

THE VISIONS OF TONDAL AND ITS RELATIONSHIP TO
DEPICTIONS OF HELL AND PURGATORY IN FIFTEENTH-
CENTURY ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS*

Dagmar Eichberger

Visions and visionary literature have for a long time been identified as sources of major importance for early Netherlandish art of the fifteenth century.¹ Many panel paintings and book illuminations from this period depict saints and other individuals in the process of experiencing a vision,² or simply represent the object of their vision, for example, a *Man of Sorrows* or a *Virgin and Child*. This general interest in visions and in their pictorial representation in particular has been interpreted as a by-product of late medieval religiosity, which was strongly affected by an upsurge in private piety and the longing of the individual for intense religious experiences.³ Such developments in late medieval spirituality are also reflected in one of Margaret of York's manuscripts, *Le dialogue de la duchesse de Bourgogne à Jésus Christ*. The introductory miniature in this manuscript (see fig. 16) portrays the duchess not in a traditional dedication scene but in her bedchamber kneeling in front of an apparition of the resurrected Christ.⁴ This unusual illumination suggests to the beholder that Margaret of York is having a vision of Christ. It was chosen in response to the actual text of the manuscript, an imaginary dialogue between the duchess and Christ, which had been written by Nicolas Finet for her religious instruction. Margaret of York's fascination with visions as a spiritual experience and as a literary genre can be gauged not only from the frontispiece in the *Dialogue* manuscript but also from three other manuscripts associated with her: *Saint Patrick's Purgatory* in Brussels,⁵ *The Vision of the Soul of Guy de Thurno*, and *The Visions of Tondal* in Malibu.⁶ In these works, Margaret is not depicted, but her ownership is expressed visually through the inclusion of her initials, device, or inscription.

Many patrons of late medieval art felt a strong urge to participate in visionary experiences not just by reading accounts of individuals such as Tondal and Saint Patrick, but also by looking at images based on descriptions of their visions and revelations. This applies to images of hell and purgatory in particular since, under normal circumstances, this realm cannot be experienced by mortal beings, who must depend on the detailed descriptions provided by visionary literature. Pictorial representations of the underworld consequently had to be constructed from a range of different literary sources, from visions as well as from biblical and theological texts. We know that many panel paintings—especially those depicting the *Last Judgment*—draw heavily on medieval literature concerning the Four Last Things.⁷ However, in the case of panel paintings, it is often difficult to identify a specific treatise or vision as the single source for a *Last Judgment* scene because in this medium iconographic motifs of heaven and hell often develop a life of their own. Furthermore, these images were frequently copied, altered, and rearranged by later artists, who had lost touch with the textual source.

One might assume that such circumstances did not apply to illuminated manuscripts. Miniatures, by their very nature, are usually placed next to the written word and thus seem more likely to enter into a close relationship with the accompanying

text. This assumption is certainly justified for *The Visions of Tondal*, a manuscript which displays a detailed sequence of narrative images juxtaposed with a visionary text. As Roger S. Wieck convincingly demonstrates, the individual miniatures illustrate in great detail the narrative of the written account.⁸ One of the most fascinating aspects of this manuscript is the ingenuity with which the artist—let us call him Simon Marmion for the time being⁹—has translated the vividly written description of the underworld into visual images of equal power of expression.¹⁰ The *Tondal* manuscript, with its twenty superbly painted miniatures, is remarkable for several reasons. So far, no earlier example of an illuminated *Tondal* has been found. Given the peculiarities of the translation, it seems likely that Marmion had to invent a whole new set of images for this particular commission. The iconographic program of the miniatures is original, and it is the closeness of image and text which demonstrates its innovative character.

However, the fact that Simon Marmion's illustrations are faithful to the text should not lead us to believe that such practice is standard for infernal imagery in manuscripts of this period. As in panel painting, one can find examples of hell scenes in illuminated manuscripts which use pictorial motifs rather freely, that is, with little or no direct reference to the accompanying text.

In this paper we shall look at two kinds of hell imagery in illuminated manuscripts, one that is essentially faithful to the text and one that is not. The first category begins with another example of illuminated vision literature and the relationship of its pictorial conventions to the *Tondal* miniatures. Then we shall consider an entirely different kind of text, the unusual *Le livre de la vigne de Nostre Seigneur*, a non-narrative compendium of learning and beliefs about hell. Although its relationship to infernal vision literature is more incidental than substantive, it lends itself readily to illustration, much like the vision texts, due to its wealth of narrative and detail about the inferno. In the second part of the paper, I will look at another, more common genre of hell imagery. This comprises illustrations to certain religious texts that enjoyed even greater popularity than vision literature in the fifteenth century: the book of hours, Saint Augustine's *City of God*, and the *Cordiale de quattuor hominus novissimis* of Gerard van Vliederveen. The illustrations in these works tend to be somewhat independent of the text.

Although a large number of infernal vision texts circulated in written form, few were accompanied by illustrations, either single images or cycles of miniatures. Illuminated editions of *Saint Patrick's Purgatory* and the *Voyage of Saint Brendan*, for instance, are the exception rather than the rule.¹¹ There are, however, a small number of visions for which extensive cycles of illuminations were provided, namely, the Apocalypse of Saint John,¹² Dante's *Divina Commedia*,¹³ and the *Pèlerinage de l'âme* by Guillaume de Deguileville. We will take a close look at the third of these because—with the exception of biblical texts—it is one of the few vision texts from Northern Europe that survives in more than one or two examples with extensive illumination.

The *Pèlerinage de l'âme* was often richly illustrated. Its popularity in England, France, and the Netherlands can be compared with the popularity of Dante's *Divina Commedia* in Italy.¹⁴ Moreover, whereas many visions from the fifteenth century are illustrated with pen-and-ink drawings of a mediocre quality, a few *Pèlerinage de l'âme* manuscripts contain excellent colored drawings or illuminations.¹⁵ This indicates that at least some of these visions were produced for wealthy clients. A fine French edition from about 1400, for instance, once belonged to the dukes of Burgundy. This particular manuscript is mentioned for the first time in Philip the Good's inventory of 1467 and, a second time, in the inventory of 1487.¹⁶ Thus it is possible that Margaret of York knew this copy.

The *Pèlerinage de l'âme* constitutes the second part of a trilogy composed by the French Cistercian monk Guillaume de Deguileville between 1355 and 1358.¹⁷ It covers four different topics, beginning with a lengthy description of a court case against the soul of the pilgrim. After the final judgment is passed, the angel and the soul

travel through purgatory, where they observe different forms of torture. This is followed by a detailed description of Satan, the location of hell, and the ways in which different groups of sinners are punished for their wrongdoings on earth. Finally, at the end of the story, the soul is led to paradise.

