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Lewis & Clark and Les Enluminures Manuscripts in the Curriculum Spring 2026

Lewis & Clark College participated in Manuscripts in the Curriculum (MiC) in Spring 2026. For context, we are a liberal arts college in Portland, Oregon. Our institution includes a Law School and a Graduate School of Education and Counseling, but there are only undergraduates (roughly 1900) in the College of Arts & Sciences, which hosted MiC. Here we provide an account of our use of the manuscripts while on campus with the hope that this may be helpful for future MiC participants.

Exhibition Theme and Content

The manuscripts had only arrived on campus for a few days when they were installed in our exhibition, *Shaping the Soul: Books in Medieval Life*. The exhibition lasted for eight weeks, open to the public, after which the manuscripts were removed from the cases and made available for viewing and teaching in the Special Collections's Reading Room.

In thinking about how to approach an exhibition, we knew that we wanted to build upon MiC, both to draw attention to the quality of our own Special Collections and to cultivate local relationships. We had already decided that we would use the exhibition as an opportunity for sharing with the public items from our own collection alongside Les Enluminures's volumes. We also inquired about loans from regional holders of medieval manuscripts whose collections are never on display in Portland, i.e., Phillip J. Pirages Fine Books & Manuscripts of McMinnville and Mount Angel Abbey near Salem. Both welcomed the prospect of a Portland exhibition, but in the end Mount Angel was unable to participate. With both our own items and the loans supplementing MiC, we greatly increased the number of illustrated materials on view, raising the visual interest for the general public.

With these guidelines, we pondered the finalized list of MiC items and tested different constellations. In the end, the theme that seemed the most capacious yet genuine was that of community, of how these manuscripts connected people with God, with each other, and with the natural world—and, by extension, how these manuscripts still create community, bringing us together through the exhibition. The summation of this argument was *Shaping the Soul: Books in Medieval Life*. As we explained in our press release:

Viewing a medieval manuscript is a profoundly intimate experience. Unlike today's mass-produced publications, medieval manuscripts are unique, bespoke productions, revealing traces of both their makers and their readers. Medieval books also performed a number of roles: developing moral character through education, nurturing interiority through meditation and prayer, creating community through shared use in worship, forming the public self through legal documentation, and more. *Shaping the Soul* demonstrates the various ways that people understood themselves and their world through books. Highlights include a nun's

private devotional handbook, a lawyer's manual with amusing doodles for memory aids, a grand choir book, a thirteenth-century Bible, and sumptuous books of hours.

With this as our polestar, the exhibition fell into place. From Lewis & Clark's collection, we added our French Book of Hours (Use of Rome, ca. 1500),¹ the legal scroll of Marie Menou (Brittany, 1499),² our printed Book of Hours (Use of Sarum, Paris, 1527),³ the "Il Nasone" second edition of Dante's *Commedia* with commentary by Cristoforo Landino (Venice, 1578), and a collection of Andrea Alciato's emblems (Padua 1618). Phillip J. Pirages Fine Books & Manuscripts contributed a hand-colored printed Book of Hours by the Hardouyn Brothers (Use of Rome, Paris, 1516), a manuscript Book of Hours (Use of Rome, Northern France, ca. 1500), and two decorated leaves with historiated initials from the Hours of Holy Spirit (one Netherlandish, ca. 1470-1490, the other from Northern France, ca. 1475).

We wanted to retain a few items for teaching purposes during the exhibition, so MiC's miscellany of mystical tracts (TM 1365) and our other illuminated manuscript Book of Hours (Ferrara, ca. 1475) were not on display.

Exhibition Layout

Shaping the Soul was hosted in the space outside the Special Collections Reading Room in our Aubrey R. Watzek Library. The main display area consists of a corridor with seven cases of different formats (two vertical wall cases, requiring tall storyboards upright in the back for the items with smaller labels; three flat deep cases against the wall; and two standalone cubes at either end of the corridor). There were two more vertical wall cases around the corner, totaling nine cases requiring content. The area is one of relatively high traffic, in that the west end of the corridor opens into the main atrium of the library, so some cases and display boards can be visible to the circulation desk, a bank of computer terminals and study tables, and, indeed, to visitors upon entering the library. The east end of the corridor terminates with restrooms and intersects with another major artery of movement in the building. This display space is accessible to library patrons whenever the building is open. (We describe the space in detail in part for those MiC participants who also may not have an enclosed gallery at their disposal, to help them imagine how they might activate a space.)

