

Colour in Medieval Illuminations

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Pigments and Dyes

- Illuminated Manuscripts are among some of the most precious artworks.
- Pigments – inorganic materials such as minerals and synthetics.
- Dyes – organic materials such as vegetable or animal.
- Different types of dyes/pigments can show how expensive the manuscript was to make.



Fig 1. Palettes of Paint on Parchment. (Aceto et al 2014: 3)

Pigments and Dyes

- Blues and Reds had a hierarchy depending on what they were made of.
- Colours could be adjusted to suit the illuminator's needs.
- Metallic pigments; gold is the most popular and expensive.



Fig 1. Palettes of Paint on Parchment. (Aceto et al 2014: 3)

How pigments and dyes are detected.

- Raman spectroscopy.
- X-ray fluorescence spectrometry (XRF).
- Ultra-violet and visible spectrophotometry.
- PRAXIS

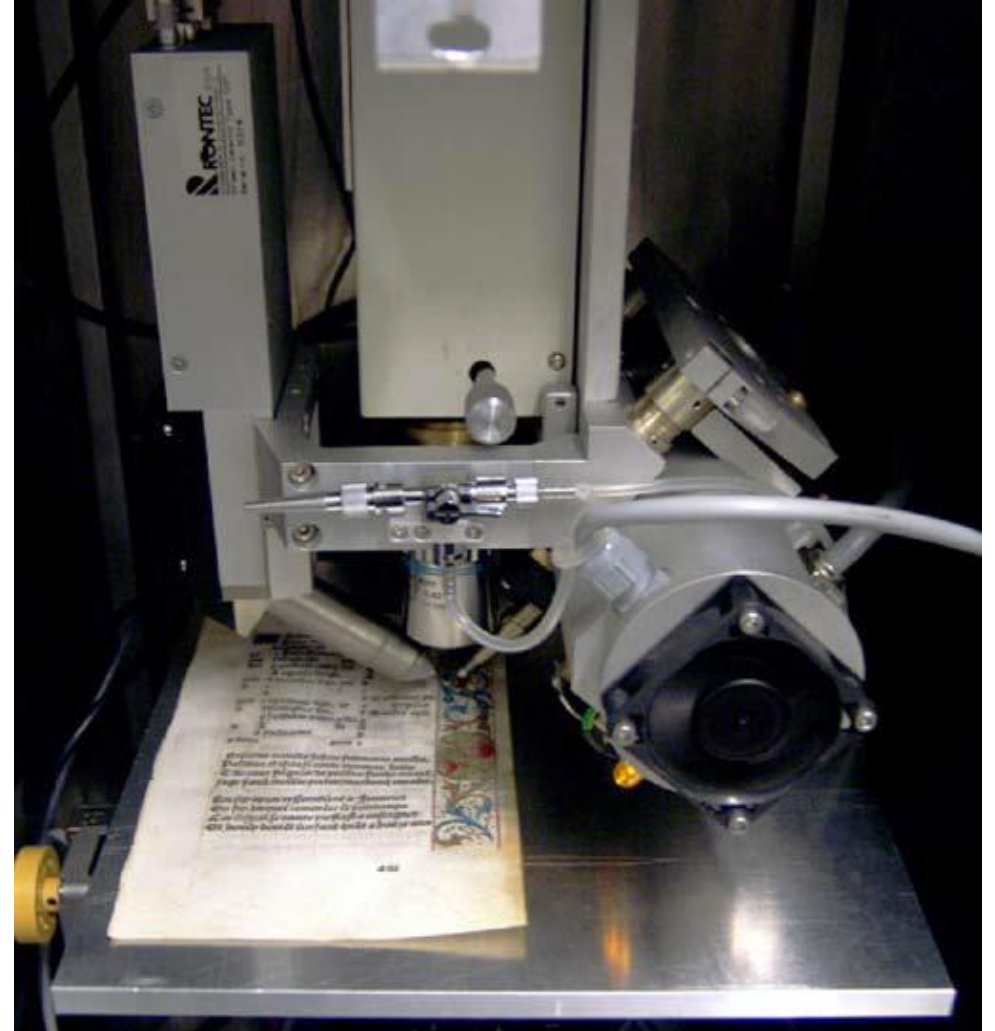


Fig 2. The PRAXIS instrument, analysing the colour of a medieval manuscript (Van Der Snickt et al 2008: 61)

The Lampeter Bible

Fig 3-7. The first page of the Lampeter Bible. (MS i)



The Hours of the Virgin Mary



Fig 8-9. Extract from the Hours of the Virgin Mary (MS vi)

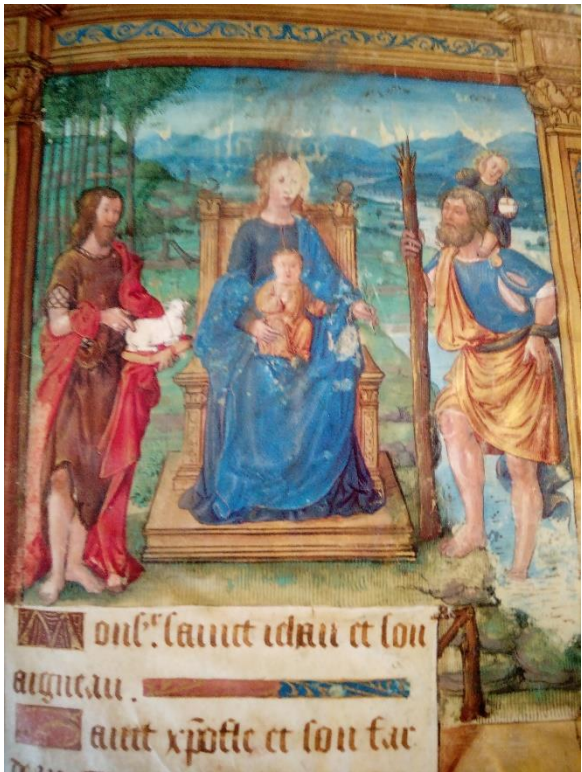
The Book of Hours of the Virgin Mary



Fig 10-13. Extracts from the second illumination (MS vii)

Disbound Manuscript

Fig 14-16. Illumination from the additional sleeve (MS viii)



Conclusion

- There are different pigments and dyes used depending on the hierarchy of colours and what can be afforded.
- There are specific techniques that can be used to detect and identify different pigments and dyes.
- The types of pigments and dyes used can give indications as to the wealth of the individuals commissioning the manuscripts



Fig 10. Extracts from the second illumination (MS vii)

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