The text of the *Pèlerinage de l'âme* has certain elements in common with *The Visions of Tondal*. The two authors, Guillaume de Deguileville and Marcus, were both clerics. Each of the texts comprises chapters which vividly describe how specific sins will bring about certain forms of punishment. Both visions use the motif of the journey of an angel and a soul through the underworld as a narrative device, which determines the structure of the text and the images. Both texts have a clear intention to entertain and spiritually instruct the reader. Deguileville's trilogy, however, can be described as a much more ambitious theological text written in response to the *Roman de la rose*. The *Pèlerinage de l'âme* is full of allegorical figures and personifications, a characteristic not paralleled in *The Visions of Tondal*. Although the *Tondal* text was written by a monk, the story itself takes place in a courtly environment.¹⁸ On fol. 7, the knight Tondal is described as a worldly nobleman who enjoys drinking, eating, and fighting. Despite these differences, it is the notion of the soul's personal experiences in hell that brings the *Pèlerinage de l'âme* and *The Visions of Tondal* closer together than most other illuminated texts from the late Middle Ages. The analysis of a selection of miniatures from several *Pèlerinage* manuscripts will show that the similarities between these two manuscripts do not end at the textual level.

The following analysis of hell images in the *Pèlerinage de l'âme* will concentrate on three different manuscripts from the first half of the fifteenth century: Ms. 10176–8 in the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels; Ms. Douce 305 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford; and Ms. 096/G94 in the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne. All three manuscripts were decorated with a detailed sequence of images. The Melbourne manuscript portrays hell in eighteen illustrations, the manuscript in Brussels contains thirty-two framed drawings, and the Oxford *Pèlerinage* has fifty-five miniatures of hell.¹⁹ A simple pen-and-ink drawing in the Melbourne manuscript (fig. 84)²⁰ depicts the barely dressed soul of the pilgrim between his guardian angel, who shows him the way, and the devil who approaches with outstretched claws. There is a similar incident in *The Visions of Tondal*, where an almost identical subject appears on fol. 11v. Despite considerable differences in quality and style, the basic idea in both miniatures is the same: the defenseless soul faces representatives of good and evil at the outset of his journey.

Like *The Visions of Tondal*, the *Pèlerinage de l'âme* attributes certain punishments to specific groups of sinners. On fol. 158 of the Brussels manuscript, for example, the artist portrays the fate of lecherous men (fig. 85); on fol. 149 of the same manuscript we get a glimpse of hell's location in the center of the earth, with the devils and the damned in one large pit. Among the fifty-five illustrations in the richly decorated Oxford manuscript are depictions such as “the avaricious devoured by wolves” or “usurers forced to drink molten bronze.”²¹ Fol. 43v, which shows human souls tied

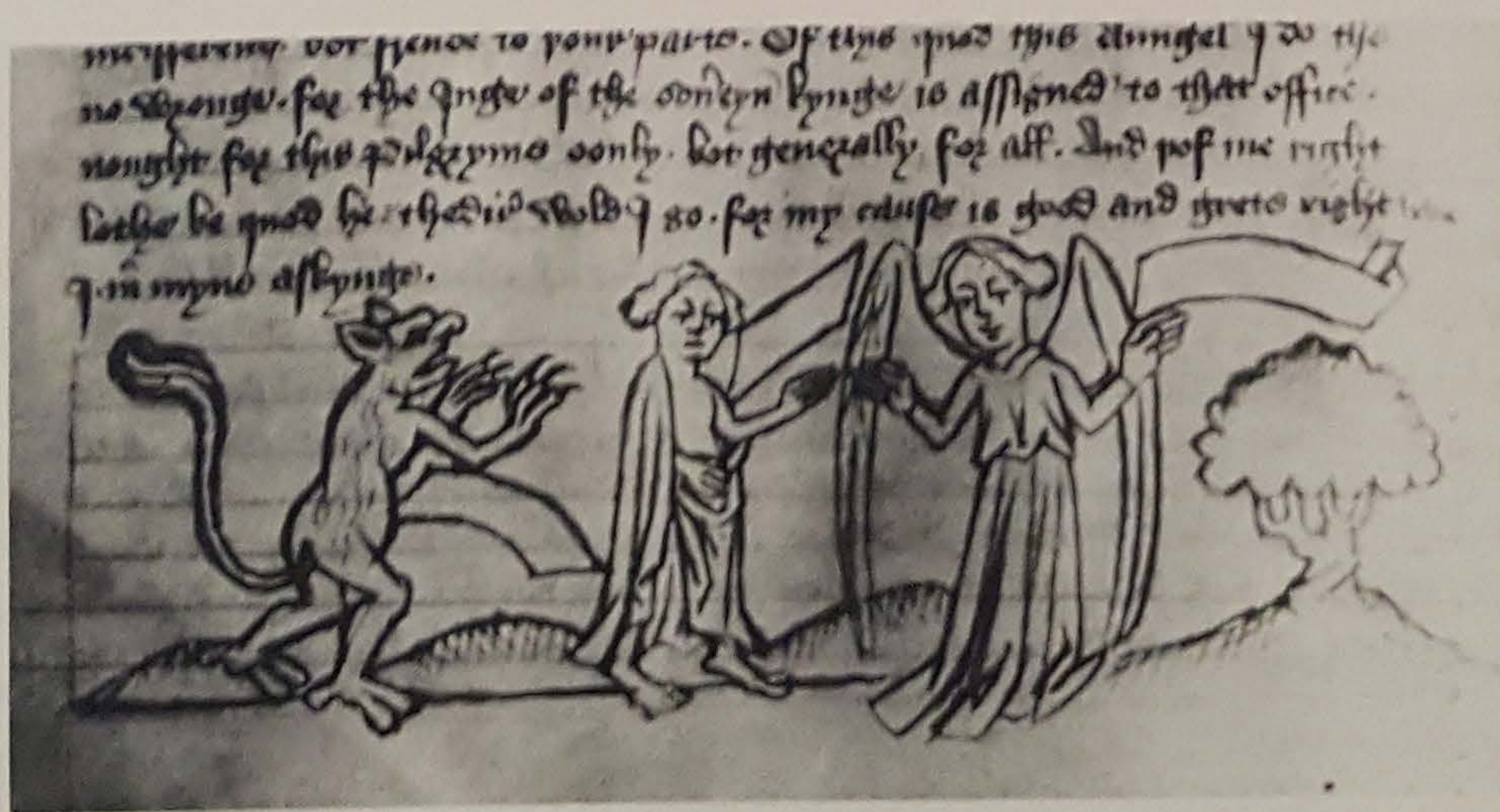


Figure 84.
Anonymous master. *Soul Taken to Judgment*,
in Guillaume de Deguileville, *Pèlerinage de
l'âme*. Melbourne, State Library of Victoria,
Rare Books Collection, Ms. 096/G94, fol. 97v.



