the Lord with the lyre, make melody to him with the ten-stringed psaltery", and as the Latin *cithara* is translated in pictorial terms in the initial E into a type of lyre known as a rote, being played by a seated lady [fig. 7]. Contrasted with this demure and tiny figure of a maiden producing music on a "rational" instrument, across the page there is a towering woman, with the flying head-dress that Camille finds symbolic of wantonness.[46] She beats a timbrel (a type of tambourine), and sways to her own licentious rhythm.

16. Luttrell Psalter, f.176r.

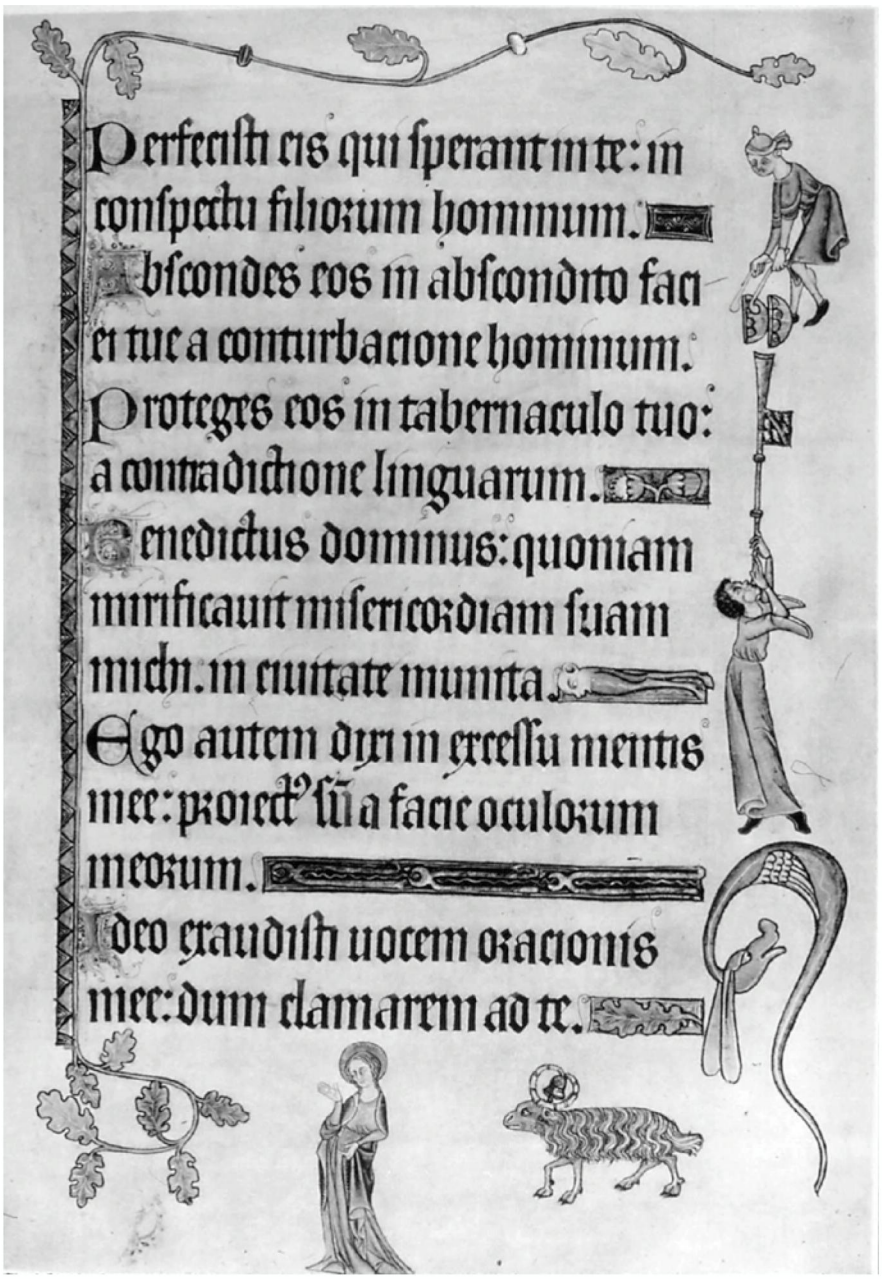
The final, and perhaps most imaginative, example of this perversion through echoed forms appears on f.185v [fig. 8]. Psalm 104 (105) begins "Confitemini domino" (Confess to the Lord), and in the initial Christ hears the confession of the man knelt before him. The placement of their heads, faces turned towards each other, finds a twisted parallel, however, in the music-making monster in the bas-de-page, where the faces are inverted and turned away from each other. Just as the figures in the initial are joined through the touching of hands, the musical mouths are joined into one monstrous babewyn. According to Camille, this hybrid "sounds his own anti-confession … from both ends of his body".[47]



