



Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England (Picturing History)

Michael Camille

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The British Library's Luttrell Psalter is probably the best known of all English illuminated manuscripts; even before it was bought for the nation in 1929, social historians were using it to illustrate early fourteenth-century agrarian life in the English Midlands. In *Mirror in Parchment* Michael Camille presents a far-reaching analysis and critique of the use of these illuminations as records of historical experience, and rethinks the relationship between them and the construction of time past.

The manuscript was made in order to consolidate the social position of Sir Geoffrey Luttrell as Lord of Irnham at a time when his family was shaken by a scandalous charge of incest. By drawing on hitherto unpublished research on the village of Irnham as well as on Sir Geoffrey's manor itself – his tomb, his will and the urban illuminators he employed – the author reveals that, rather than serving as a perfect mirror in miniature of a feudal society, the Luttrell Psalter flaunts the cracks and contradictions in the social system of the time, and ultimately heralds that system's demise.

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