Figure 85.
Anonymous master. *Pain for Lecherous Men*,
in Guillaume de Deguileville, *Pèlerinage de
l'âme*. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, Ms.
10176–8, fol. 158.



Figure 86.
Anonymous master. *Punishment of the Lazy*,
in Guillaume de Deguileville, *Pèlerinage de
l'âme*. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Douce
305, fol. 43v.

to a wheel of hell, illustrates the punishment for the lazy, who are awakened from their sleep each time their heads hit the stone column (fig. 86). These fairly simple pen drawings, which have been colored with red ink and tinted with pale washes, create a lively picture of what people expected to encounter after they died.

These illustrations, as in *The Visions of Tondal*, seem to aim at rousing the reader emotionally by visualizing the horrors of hell. Visionary texts had fulfilled a similar function for several centuries,²² but the fifteenth century intensifies this experience by providing the already explicit texts with even more expressive images. In most pictorial cycles of the *Pèlerinage de l'âme*, the hell scenes also represent the soul and the guardian angel within the infernal environment. Through the presence of the pilgrim's soul, the story acquires a human dimension. The soul experiences hell on behalf of the reader, and the horrors of hell become more real through his reactions.

This idea of one man's personal experience with hell is taken to the extreme in *The Visions of Tondal*. Here the soul not only observes what is happening, but literally lives through some of the torments before being rescued by the angel. The immediacy of the story, as told by the Irish monk Marcus, is matched by Marmion's remarkable degree of realism and his mastery in creating a hell-like atmosphere. There is a second reason for the presence of the angel and the soul in the illustrations of the *Pèlerinage de l'âme* and *The Visions of Tondal*: their appearance establishes the narrative character of the illuminations. By including the same two figures in most of the miniatures, the progress of the narrative is expressed visually; the story un-

folds in front of the reader through a combination of image and text. However, in order to achieve this effect, the artist either had to duplicate the layout of a scene or portray the central figures in almost every picture. This happens to a tedious extreme in the extensive cycle of illustrations that decorates the *Pèlerinage* in Oxford. On fols. 39, 44v(a) and 44v(b), for example, the soul and the angel are standing each time at the right side of the picture watching the punishments being suffered in an open fiery pit. The artist responsible for the decoration of this manuscript obviously cared little about the repetitiveness of his illustrations, whereas Simon Marmion tried to overcome this problem by frequently altering the position of the two main figures and by changing the viewpoint.²³

Le livre de la vigne de Nostre Seigneur,²⁴ which contains a most unusual group of hell images, treats in great detail the events that the faithful believed would take place at the end of the world. The codex in the Bodleian Library is the second volume of the manuscript and seems to be the only surviving copy of this portion of the text.²⁵ Unfortunately, nothing is known about the author, and the text itself still awaits careful study. It is largely a compendium of information and moral teachings about hell that focuses on five topics: the appearance of the Antichrist, the fifteen signs before the Last Judgment, the Last Judgment proper, the torments of hell, and the bliss of heaven. The section on life in hell is of particular interest for this investigation. It fills approximately fifty folios and was provided with twenty-six illuminations.²⁶ Among the various topics addressed are punishments for cardinal sins, torments for specific groups of damned souls, and detailed descriptions of Lucifer and the devils, who administer the divine judgment. Most of the text is written in French and offers the reader a lively description of the various forms of torture. Frequently, the main text is enriched by Latin quotations from the Bible, whose purpose is to give more authority to the images and to the French prose text. Apart from more familiar elements such as the jaws of hell, one can also find subjects rarely depicted—the four rivers of hell, Styx, Phlegeton, Lethe, and Cocytos.²⁷

The volume is decorated with an extensive cycle of illustrations which, in sheer number, realism, and obsession with devils and hell, surpasses most of the imagery produced in the first half of the fifteenth century. The episodic nature of the illuminations reflects the structure of this text which, for didactic purposes, focuses dramatically on numerous individual aspects of hell, almost as if directing a spotlight on a stage. As in *The Visions of Tondal* and the *Pèlerinage*, the author attributes certain forms of punishment to certain sins. Fol. 82v, for example, shows devils burning the souls of those who broke the Commandments; fol. 101 demonstrates how devils scourge and beat the sinners (fig. 87).

A typical feature of all the illustrations is the concentration on a single episode or incident, each of which is closely linked to the chapter in which it appears. Other scenes within this group of twenty-six illustrations depict such cruelties as “thieves hung over fire” on fol. 121v (fig. 88) or “the proud and vainglorious broken on a wheel” on fol. 83 (see fig. 107). Although the chapter on hell starts with a paragraph entitled “De la descendue des mauvais en enfer,” the idea of the journey through the underworld is not developed any further.²⁸ *Le livre de la vigne* is a compendium, with no hero and no narrative. The author finishes the chapter with three paragraphs that underline the didactic nature of the text: “About the advantages of reflecting upon hell,” “The reasons why people go to hell,” and “What one has to do to avoid hell.”²⁹

Comparing the pictorial cycle in *The Visions of Tondal* with that in *Le livre de la vigne*, differences as well as similarities become apparent. The wealth of descriptive detail in both manuscripts lends itself to an extensive cycle of illumination; hell is clearly a rich pictorial subject matter. In each manuscript, the illustrations represent the texts of the relevant subchapters fairly faithfully, and the images are integrated into these texts at irregular intervals. However, the miniatures in *Le livre de la vigne* lack the narrative continuity of those in *The Visions of Tondal*. And, unlike the *Tondal* illuminations, the scenes in *Le livre de la vigne* depict the torture of the damned souls



Figure 87.
Anonymous master. *Devils Scourging the Damned*, in *Le livre de la vigne de Nostre Seigneur*. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Douce 134, vol. 1, fol. 101.