17. Luttrell Psalter, f.161r.

FURTHER INSTANCES OF MUSIC-MAKING. There is one more instance of liturgical singing, on f.171v, where Psalm 95 (96) again begins with the words, "Sing to the Lord a new song" [fig. 9]. In the initial C are depicted three monks standing and singing from a scroll bearing illegible musical notation.[48]

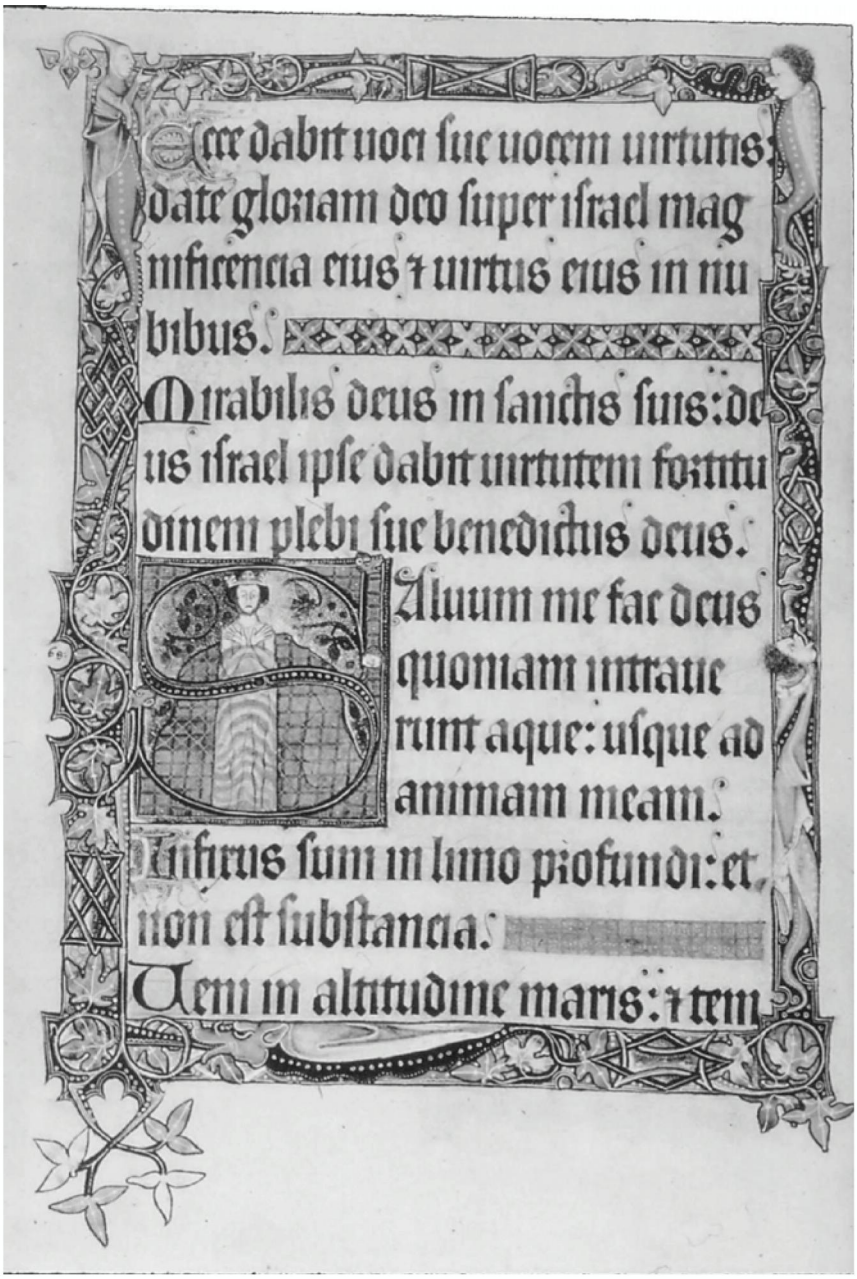
One final initial contains musical instruments, on f.170v where two men sound trumpets to illustrate Psalm 94 (95), "Come, let us praise the Lord, let us make a joyful noise to the God of our salvation" [fig. 10]. The trumpet was the instrument of choice to make loud proclamations and to herald events, and is mentioned in Psalm 150 being used in this way. Although employed at court rather than in religious contexts, there are records of it being used to announce the elevation of the host during the Mass.[49]