¹ Previously included in Les Enluminures's inventory: see item #8 in Roger Weick, with Sandra Hindaman and Ariane Bergeron-Foote, *Picturing Piety: The Book of Hours*, Les Enluminures Catalogue 13 (London: Paul Hoberton Publishing for Les Enluminures, 2007), 88-93.

² Acquired from Les Enluminures (formerly TM 1305).

³ Acquired from Les Enluminures (formerly TM 145BOH).



View upon entering Aubrey R. Watzek Library of atrium, display cases, and entrance to Special Collections's Reading Room.

Display Cases

The cases presented the argument of the exhibition. Given their arrangement as well as how people access the space, the cases needed to resonate with each other without requiring a linear narrative (as opposed to a traditional gallery space, which might more directly channel visitor flow). For continuity, every case was given a placard in the exhibition's theme colors with a gerund title, highlighting different work these manuscripts fostered. In those cases large enough to accommodate, story boards of ~250 words explained specific context. Small labels of ~100 words (inclusive of item identification) accompanied each object. Cases were organized by

Living with the Psalms #1 – TM1357 Ferial Psalter open fols. 1v-2r

Living with the Psalms #2 – TM789 Psalter open fols. 36v-37r (Michael slaying the dragon); L&C French Book of Hours open to fol. 32v-33r (David)

Personalizing Devotion – Pirages's Book of Hours open fol. 104r (Annunciation with owner's heraldic shield); TM1358 Nun's Prayer book open to tipped-in print of Woman of the Sun and fol.1r

Preparing for the Afterlife – BoH229 open fols. 138v-139r – meeting of the quick and the dead; L&C Printed Book of Hours showing Last Judgment

Worshipping Together – TM1164 Choir Gradual opened to folio 1 with Annunciation, David initial, and music

Reading Nature – Pirages's Book of Hours printed by Germain Hardouyn open to Zodiac Man; Pirages's leaf with naturalistic border of birds and insects

Studying on the Move – TM892 Bible open to fols. 4v-5r Genesis incipit; Pirages's leaf with miniature of Pentecost (N. France, ca. 1475)

Defining the Law – TM1410 law tracts opened to fol. 150v-151r; legal scroll of the will and testament of Marie Menou

Making Friends beyond the Grave – TM 1299 Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations*, opened to fol. 1v-2r; Dante, *Commedia*, opened to *Inferno* IV (Limbo, where, according to the poem, Cicero resides); Alciati, *Emblemata*, open to Emblema CLVI ("Friendship that endures after death")



Installation of *Shaping the Soul: Books in Medieval Life*

Framed Leaves

While the cases presented thematic information, framed leaves in the corridor highlighted aspects of manuscript production and (ab)use. In a sense, there was a second exhibition on the walls in support of the main exhibition in the cases, intended to answer visitors’ amazed queries, “But how did they make these books? Why do they look like this?” Leaves on one wall demonstrated the differences between hairside and fleshside, pricking and ruling, oak gall ink and its acidity risks, gold leaf versus shell gold. On the opposite wall, leaves attested to various uses of medieval manuscripts, including marginalia, doodling, binding waste, and miniature cuttings. The explanatory labels intentionally connected leaves with items in the cases (e.g., a leaf from a Paris Bible exemplifying ruling was related to TM892). All leaves were from Lewis & Clark’s Special Collections. Also included was a label explaining Lewis & Clark’s Special Collections’s policy regarding the acquisition of leaves.



Framed leaves illustrating aspects of manuscript manufacture.

Display with British Library Videos

Accompanying the leaves, a mounted monitor showed on a loop the seven-part video series *Making Medieval Manuscripts* (2018), courtesy of the British Library's *Medieval England and France 700-1200 Project* and the Polonsky Foundation.

Large-print guides reprinting the exhibition text were available.

A [Digital Exhibition](#) was created by the student curator, Alli Sanders.