Figure 88.
Anonymous master. *Thieves Hung over Fire*, in *Le livre de la vigne de Nostre Seigneur*. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Douce 134, vol. 1, fol. 121v.

in a direct way, with a tendency to highlight the brutal and gory aspects of the text. In contrast, the artist in the *Tondal* manuscript pays more attention to the physical and atmospheric quality of the setting. Smoke, fire, and fumes, which are all part of the iconography of hell, are depicted with particular care and at times obscure the suffering sinners. On fol. 27, the devils and their victims are silhouetted against the background of the scene rather than portrayed with cruel attention to the details of torture.³⁰

A second group of manuscripts offers a different type of text-image relationship. These manuscripts contain only a single illustration of hell, usually at the beginning of a chapter or book. The relationship between single infernal images and their texts will be discussed here in terms of a devotional manuscript, the Salting Hours; a theological text, the *City of God*; and a compendium on the Four Last Things, *Le livre des quatre dernières choses*. These three different types of text enjoyed great popularity in the fifteenth century and were both copied and illuminated far more frequently than either *The Visions of Tondal* or *Le livre de la vigne de Notre Seigneur*. This frequency may have had an effect on the availability of models in contemporary workshops and may indeed be one of the reasons why single representations of hell in these manuscripts seem to be linked more loosely to the text than sequential images in illuminated visions.

A comparative analysis of a miniature in the Salting Hours depicting the vision of hell and earthly paradise (see fig. 143)³¹ with the illuminations in *The Visions of Tondal* clearly shows that images of purgatory and hell in illuminated manuscripts could play distinctively different roles, depending on the nature of the text and the type of miniature.³² The Salting miniature has been identified by some as the work of the artist who illuminated the *The Visions of Tondal*,³³ but was attributed more recently to the anonymous Master of Fitzwilliam 268.³⁴ The depiction of hell and paradise has been placed at the beginning of the Office of the Dead, together with two further miniatures, the *Last Judgment* on fol. 152v and the *Raising of Lazarus* on fol. 153v. It offers a synoptic image of hell and earthly paradise: the souls' various punishments in the underworld—in a hellmouth, an infernal river, and on fiery mountains; their progress over a bridge leading to paradise; and, finally, the fountain of life. Formally, this particular miniature can be singled out from the rest of the illustrations in the same manuscript by its use of a plain frame without any marginal decorations. It is also set apart from the text of the Office of the Dead by its position between two other miniatures.

There is a considerable discrepancy between this miniature and the text it accompanies. The text of the Office of the Dead bears no relation to visionary literature of the kind found in *The Visions of Tondal*. This section of a book of hours consists of lessons, taken from Job, of psalms, cantica, and antiphons. Although brief references are made to the Last Judgment and the resurrection of Lazarus, this devotional text does not provide the artist or the reader with a detailed description of paradise, purgatory, or the underworld.³⁵ Hence, the illuminator, unable to rely on information provided by the text itself, decided to use pictorial material from other sources for the decoration of this page.³⁶ This hypothesis reinforces the initial impression that the miniature on fol. 153 of the Salting Hours in no way attempts to be a literal translation of the text. Rather it stands separately, more linked to the general idea of death and afterlife than to the actual lessons and prayers. One could perhaps say that this miniature admonishes the reader not to neglect the performance of prayers and devotions, which may influence the fate of the soul after corporeal death. In other words, the miniature extends the meaning of the text rather than illustrates it in a strict sense.

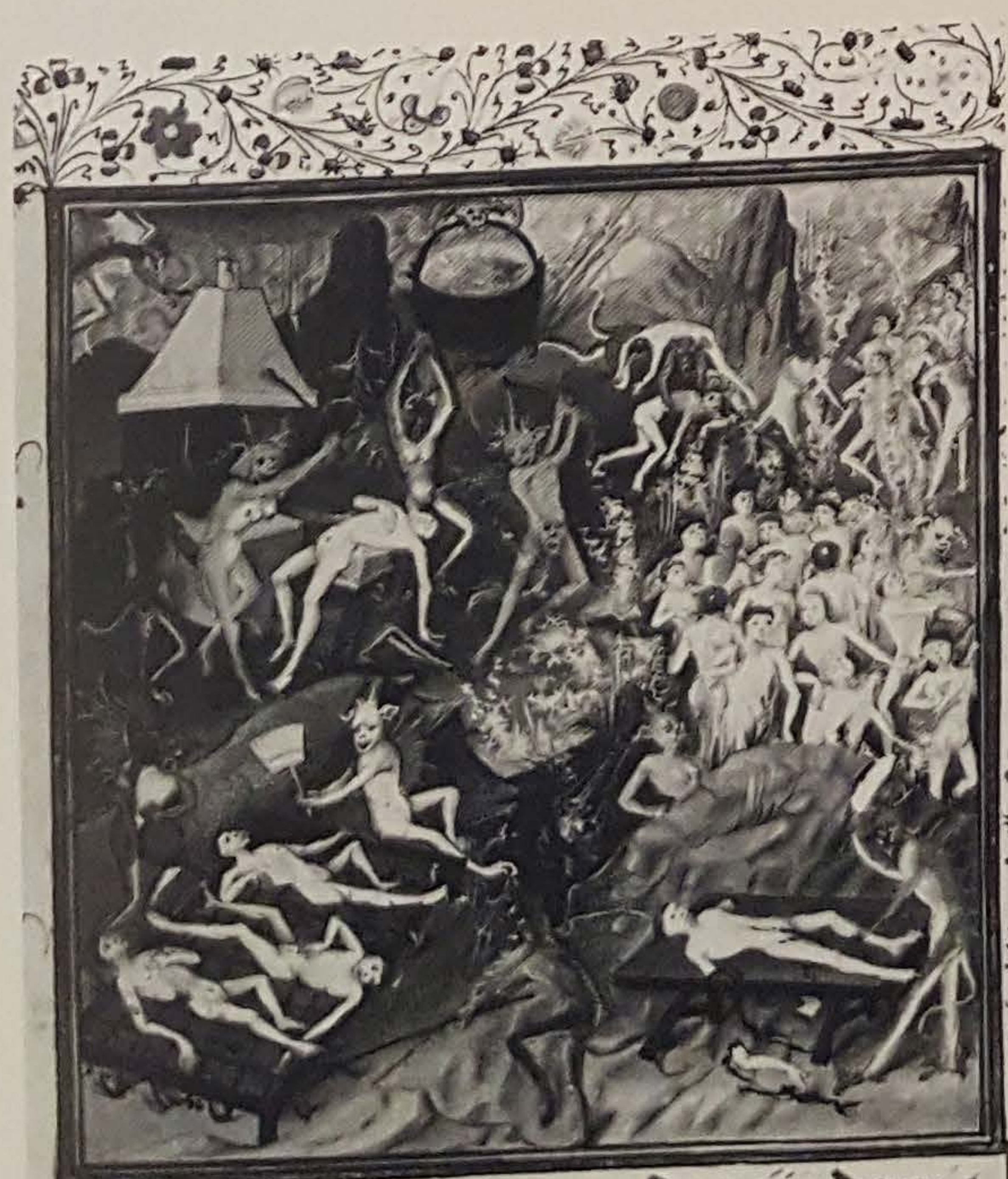
Many depictions of purgatory and hell also appear in fifteenth-century illuminated manuscripts of the *Cordiale de quattuor hominis novissimis*, or *Le livre des quatre dernières choses*, by Gerard van Vliedervoven, and of Saint Augustine's *City of God*. Both were very popular in the late Middle Ages and could be found in many

fifteenth-century libraries.³⁷ Not only Philip the Good, Margaret's father-in-law, but also Louis de Gruuthuse from Bruges, a close friend of Margaret's brother, Edward IV, owned at least one copy of each text.³⁸ The *Cordiale* was written around 1400 in the sphere of the *Devotio Moderna* and deals exclusively with the Four Last Things.³⁹ In this context, it is worth mentioning that the *Cordiale* was frequently bound together in one volume with *The Visions of Tondal* and other texts.⁴⁰