18. Luttrell Psalter, f.59r.

Trumpets are played for the same reasons by the angelic host who declare the glory of God, or specifically by angels who announce the Last Judgement. On f.101v three angels sound trumpets above the heads of the group of naked souls they are escorting to the final verdict [fig. 11].

The only instrument to gain official acceptance within religious service was the organ, which by the thirteenth century was in wide use during the liturgy.[50] Church authorities acknowledged the sacred character of its music, and singled it out as the only instrument permissible for use in services.[51] On f.55r of the Luttrell Psalter a man is shown seated at a positive organ [fig. 12]. Smaller than the church organ but larger than the portative organ, this instrument could be moved with relative ease and was suitable for both church and court.



19. Luttrell Psalter, f.121v.

An assistant worked the bellows so that the player could use both hands.[51] Its presence here may be due to association with the abbot in the center of the bas-de-page.

The penetrating sound of the long trumpet had made it suitable to accompany armies onto the battlefield, and it developed associations with proclamations and fanfares, and its primary use was ceremonial. It came to be limited to the nobility and as official heralds the trumpet players had a higher position than other musicians and formed their own guild.[52] Due to its official nature, a banner was attached bearing the coat-of-arms of the lord in order to emphasize his power and prestige, and it appears in this way in most instances in the Luttrell Psalter. On f.75v [fig. 13] we see the trumpet in the courtly context, being sounded by a lady

from the top of the castle of love, perhaps to send out a summons to the knights. In the scene of a group of garlanded men dancing their way out of the city walls on f.164v [fig. 14], the event is heralded by two trumpets emerging from the gate which bear the Luttrell and Sutton arms. The pipe-and-tabor and shawm played by two figures who dance ahead were the standard accompaniment for dances from the thirteenth century on. The heads of soldiers in chain-mail and the two bowmen positioned in the castles of the ship in the bas-de-page of f.161v [fig. 15] make it clear that this is a warship and that the trumpets here are used for battle cries.

Psalm 150, the last in the Book of Psalms and one which drew much attention from medieval commentators, is wholly concerned with praise-giving through music, and one might understandably expect some accompanying imagery of instruments and music-making, but in the Luttrell Psalter it falls within the gatherings that were completed hastily at a later date, and contains no marginalia.

Word illustration. The remaining instances of musical representations can be explained partially by their direct reference to the content of the psalm, a connection made either by the actual illuminator (which suggests he or she was literate) or by someone else directing the project. Mary Carruthers discusses this in terms of *imagines verborum*, mnemonic images (either mental or on the page) of the narrative content of the text. She cites the Utrecht Psalter as the best-known and most detailed example of this, where large illustrations precede the text of the psalm and visualize much of the content. Although the approach to illumination in the Luttrell Psalter is not of the same direct nature, there are still many places where there is apparently a connection between a word and a neighboring marginal image.[54]

Psalm 99 (100) contains many invocations to praise the Lord – *Exultate… adorate*, *Jubilate*, and *Laudate* all occur on f.176r – although it contains no specific references to musical instruments [fig. 16]. Nevertheless, the portrayal of music-making here is the fullest in the entire manuscript. At the top a hybrid form sprouts from the line-filler and rings a pair of hand-bells, and in the right margin one man sings as he plays a portative organ. Beneath him another plays a bagpipe as he strides towards the text. In the bas-de-page a hunched figure plays a hurdy-gurdy (*symphonia* or *chifonie*) as he walks, and another bangs nakers suspended at his waist as he dances. It is also interesting to note that this is one of only three psalms in the so-called "master's section" that does not have an illuminated initial.[55] Without the opposition to the content of the initial, it is difficult to theorize what significance these figures could have. In Camille's interpretation they represent the minstrels who play for an "earthly lord", and stand as a critique of the excesses at court.[56] It seems equally plausible, however, to understand them rather as representations of the sort of musicians Sir Geoffrey would have had in his own household. There is also a certain ambiguity in the selection illustrated: the hand-bells and organ are instruments legitimized through mention in the psalms, but the others are of the loud, outdoors variety that was used in popular festivities and entertainments, and not appropriate for holy worship of any kind. Neither are all five suitable to form an ensemble, and they thus appear to represent more of a cumulative idea of instrumental music.