Programming

We organized a number of tie-in events for the duration of the exhibition:

Opening Reception

This was a two-hour party open to the public, held the weekend after the exhibition was installed. Local early-music group [Musica Universalis](#) performed during the event, setting a wonderful ambiance. Visiting Professor John Cox also directed students in performing plainchants that were included in the Italian Gradual (TM 1164). There were brief remarks by Hannah, Karen, and Alli, but the attention was really on the manuscripts and music (and the catering, which was consumed quickly!). Over 200 people attended, not just current students and faculty but also alumni, faculty from regional institutions, museum curators, librarians, booklovers, medieval enthusiasts, and more. Visitors came from within nearly a 200-mile radius, ranging from Seattle to Eugene. People also stayed for quite a while, thanks to the music, and some students danced among the book stacks and study tables, adding to the festive mood. We had requested a photographer from the college's media office, and she reported that our reception was one of the most successful events she had ever covered. (NB: Photos included in this report are from Karen's phone.)



Opening reception for *Shaping the Soul: Books in Medieval Life*, 24 January 2026.



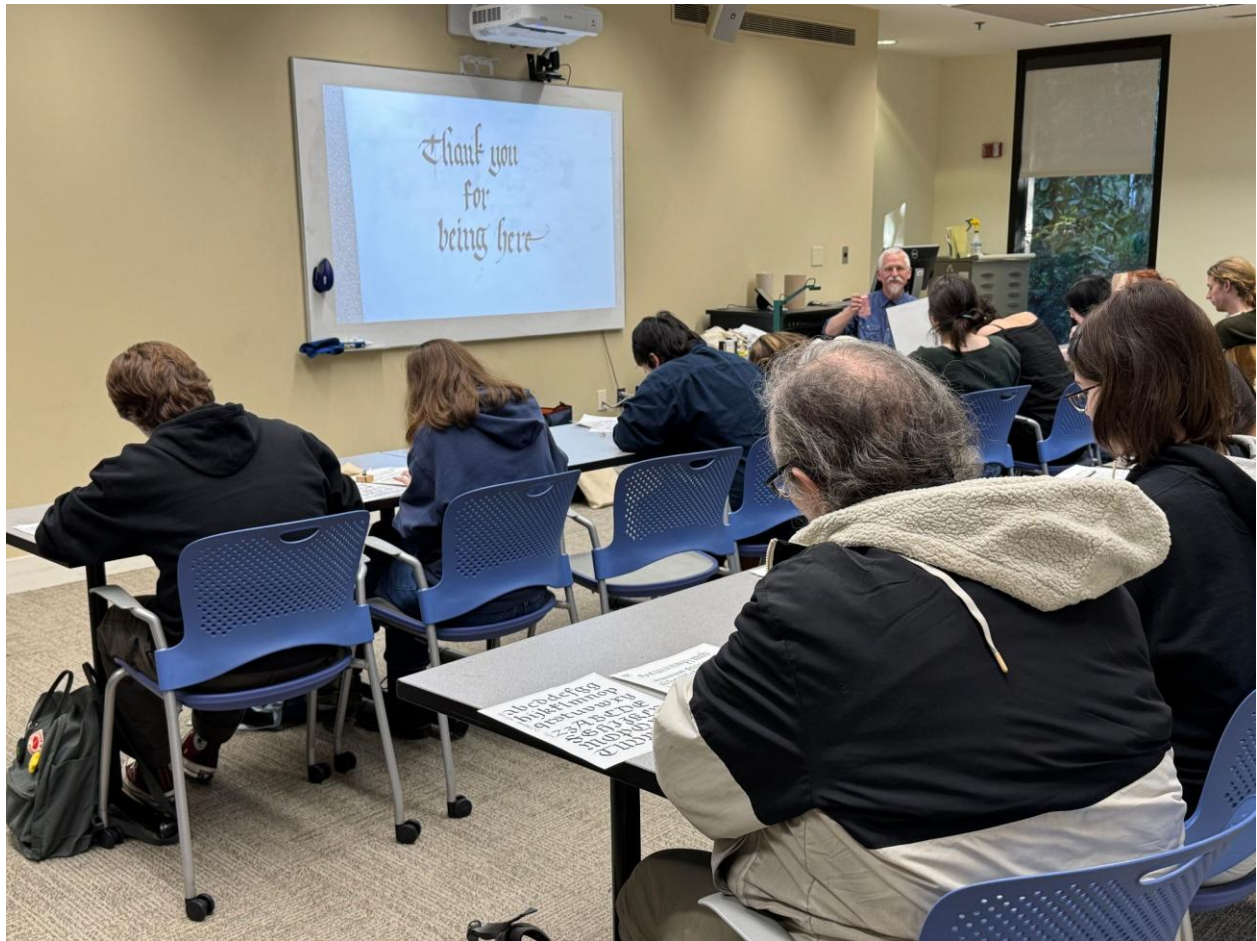
Opening reception to *Shaping the Soul*

Presentation to the Board of Trustees

President Robin Holmes-Sullivan agreed to let the manuscripts be the featured faculty-student showcase for the February Board Meeting. As the Trustees finished their lunch, Karen gave a brief presentation explaining what a medieval manuscript is but also how unique it is for undergraduates to access these materials, how this current exhibition builds upon recent campus developments in collections and teaching, both supported by grants, and how student opportunities to work hands-on is crucial for humanities studies. The Trustees then visited the exhibit and an open house in the Special Collections Reading Room to view other items not on display. Hannah and student docents were on hand to speak with Trustees and administrators. John and the music students also reprised their plainchant.