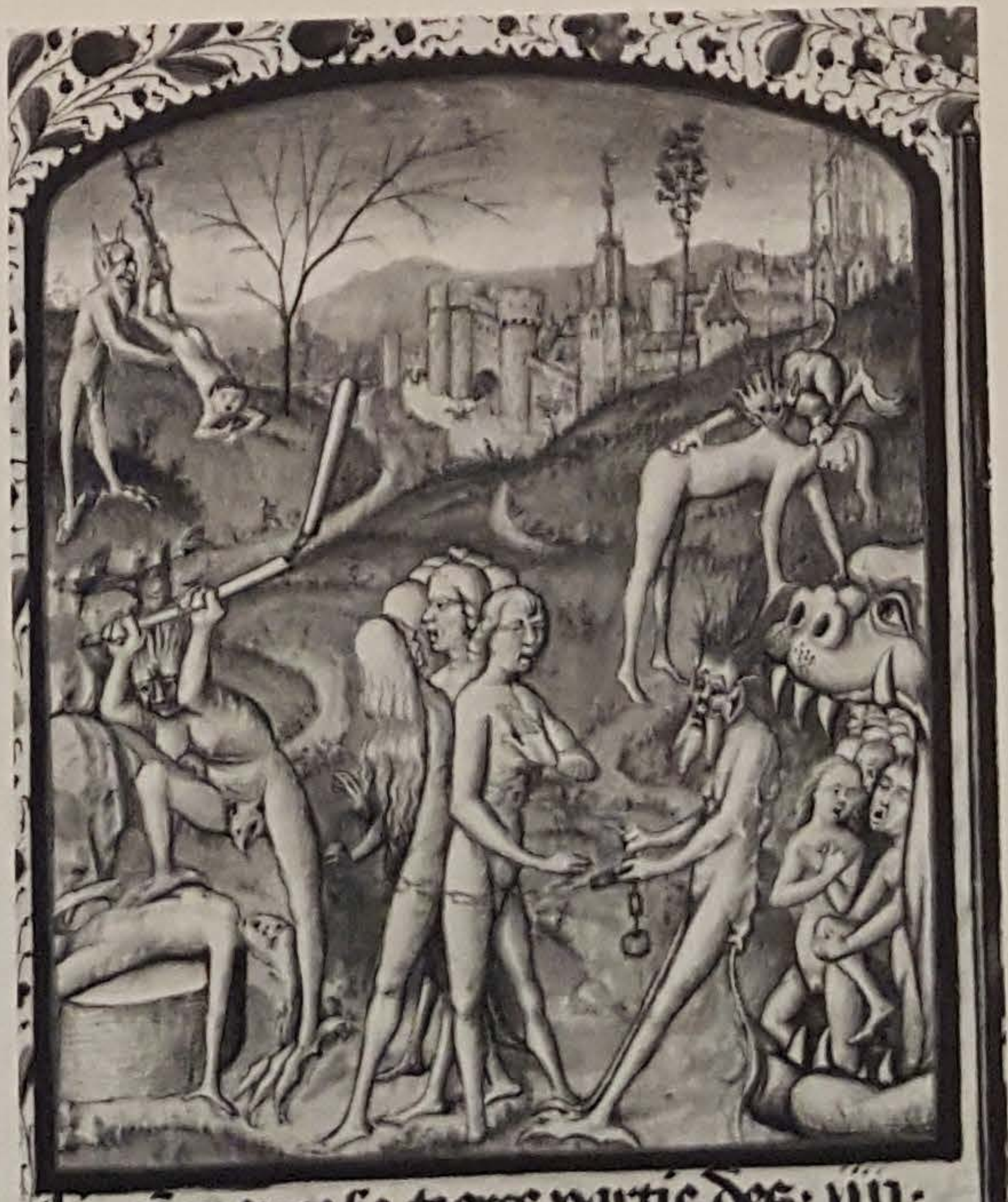
Illuminated copies of the *Cordiale* usually contain a single miniature at the beginning of each of the four books, depicting the main theme of that book—corporeal death, the Last Judgment, hell, and heaven.⁴¹ Depictions of hell can be found, for instance, in two slightly different versions of the French *Cordiale*, both now in the Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels. One manuscript dates from about 1455 and was made for Duke Philip the Good (fig. 89).⁴² The other copy was made for Charles de Croy some time after 1472 and later entered Margaret of Austria's library (fig. 90).⁴³ The rubric text below the two miniatures indicates that both representations of hell introduce the third part of the Four Last Things. In this section the author discusses the different names used for hell in the Bible and comments on the various tortures by which the damned will be punished. At the end of the third book, Gerard explains how valuable and profitable it is to constantly remember the gravity of these matters. The literary format for these expositions is not a vision, but rather a theological compendium containing passages from the Bible and the writings of medieval theologians, which have been loosely strung together according to their subject matter. On several occasions, Gerard van Vliedervoven also mentions visions experienced by knights and monks. He refers to these visions either to provide further evidence for the atrociousness of the devils or to serve as *exempla* demonstrating that awareness of the horrors of hell can lead to a better life.⁴⁴

Despite the fact that the two examples discussed here are quite different in style and technique, they reflect the intention of the illuminator to pack as many individual scenes into the picture as possible. There is the whole gamut of infernal punishments: damned skewered on a spit or carried through the air; souls grilled on an open fire or beaten on an anvil next to a forge; men cut into pieces or boiled in a cauldron. All these scenes take place in an infernal landscape which has been equipped with the usual tools and trappings. Although the text itself contains a few detailed references—the threshing and beating of the damned and devils stirring the fire of a furnace⁴⁵—the *Cordiale* does not describe individual scenes in as much detail as *The Visions of Tondal*. No mention is made, for instance, of the grill, the anvil, or the cauldron.