Camille finds in the Luttrell Psalter many elements to connect it with contemporary mumming plays and other theatrical performances, citing the emphasis on elaborate costumes and the frequent mask-like appearance of the babewyns in particular. He goes so far as to suggest that the master-illuminator "must have had experience designing masks and costumes for festivals".[57] This is an interesting suggestion in light of the musical depictions, and it is possible that some of the choices of instruments to be depicted were inspired by such practices. Further, Bowles points out that although the details of musical imagery might have little or nothing to do with use in the liturgy itself, they do draw on liturgical dramas, or mystery plays.[58]

Another example of word-illustration appears on f.161r when Psalm 88 (89), v24 reads "in my name shall his horn (*cornu*) be exalted" [fig. 17]. A *cornu* was a Roman curved trumpet, but the word in medieval Latin was used to designate a horn. The illuminator has chosen it here as a prompt for the web-footed hybrid with puffed out cheeks who holds a straight trumpet bearing the Scrope arms up the right margin.

One final example that defies explanation at present is f.59r [fig. 18]. Although Psalm 30 (31) makes no reference to music, the illuminator has depicted a man leaning over to play the nakers and a figure beneath him sounds a trumpet with a banner bearing the Luttrell arms. Meanwhile, in the bas-de-page, St. Apollonia stands about to pull out her teeth, as according to the legend (with the result on the following page).

Speech within the Psalter. The psalms are different from much of the rest of the Scriptures in that rather than being accounts or teachings, they are designed to be performed, recited, sung, or read aloud, as audible prayers. Camille stresses that "performed speech, or prayer spoken out loud, forms the major mode of devotional expression in the psalter". He points out that there is an open mouth on nearly every page, of which f.121v can stand as just one example [fig. 19].[59] As seen earlier, the figure at the top left plays a foliage-trumpet, producing a physical embodiment of Psalm 67 (68), where God "sends out his voice, his mighty voice", and five other little creatures here have gaping mouths. One can also point to the unusual subject matter in the initials for Psalms 26, 38, and 51 of the Luttrell Psalter, all of which pick up on words in the first verse to do with the tongue, and sins committed in speech.

Text/image as reminder of sound. Carruthers, in her *Book of Memory*, relates how Richart de Fournival in 1240 distinguishes between *painture* and *parole*. *Painture* consists of the visual aspect of the sign, that is the word as marked on the page, which serves as a reminder of the *parole*, the spoken word. As a painted image could just as well be used to substitute for the parole, written word and image thereby stand in equal relationship. The spoken word itself, however, serves only as an aid to *memoria* to recollect the ideas themselves. Thus, "the sensory gateway is always dual … for all words are both shape and sound, by their very nature, and all sensory impressions are processed so as to act upon the memory in the same way, making what is no longer physically before one present to the mind's eye".[60] She cites the Utrecht Psalter "as an excellent example of what Gregory the Great meant when he said that images are a form of *litteratura*, which, like graphemes, recall not meanings directly but the words ("voces") which are the signs of meaning".[61]

The visual presentation of the Luttrell Psalter can thus be seen holistically, with the inscribed text and painted imagery both merely an indication of the actual performance, either the recitation of the psalms by Sir Geoffrey or the singing by his friars. This *parole* and the *painture* on the page which facilitates it together form a "carefully fabricated aural-visual synaesthesia".[62] Camille concurs in this respect, stating that both word and image "would have been thought of as conventional and secondary representations, external to, but always referring back to, the spontaneous springs of speech".[63]

Conclusion. We have seen how important is the nature of the psalms as poetry and song in determining their performance and reception, and how even the appearance of the text and illumination on the page is influenced by their spoken and sung rhythms. The elements of orality retained in the Luttrell Psalter extend beyond this, with the frequent depiction of instruments helping to create a pervasive presence of music. This instrumental music, however, does not provide a direct link to the daily enactment by the patron (and his clerics), but instead transmits through symbolic oppositions a lesson concerning the diametrical forms in which music and sound can appear: the rational and liturgical vs. devilish and corrupting. In this way the idea and representation of music is employed to express a profound ontological and religious truth about the choices that confront the Christian.