Calligraphy Workshop

About a month into the exhibition, to rekindle excitement, we hosted Gregory MacNaughton, calligrapher and instructor at Cooley Gallery, Reed College. Gregory led a 90-minute workshop practicing Gothic scripts for over forty participants, mostly undergraduates but also staff, law and education students, and community members.



Gregory MacNaughton of Reed College teaching calligraphy.

First Friday Arts@Watzek

In the afternoon of every first Friday of the month, Watzek Library hosts a brief pop-up arts showcase in the atrium. This event may feature an upcoming main stage Theatre production, a student poetry reading, or other highlight of campus arts programming. We secured the spot for the Friday that coincided with the closing weeks of the exhibit for John's student singers to reprise their plainchant. Our hope was that the Arts@Watzek spotlight might encourage attendance from those who had been meaning to see the exhibition but kept putting it off.

Visiting Scholar Lecture

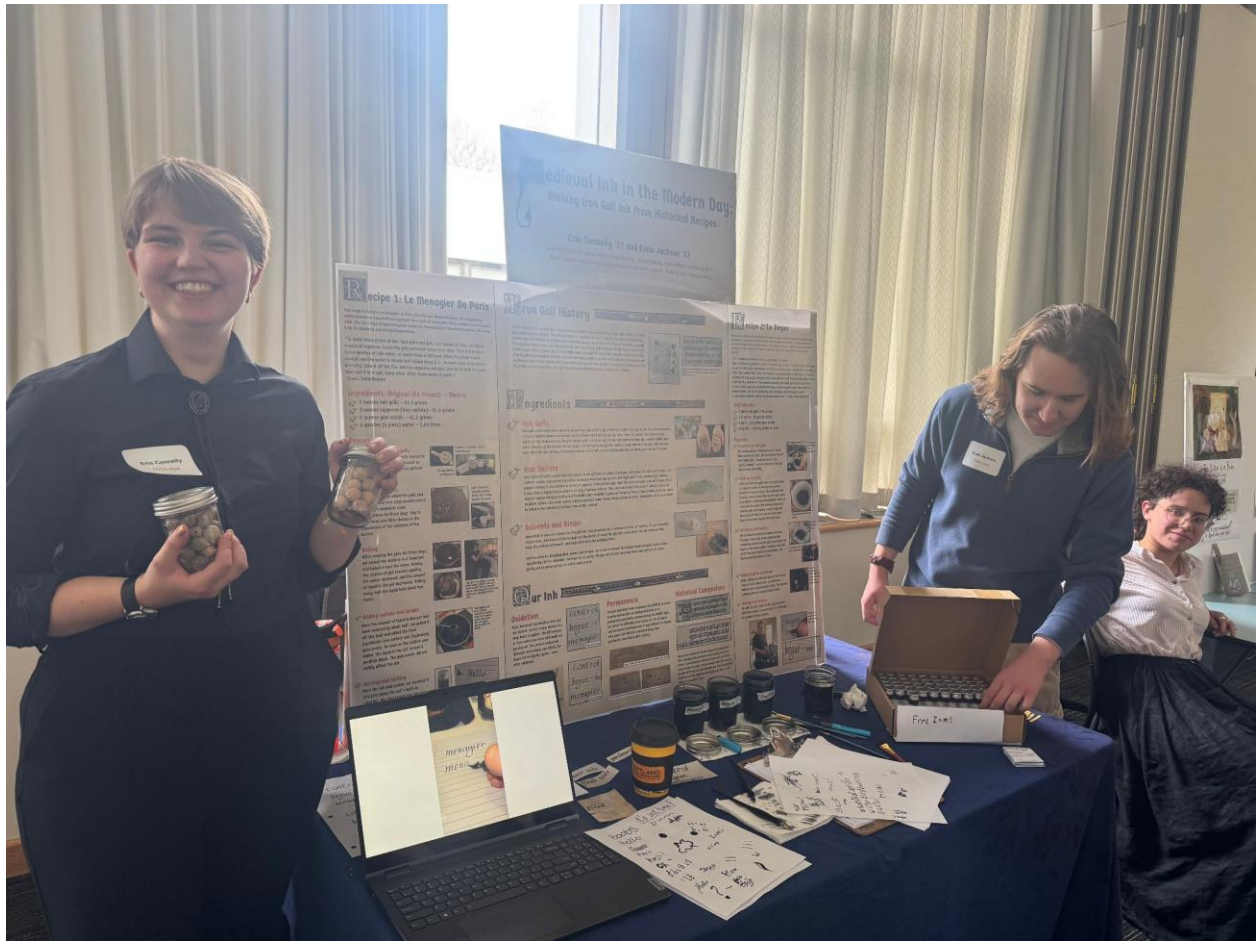
The premier honors society on campus, the Lewis & Clark Society of Fellows, requested to pair their annual endowed lecture with the exhibition. After consulting with Karen, the students invited Dr. Lisa Fagin Davis, executive director of the Medieval Academy of America, who delivered a talk entitled "Scattered Leaves: Otto Ege in Oregon." (A [version of her address](#) is published on her "Manuscripts Road Trip" blog.) We held the event the closing week of the exhibition, intended as an opportunity for community members to return to campus once again for the manuscripts. Attendees came from as far as Seattle.