By virtue of their placement, the miniatures in the *Cordiale* manuscript function as a kind of frontispiece rather than as an illustration of the text. We must thus



Cy cōmence de la tierce des m̃j̃s demie
rees choses cest ass̃ de la gehenne denfer



Cy cōmence la tierce partie des m̃j̃s
dorement choses qui sont aduener

Figure 89.
Attributed to Jean Le Tavernier. *The Torments of Hell*, in Gerard van Vliedervoven, *Cordiale de quattuor hominis novissimis* (or *Le livre des quatre dernières choses*), translated by Jean Miélot. Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, Ms. 11129, fol. 90.

Figure 90.
Anonymous master. *The Torments of Hell*, in Gerard van Vliedervoven, *Cordiale de quattuor hominis novissimis* (or *Le livre des quatre dernières choses*). Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, Ms. 9048, fol. 90.



Figure 91.
Anonymous master. *Hell*, in Saint Augustine,
Cité de Dieu. Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Univer-
sitaire et Municipale, Ms. 523, fol. 290.

ask where the artist got his pictorial ideas. The answer to this difficult question can only be conjectural. On the basis of the observations made so far, it seems that a single image of hell that introduces larger sections of text can depict the underworld in general terms, without necessarily following the text for which it had been chosen. If, as in the case of the *Cordiale*, it was sufficient to signify the content of a whole chapter by using a generic image of hell, some of these composite images could have been transmitted independently of a specific textual source. In other words, artists or workshops obviously used these illuminations consciously as generic images, paying little attention to the congruity between individual motifs and the written text. One could even go a step further and suggest that these generic images became almost as detached from specific textual sources as were some contemporaneous panel paintings. However, before investigating the use of these images in more detail, it is necessary to clarify the sources that book illuminators could have used for such infernal imagery. A generic image of the underworld represents the tortures and landscape of hell by combining a number of common motifs that can be easily recognized as pertaining to hell. Although the individual motifs can derive from literary sources of the kind discussed here, they could equally draw inspiration from oral accounts, such as sermons, or from visual material such as wall paintings and panel paintings, or indeed other book illuminations. In addition, generic images of hell are not limited to material from one source, but can combine a range of motifs of diverse origin.

Taking into account the loose text-image relationship in illuminated *Cordiale* manuscripts, it is therefore not surprising to discover that some of these designs and motifs reappear with slight variations in a different kind of text. Illustrations of hell in Saint Augustine's *City of God* are a good case in point. Illuminated versions of this popular text usually contain one frontispiece-like miniature at the beginning of each of the twenty-two books. The three last books are dedicated, respectively, to the Last Judgment, hell, and heaven. One copy of the French edition belonged to Guy Guilbaut, Philip the Good's treasurer, and was later acquired by the duke.⁴⁶ Another copy of the same text, now in Strasbourg (fig. 91)⁴⁷ contains a depiction of hell which is similar in style to the illumination of one of the *Cordiale* manuscripts (fig. 90). Whereas the text of the *Cordiale* still offered the artist a number of clues as to how the devils and hell should be visualized, book XXI of the *Cité de Dieu* is much more abstract and less descriptive about the underworld. Saint Augustine discusses a number of theories about hell that he considers to be wrong, among them, "Whether justice requires that the time of punishment should not be longer than the time of sinning," and "Of those who think that sins committed amid works of alms are not called into judgment of condemnation."⁴⁸ For this reason, no direct references can be found in the text of the Strasbourg manuscript for most of the motifs depicted in the opening miniatures.⁴⁹

The clustering of separate scenes into a single picture frame can be found in early as well as in late versions of the *Cité de Dieu*. The well-known depiction of hell



Figure 92.
Maître François. *Hell*, in Saint Augustine, *Cité de Dieu*. Nantes, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. fr. 8, fol. 377.

by the Boucicaut Master in the *Cité de Dieu* manuscript in Baltimore, for instance, includes different forms of punishment, many of which recur in illuminations of later copies of the *Cité de Dieu*, often by Maître François or his shop.⁵⁰ Scenes such as the damned hanging from gallows or the souls in a cauldron are used frequently by Maître François and his assistants.⁵¹ The frontispiece to book XXI in the *Cité de Dieu* manuscript in Nantes (fig. 92) is a typical example of a certain type of miniature produced in the 1470s by this workshop. Similar to the composite illustrations in the *Cordiale*, these miniatures also convey a comprehensive rendition of the underworld in one frame. These “frontispiece” illuminations can equally be described as generic images of hell, as they reproduce popular motifs that stem from a range of different sources.

Two factors may have contributed to the similarities found among *Cordiale* and *Cité de Dieu* illuminations. Firstly, the popularity of both texts in the late Middle Ages led to a prolific production of illuminated manuscripts. In the case of the *Cité de Dieu*, it is obvious that the workshop of Maître François specialized in producing copies of this text, which in turn contributed to the repetition of certain iconographic motifs. Second, both these manuscript types contain one composite representation of hell which is always placed at the beginning of the relevant chapter of the book. This means that the miniature often functions as a visual marker for a larger section of text. An intimate relationship between the miniature and the text that follows is therefore not essential, especially since the text itself does not convey a vivid image of hell. In the case of single composite images of hell, it was obviously adequate for the book illuminator to make use of existing models available in the workshop or elsewhere.

The contrast between this type of miniature and Simon Marmion’s illustrations can be exemplified by juxtaposing, say, *The Cistern of Hell* from *The Visions of Tondal* (see cover) with a representation of hell in the *Cité de Dieu* (fig. 92). Although both

images show souls blasted through the air in a whirlwind of fire and smoke, there are noticeable differences between the function and the structure of the illuminations. While the miniature in the *Tondal* manuscript reinforces the narrative of the main text—the fate of the individual soul—and illustrates the central image of one chapter, the *Cité de Dieu* miniature focuses on the landscape of hell and its torments. Tondal's journey through hell is an utterly personal experience dominated by his own encounters with the devils and imbued with his personal fears and anxieties. Most of the dissimilarities in the structure and the layout of these two miniatures can be explained by the different nature of the texts. It appears that the plan of illumination for the *Cordiale* and *Cité de Dieu* called for a graphic image of hell, details of which the text did not provide. As a result, the illuminators who created the “frontispiece” miniatures were obviously free to choose suitable motifs even if they came from different literary or visual sources; thus the interchangeability of designs between the *Cordiale* and the *Cité de Dieu*.