In such an area of shifting signification as the margins, however, it is perhaps too hasty to make so clear-cut a distinction between the two realms of holy vs. unholy. The portrayals that crowd the edges of the page with their cacophony of instruments and embodied utterances incorporate elements which, as we have seen, would have featured in the entertainment of the lord and thus are symbols of his wealth. Do they therefore constitute an acknowledgment that a temporal lord, because he is unable to abandon his attachment to worldly possessions and pleasures, can never in fact attain a truly holy state? If so, what we see here is an attempt to discipline their unholy power by recruiting them in the service of a higher ideal, whereby the morally suspect secular music-making is transformed by its presence within the pages of the Psalter into a form of sacred praise.

NOTES

[1] Lucy Freeman Sandler places the manuscript for stylistic reasons between 1325 and 1330, and Michael Camille goes for the 1330s to early 1340s.

[2] Michael Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England* (London: Reaktion, 1998), 327. Sandler suggests, however, that this section was the result of a collaboration between two illuminators. Cf. Lucy Freeman Sandler, *Gothic Manuscripts, 1285–1385* (London: H. Miller; New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), II:120.

[3] M. Camille, *op. cit.*, 123.

[4] M. Camille, *ibid.*, 26-38. Instrument details are included in Nicholas Bell, *Music in Medieval Manuscripts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001) and Jeremy Montagu, *The World of Medieval and Renaissance Instruments* (Woodstock: The Overlook Press, 1976).

[5] Bruce M. Metzger and Roland M. Murphy, *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocryphal /Deuterocanonical Books* (New York, 1991), 674. Numbering of the psalms differs between the Authorized Version and the Vulgate due to the use of different Hebrew sources and different divisions in the psalms.

[6] Michael P. Kuczynski, *Prophetic Song: The Psalms as Moral Discourse in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 120-121.

[7] As analyzed by Robert Lowth: *Encyclopedia Britannica* CD 2.0 (1995), "Psalms" entry

[8] Charles Alexander Lamb, *The Psalms in Christain Worship* (London: Faith Press, 1962), 83.

[9] Owain Tudor Edwards, "Dynamic Qualities in the Medieval Office", *Liturgy and the Arts in the Middle Ages: Studies in Honor of C. Clifford Flanigan*, ed. by Eva Louise Lillie & Nils Holger Petersen (København: Museum Tusculanum Press; University of Copenhagen: 1996), 50.

[10] O.T. Edwards, *op. cit.*, 38, 53.

[11] Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office: A Guide to their Organization and Terminology* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 225.

[12] S.J.P. van Dijk, "Medieval Terminology and Methods of Psalm Singing", *Musica disciplina* VI (1952), 8.

[13] M. Camille, *op. cit.*, 316.

[14] Lucy Freeman Sandler, *The Peterborough Psalter in Brussels and Other Fenland Manuscripts* (London: H. Miller; Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1974), figs. 84, 122, 297.

[15] N. Bell, *op. cit.*, 27.

[16] Lilian Randall, *Images in the Margins of Gothic Manuscripts* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966), 20.

[17] Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 117.

[18] E. Millar, *The Luttrell Psalter* (London: The British Museum, 1932), 60.

[19] Christopher Page, "Biblical Instruments in Medieval Manuscript Illustration", *Early Music* V/3 (July 1977), 299-309.

[20] Tilman Seebass, "The Visualisation of Music Through Pictorial Imagery and Notation in Late Medieval France". *Studies in the Performance of Late Medieval Music*, ed. by Stanley Boorman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 26.

[21] Reinhold Hammerstein, *Diabolus in musica: Studien zur Ikonographie der Musik im Mittelalter* (Bern: Francke, 1974), 22.

[22] Albert Seay, *Music in the Medieval World* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 15-21.

[23] Richard Rastall, "Minstrelsy, Church and Clergy in Medieval England", *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 97 (1970), 83; Edmund A. Bowles, "Were Musical Instruments Used in the Liturgical Service during the Middle Ages?", *The Galpin Society Journal* X (1957), 45.