Gender Studies Symposium

Shortly after the exhibition closed, Lewis & Clark held its forty-fifth annual Gender Studies Symposium, with the theme "[Resist Now!](#)" Karen and two students presented a session entitled "Stories of Resistance from the Archives," focused on recovering women's experiences from manuscripts and rare books. One student discussed the MiC Dutch prayer book (TM 1358), with emphasis on the devotional tradition of the Holy Helpers; the other used the MiC legal miscellany (TM 1410) to contextualize the dispute surrounding the final testament of Marie Menou (d. 1499), as recounted in a scroll owned by Lewis & Clark (formerly TM 1305). Karen introduced another book owned by Lewis & Clark, *The Matchless Orinda* (London, 1667), the posthumous folio edition of the collected poetry of Katherine Philips (1631-1664). Afterwards, the audience was invited to the Special Collections Reading Room to view the items discussed along with other materials relevant to the Symposium's theme. Roughly 40 people attended.

Oak-Gall Ink production for Festival of Scholars & Artists

Two advanced manuscripts students researched oak gall ink as part of an independent study. They conducted both historical and chemical investigations, meeting with members of our Chemistry faculty. Using oak galls imported from Turkey, the two students successfully followed two different medieval recipes. At the Festival of Scholars & Artists (the annual showcase of student research and artistic production), the students held a demonstration, allowing people to evaluate the qualities of the different recipes, and distributed free vials of ink.



Erin Connelly and Evan Jackson demonstrate their oak gall ink at the 2026 Lewis & Clark Festival of Scholars & Artists.

Promotional Materials

We had a limited budget, but we were able to produce some items, all designed by the student curator, to promote the exhibition.

Posters were placed around campus as well as in local coffeeshops, libraries, bookstores, and other friendly establishments in the city.

Postcards were sent to a select list (e.g., faculty, librarians, curators, and booksellers in the region).

Email notifications were sent to alumni, both in batch notices from the Alumni Office and personal emails to some.

Booklet catalogues reprinting some of the exhibition text and images were available.

Bookmarks & Stickers were left in a nearby lounge area in the library's atrium. Both reproduced amusing details from marginalia of the manuscripts. These were very popular items that students sported on their water bottles and laptop covers.

Media Coverage

Prior to the exhibition's opening, "Shaping the Soul" was featured by [Oregon Arts Watch](#) and [Willamette Week](#). The Exhibition's opening reception was listed in several local publications as a Recommended Event, including in [Everout](#) and [Travel Portland](#). Our closing was similarly featured in the press, including by [ICMA](#)'s calendar. The regional news program [Think Out Loud](#) on Oregon Public Broadcasting also interviewed Hannah and Karen.