It is apparent from this small selection of examples that in the late Middle Ages a wide variety of texts was embellished with illustrations of purgatory and hell. The preceding analysis of contrasting text-image relationships has shown that Simon Marmion's pictorial interpretation of *The Visions of Tondal* clearly operates within the framework of a specific genre, the illustrated infernal vision. By faithfully expressing the highlights of the narrative in the language of a book illuminator, Marmion arrives at solutions similar to those of the artists who had provided other infernal visions with detailed sequences of images.

The two characteristics which distinguish *The Visions of Tondal* from all the hell scenes discussed in this paper, however, are the style and quality of its miniatures. One of Marmion's most important artistic contributions to hell imagery in fifteenth-century illuminated manuscripts is his method of creating eerie pictures of the underworld by capturing the properties of natural phenomena, such as darkness and fire, smoke and ice. Apart from these stylistic considerations,⁵² Marmion is particularly inventive in modifying and altering the narrative pattern that underlies his cycle of illuminations, thus keeping the use of stereotype compositions to a minimum. His illuminations of hell are subtle representations of a world revealed to us by the visions of a knight called Tondal. In this they stand apart from most infernal imagery that appears in illuminated manuscripts from Northern Europe during the late Middle Ages.

Notes

* I wish to thank Professor J. Trapp and the Warburg Institute, London, for supporting my work on this paper during my stay as a Frances Yates Fellow in May and June 1990. I am also grateful for discussions with Michael Koortboijan and Hilary Maddocks, which helped me clarify some aspects of this paper.

3 Harbison (note 1), p. 88.

4 London, British Library, Add. Ms. 7970, fol. 1v. This scene seems to be modeled on the apparition of Christ to Mary Magdalene, although the meaning of the scene has changed due to the text which follows; see Harbison (note 1), pp. 93–94.

5 Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, Ms. 9030–37, fols. 223–42v; see Appendix no. 22(f).

6 J. Paul Getty Museum, Mss. 31 and 30.

7 D. Eichberger, *Bildkonzeption und Weltdeutung im New Yorker Diptychon des Jan van Eyck* (Wiesbaden, 1987), and A. Châtelet, “Sur un Jugement dernier de Dieric Bouts,” *Nederlands kunsthistorisch jaarboek* 16 (1965), pp. 17–42.

1 E. Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1953), vol. 1, p. 143; C. Harbison, “Visions and Meditations in Early Flemish Painting,” *Simiolus* 15 (1985), pp. 87–118; S. Ringbom, “Devotional Images and Imaginative Devotions,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 73 (1969), pp. 159–70.

2 For example, Simon Marmion's *Saint Bernard's Vision of the Virgo Lactans*, Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum, Ms. 32.

- 8 See Wieck's essay in the present volume.
- 9 The problems surrounding the historical figure Simon Marmion and the body of works attributed to the artist are still unresolved. I have decided to accept the attribution of *The Visions of Tondal* to Marmion until we have more evidence about who illuminated the group of manuscripts under discussion.
- 10 The remarkably close relationship between text and image is made evident in Malibu 1990 and is discussed in more detail in Wieck's essay.
- 11 Occasionally, one can find a small miniature at the beginning of *Saint Patrick's Purgatory* in legendaries, e.g., in the *Golden Legend* in Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, Ms. 9228, fol. 87, or the *Legendary* in Oxford, Queen's College, Ms. 305, fol. 137. An exceptionally detailed cycle of fifteen colored pen drawings occurs in a German edition of *Saint Patrick's Purgatory*, a manuscript which has been bound together in one volume with an illustrated version of the *Voyage of Saint Brendan* and several other texts (Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Pal. Germ. 60); for further information on this manuscript, see H. Wegener, *Bilderhandschriften* (Leipzig, 1927), and G.E. Sollbach, ed., *St. Brandans wundersame Seefahrt: Nach der Heidelberger Handschrift Cod. Pal. Germ. 60* (Frankfurt, 1987). The illustrations in *Saint Patrick's Purgatory* show the saint's journey through the underworld and were executed slightly earlier than those in *The Visions of Tondal*. The images in the Heidelberg manuscript visualize in a fairly detailed sequence how the protagonist of the story experiences hell, being observer and victim at the same time. Since this book and its illustrations belong to a different cultural context, it will not be analyzed here.
- 12 I will not discuss illuminated Apocalypse manuscripts in this context because Saint John's vision deals only in passing with hell and therefore bears less relationship with *The Visions of Tondal* than the *Pèlerinage de l'âme*. The text-image relationship in Apocalypse manuscripts is discussed in Suzanne Lewis's essay in the present volume.
- 13 Although it is well known that Christine de Pisan recommended the *Divine Comedy* for reading, it was not translated into French during the fifteenth century. We know of an illuminated Italian edition, which belonged to a French nobleman, Jean Cossa, the great Seneschal of Provence; for Cossa's copy, see *Dix siècles d'enluminure italienne*, exh. cat. (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 1984), p. 114. Another Italian manuscript, with three miniatures by the Coëtivy Master, belonged to Charles de France, brother of Louis XI, and dates from about 1465; see P. Durrieu, "Dante et l'art français du xve siècle," *Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres: Comptes rendus des séances de l'année 1921* (Paris, 1921), pp. 214–24.
- 14 In his article on the importance of Dante manuscripts for French bibliophiles, Durrieu suggests that the *Divina Commedia* can be found less frequently in French libraries of the fifteenth century because the Italian version was not particularly popular among French collectors, who preferred Latin or French editions. The text was not translated into French until the beginning of the sixteenth century, by François Bergaigne; see Durrieu (note 13), pp. 218–19.
- 15 For example, New York Public Library, Spencer Collection, Ms. 19, the second half of which is in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Laud 740; British Library, Egerton Ms. 615, an illuminated copy also from the first half of the fifteenth century.
- 16 Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, Ms. 10176–78; see L.M.L. Delaissé, "Les miniatures de *Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* de Bruxelles et l'archéologie du livre," *Scriptorium* 10 (1956), pp. 233–50.
- 17 The first and third parts of the trilogy are the *Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* and the *Pèlerinage de Jésus Christ*, respectively. For de Deguileville, see S.L. Galpin, "On the sources of Guillaume de Deguileville's *Pèlerinage de l'âme*," *Publications of the Modern Language Association* 25 (1910), pp. 275–308; J.J. Sturzinger, ed., *Le Pèlerinage de l'âme de G. de Deguileville* (London, 1895); R. Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: Some Medieval Books and Their Posterity* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 145–49. I wish to thank Hilary Maddocks, University of Melbourne, for letting me read her unpublished honors thesis, "The *Pilgrimage of the Life of Man* in the State Library of Victoria (Ms. 096/G94, fols. 1r–95v)"; see also M. Manion and V. Vines, *Medieval and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts in Australian Collections* (New York, 1984), pp. 110–12.
- 18 In the case of the *Pèlerinage de l'âme*, the man experiencing the vision is a cleric. R. Bergmann, *Die Pilgerfahrt zum himmlischen Jerusalem* (Wiesbaden, 1983), p. 10, even suggests that Guillaume is identical with the pilgrim.
- 19 In the Melbourne manuscript, subheadings appear in most cases, either above or below the pen drawings. The Bodleian *Pèlerinage* seems to be decorated less systematically, as the titulus is rarely placed next to the drawing.
- 20 The Melbourne manuscript comprises an English prose version of the *Pèlerinage de la vie humaine* and *Pèlerinage de l'âme* in one volume.
- 21 These two scenes are portrayed on fol. 42 of the Oxford manuscript.
- 22 Dinzelbacher 1981, pp. 233–65.
- 23 See, for instance, the crossing of a bridge on fols. 15v and 20 of the *Tondal* and, to a certain extent, the depiction of a valley on fols. 13v and 27.
- 24 Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Douce 134; see *The Douce Legacy*, exh. cat. (Bodleian Library, Oxford, 1984), no. 248.
- 25 According to the recent findings of Martin Kauffmann and Nigel Palmer, the first part of this manuscript has been identified with Ms. 408 in Grenoble; see Thomas Kren's essay, p. 143 and n. 19, below.
- 26 Ms. Douce 134, fols. 77–129v.
- 27 Ibid., fols. 87v–88.
- 28 This chapter is illustrated by a depiction of the *Fall of the Damned* on fol. 77v, which does not single out any individuals but describes the sinners entering the realm of hell.
- 29 Ms. Douce 134, fols. 126–29v.
- 30 Whether these differences are only due to the different modes of expression of the individual illuminators or to the taste of the patron is a question which deserves a separate study.
- 31 London, Victoria and Albert Museum, Ms. Salting 1221, fol. 153.
- 32 Individual scenes such as the jaws of hell, the bridge, the beasts and devils in a fiery landscape, and the four rivers of paradise suggest that the image is inspired by literary visions, such as *The Vision of Saint Paul* or *The Visions of Tondal*, and is therefore another important example in book illumination of the significance of such literary texts for the visual arts in the Middle Ages. The appearance of a narrative progression of incidents from the depths of hell to paradise in the Salting Hours prompted one scholar to connect this miniature directly with the text of *The Visions of Tondal*, although the suggestion is unconvincing.
- 33 Hindman 1977, p. 193.
- 34 Bodo Brinkmann, pp. 185–86, below, argues convincingly that this miniature, on the reverse of Simon Marmion's *Raising of Lazarus*, forms part of a later stage of decorating the manuscript and should for stylistic reasons not be attributed to Simon Marmion, but to the Master of Fitzwilliam 268.
- 35 G. Bartz and E. König, "Die Illustration des Totenoffiziums in Stundenbüchern," in H. Becker et al., eds., *Pietas Liturgica 3: Im Angesicht des Todes* (Sankt Ottilien, 1988), vol. 1, pp. 497–98.
- 36 This situation might apply even more so to illuminations commissioned independently of the text and possibly from different towns within the Burgundian Netherlands; see Brinkmann, pp. 188–91, below.
- 37 R. Byrn, "Late Medieval Eschatology: Gerard van Vliederhoven's Cordiale de IV novissimis," *Proceedings of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society* 17 (1979), pp. 55–65; M. Dusch, *De Veer Utersten—Das Cordiale des Gerard van Vliederhoven in mittelniederdeutscher Überlieferung* (Cologne, 1975); J.A. Mulders, *The Cordial by Anthony Woodville, Earl Rivers* (Nijmegen, 1962); A. de Laborde, *Les manuscrits à peintures de la Cité de Dieu de Saint Augustin*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1909).