[24] R. Hammerstein, *op. cit.*, 14.

[25] Edward B. Pusey (transl.), *The Confessions of Saint Augustine* (London: Collier Books, 1961), 176.

[26] E.A. Bowles, *op. cit.*, 47; A. Seay, *op. cit.*, 73; R. Hammerstein, *op. cit.*, 21.

[27] E.A. Bowles, *op. cit.*, passim; Richard Pestell, "Medieval Art and the Performance of Medieval Music", *Early Music* XV/1 (February 1987), 66.

[28] R. Rastall, *op. cit.*, 83.

[29] R. Pestell, *op. cit.*, 68, fn.23; R. Hammerstein, *op. cit.*, 24.

[30] E.A. Bowles, *op. cit.*, 41.

[31] Keith McGowan, "The Prince and the Piper: Haut, Bas and the Whole Body in Early Modern Europe", *Early Music* XXVII/2 (May 1999), 211-212; E.A. Bowles, "Haut and Bas: The Grouping of Musical Instruments in the Middle Ages", *Musica disciplina* VIII (1954), passim.

[32] James W. McKinnon, "Musical Instruments in Medieval Psalm Commentaries and Psalters", *Journal of the American Musicological Society* XXI/1 (1968), 6; Dorthe Falcon Møller , *Music Aloft: Musical Symbolism in the Mural Paintings of Danish Medieval Churches* (København: Forlaget Falcon, 1996), 56.

[33] J.W. McKinnon, *ibid.*, 6.

[34] *Ibid.*, 11.

[35] D.F. Møller, *op. cit.*, 11.

[36] J.W. McKinnon, *op. cit.*, 3.

[37] Elizabeth C. Teviotdale, "Music and Pictures in the Middle Ages". *Companion to Medieval and Renaissance Music*, ed. by Tess Knighton and David Fallows (London: Dent, 1992), 180, 182.

[38] Martin van Schaik suggests this with regard to the Beatus initial in the manuscript Bodley 284 at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, dating from the early thirteenth century. Cf. Martin van Schaik, *The Harp in the Middle Ages: The Symbolism of a Musical Instrument* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992), 101.

[39] M. van Schaik, *ibid.*, 40-45, 58.

[40] R. Hammerstein, *op. cit.*, 29, 35, 58-59. For the significance of bagpipes, see also Emanuel Winternitz, "Bagpipes for the Lord", *Musical Instruments and their Symbolism in Western Art* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press,1967), 129-136.

[41] M. van Schaik, *op. cit.*, 136-139.

[42] Howard Mayer Brown & Stanley Sadie, eds., *Performance Practice: Music before 1600* (New York: 1990), 25.

[42] C. Page, "An English Motet of the 14th Century in Performance: Two Contemporary Images", *Early Music* XXV/1 (February 1997), 9-11.

[43] M. Camille, *Image on the Edge: The Marhins of Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press 1992), 10.

[44] David Munrow, *Instruments of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 8.

[45] M. Camille, *Mirror in Parchment*, 109.

[46] *Ibid.*, 144.

[47] C. Page,"An English Motet, 11.

[48] R. Rastall, *op. cit.*, 92.

[49] E.A. Bowles, "Were Musical Instruments..., 49.

[50] E.A. Bowles, "La hiérarchie des instruments de musique dans l'Europe féodale", *Revue de musicologie* XLII (1958), 160-161.

[51] D. Munrow, *op. cit.*, 16.

[52] J. Montagu, *op. cit.*, 41; E.A. Bowles, "La hiérarchie des instruments...", 157-159.

[53] See L.F. Sandler, "The World in the Text and the Image in the Margin: The Case of the Luttrell Psalter", *The Journal of the Walters Art Gallery* LIV (1996), passim, for a discussion of other examples.

[54] The other two psalms are 85 (86) starting on f155r and 113 (114) on f206r.

[55] M. Camille, *Mirror in Parchment*, 114-115.

[56] *Ibid.*, 246ff.

[57] E.A. Bowles, "Were Musical Instruments...", 45.

[58] M. Camille, *Mirror in Parchment*, 144, 336.

[59] M. Carruthers, *op. cit.*, 223-224.

[60] *Ibid.*, 227.

[61] *Ibid.*, 230.

[62] M. Camille, *Mirror in Parchment,* 174.

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