Educational uses

ENG 280 Working with Medieval Manuscripts

This course is open to all students, although it counts towards both the art history and English majors; it also fulfills some general education requirements. Consequently, student enrollment is varied, ranging from senior art history majors to curious undeclared freshmen and everyone in between. Students complete a codicological description of a manuscript and a self-designed research paper.

MiC featured in Lewis & Clark coursework even before the manuscripts arrived: in the spring 2025 iteration of ENG 281, in lieu of a research paper, students collaborated on a hypothetical exhibition, using in part items included in the Text Manuscripts inventory. (None of the items the students had gravitated to was included in the eventual loan.)

In Spring 2026, ENG 281 students benefitted from the special programming related to the exhibition and researched questions related to the MiC manuscripts after the exhibition ended. Some particularly advanced projects included a classics student who transcribed, translated, and analyzed the annotations in the humanist copy of Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* (TM 1299) and the first-year student who transcribed and roughly translated the unedited Old French poem at the end of the mystical miscellany (TM 1365).

Independent Studies

Several advanced students who had already completed ENG 281 were eager to spend time with the visiting manuscripts. A cadre of ten students took on separate independent projects under Karen's supervision.

Other Educational Visits

Other classes on campus viewed the manuscripts in visits to Special Collections, including from the first-year seminar program, English, art history, music, and history. Medievalist colleagues from the University of Portland brought their students to campus for a field trip. Reed College and Portland State University faculty encouraged students to attend with incentivized assignments. Area high school groups also toured the exhibition.

The Seattle-based *Book Club of Washington* featured "Shaping the Soul" on their blog. Several members visited the exhibition and events, including the opening reception.

Community Groups throughout the area visited, including church groups, calligraphy and book arts groups, book clubs, and medieval hobbyists. For several people, this was their first visit to campus.

Final Reflections

When applying to participate in Manuscripts in the Curriculum, we knew that our students would have access to an expanded range of medieval manuscripts, enriching instruction. Perhaps more valuable for our campus, though, was our ability to host an exhibition using medieval materials, which allowed us to

- Provide students with practica and research experiences
- Strengthen collaborations among medieval and early modern faculty and staff on campus
- Advocate for the arts and humanities with our President and Board of Trustees
- Deepen existing relationships with area stakeholders, such as the Multnomah County Library, the Portland Art Museum, Phillip J. Pirages Fine Books & Manuscripts, the Himes & Duniway Society of book collectors, the Book Club of Washington, the University of Portland, Portland State University, Reed College, and Mount Angel Abbey
- Forge new connections with regional institutions, using the exhibition as an opportunity for invitations to campus, including Willamette University, Seattle University, University of Oregon, and Whitman College
- Welcome to campus many alumni and retired faculty
- Host prominent events, which brought numerous community members to our campus for the first time
- Provide our greater municipality the opportunity to view in person medieval manuscripts, an experience the city has not had for thirty years
- Amplify the regional reputation of Lewis & Clark, and Special Collections in particular, as a hub of innovative pedagogy and dynamic programming

We expect that the benefits of the exhibition—and our raised visibility as a consequence— will continue to reverberate. We are proud of what we accomplished this spring. When we consider that we did not know what books we would host until just prior to Labor Day, and the exhibition opened the weekend before Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, we are thrilled we pulled off all we did!

We thank the President's Office, which provided the financial support that made possible our participation in Manuscripts in Curriculum; Phillip J. Pirages, for generously loaning us further materials to widen the scope of our exhibit; the Lewis & Clark Humanities Fund, the English department, and the General Education program, for providing us financial support for programming and additional promotional materials beyond Special Collections's budget; the Lewis & Clark Society of Fellows, for sponsoring Dr. Lisa Fagin Davis's visit to campus; and, of course, Les Enluminures for welcoming us into the Manuscripts in the Curriculum program. We are especially grateful for your responsiveness to our preferences for the "wild card" books. (We can't imagine our spring without the Gradual or the Dutch devotional book, and we mightily miss Michael and the dragon of TM 789!)

With best wishes,

Hannah Crummé
Head of Special Collections

Karen Gross
Professor of English