- 38 Brussels 1967b, p. 47, no. 61, and *Vlaamse kunst op pergament*, exh. cat. (Gruuthusemuseum, Bruges, 1981), p. 227, no. 91.
- 39 The popularity of this text is also reflected by the fact that Jean Miélot prepared a French translation in 1455, which was printed in Bruges by Colart Mansion in 1476. An English version, printed by William Caxton, followed in 1479.
- 40 Palmer 1982, nos. 3, 4, 6, 15, 17.
- 41 M. Debae, *La librairie de Marguerite d'Autriche*, exh. cat. (Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, 1987), p. 96, and Brussels 1967b, p. 47, no. 61.
- 42 Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, Ms. 11129, fol. 90; see Brussels 1967b, p. 47, no. 61, and J. Deschamps, *Cinq années d'acquisitions: 1974-78*, exh. cat. (Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, 1979), pp. 117-19, no. 51.
- 43 Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, Ms. 9048, fol. 90; see Debae (note 41), pp. 96-98, no. 28.
- 44 Mulders (note 37), pp. 99, 108.
- 45 Ibid., pp. 101, 106.
- 46 Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, Ms. 9006, fol. 265v; see Brussels 1967b, pp. 27-28, and Dogaer 1987, pp. 33-36.
- 47 Strasbourg, Bibliothèque Universitaire et Municipale, Ms. 523, fol. 290; Brussels 1967b, pp. 70-76.
- 48 W.M. Green, trans., *Saint Augustine, The City of God Against the Pagans*, vol. 7 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1972), book XXI, 11 and 22.
- 49 One of the most detailed descriptions can be found in book XXI, 13, where Saint Augustine quotes a passage from Virgil's *Aeneid*: "Ergo exercentur poenis ceterunque malorum supplicia expendentur; aliae pandantur inanes suspensae ad ventos, aliis sub gurgite vasto infectum eluitur scelus aut exurgitur igni"; *ibid.*, pp. 76-78.
- 50 See, for example, Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, Ms. 770, fol. 227; Meiss 1968, pp. 76-77. Most of the illuminations by Maître François and his workshop have been described by de Laborde (note 37).
- 51 Nantes, Bibliothèque Municipale, Ms. fr. 8, fol. 377; see de Laborde (note 37), vol. 2, pp. 423-48. Geneva, Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire, Ms. fr. 79, fol. 479; see F. Gagnebin, *L'enluminure de Charlemagne à François Ier*, exh. cat. (Musée Rath, Geneva, 1976), pp. 127-30, no. 54.
- 52 The style of the miniatures by Simon Marmon is discussed in more detail in other essays in this volume, e.g., those by Roger S. Wieck, pp. 119-28, above, and Thomas Kren, pp. 141-56, below.