

0. SECULAR SCENES - Story Preface

1. SECULAR SCENES

2. ROYALTY'S ILLUMINATIONS

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Although many illuminations are based on Bible stories or Biblical commentaries, miniatures of secular scenes are as beautiful as their scriptural counterparts.

- Hundreds of years had passed between the Battle of Hastings (when William the Conqueror defeated King Harold II in 1066) and the creation of the *Life of King St. Edward* (in the 13th century). One of the *St. Edward* illustrations gives us a good picture of the types of arms used at that time. (University Library, Cambridge)
- King Louis IX of France (also known as St. Louis) commissioned many works and collected others, thereby creating a library of manuscripts. Although the names of his illustrators are no longer known, Master Honoré worked for one of the king's grandsons. His workshop created pictures for *La Somme le Roy*. An illumination depicts Humility, Pride (note the fall), the Sinner and the Hypocrite. (British Library, London)
- A story in *The Songs of Alfonso the Wise* is about the life of sea-going merchants. The book (*Cantigas de Alfonso el Sabio* in Spanish) contains a total of 1,255 scenes. (Biblioteca del Escorial, Madrid)
- Avicenna (an influential Persian philosopher/physician from the early 11th century) believed the human brain had five ventricles: common sense, imagination, judgment, image creation and memory. Those components are reflected in a Cambridge University diagram of the brain created in about 1300. (University Library, Cambridge)
- A different text, owned by the Bodleian Library in Oxford, includes an anatomical illustration of human veins. The drawing reflects 13th century medical knowledge.
- In the 12th century, people looked to more than medicine for help following a rabid-dog bite. They also relied on omens. A chicken with a healthy appetite, for example, meant recovery was likely. (Bodleian Library, Oxford)
- The Feast of St. Nicolas, on December 6th, is still celebrated in some European countries. The *Breviary of Chertsey Abbey*, produced in England during the first quarter of the 14th century (but after 1307), portrays the legend that St. Nicholas restored three boys to life after an innkeeper chopped them up and pickled them (scroll down 40%) in a brine tub. (Bodleian Library, Oxford)
- In the 14th century, children learned about the lives of saints and legends from pictures. One such story, the "Legend of Saint Ladislav," was originally included in the *Anjou Legendarium*. Fragments of that collection are held by the Vatican, the Hermitage (in St. Petersburg, Russia) and the Morgan Library (in New York City). (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican)
- The Manesse Song Collection (*Mannesische Liederhandschrift*) represents an extensive collection of early

14th century German songs assembled by two brothers, Rüdiger and Johannes Manesse. Of the many pictures in the collection, one depicts a knight kneeling at the feet of a beautiful woman. (University Library, Heidelberg)

Because richly illustrated books and manuscripts were expensive during the Middle Ages, many treasures which survive today were originally owned by royalty. Let's take a look at some of them.

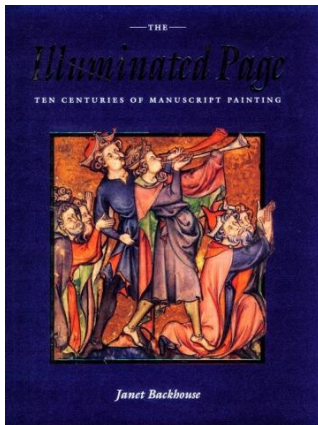
See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/SECULAR-SCENES-Illuminated-Manuscripts>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/SECULAR-SCENES-Illuminated-Manuscripts>

Media Stream



The Ten Centuries of Manuscript Painting - by Janet Backhouse

Image online, courtesy the amazon.com website.

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Secular Illuminations

Image online, courtesy the nostravalencia.com website.

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Secular Scene Illuminations

Image online, courtesy The Public Domain Review [website](http://www.thepublicdomainreview.com).

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Harold II

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Arms and Weapons Depicted in Illuminations

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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King Louis IX

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Saint Louis IX

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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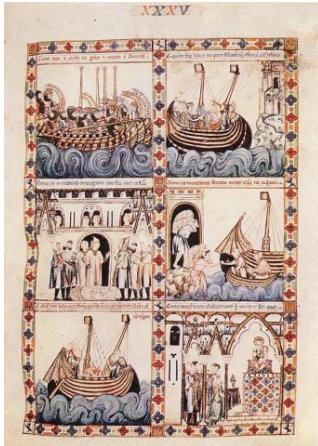


The Deadly Sins Illumination

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Sea-Going Merchants Illumination

Image online, courtesy the vincentvangoghclaudemonet.org website.

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Anjou Legendarium

Image online, courtesy the lib-art.com website.

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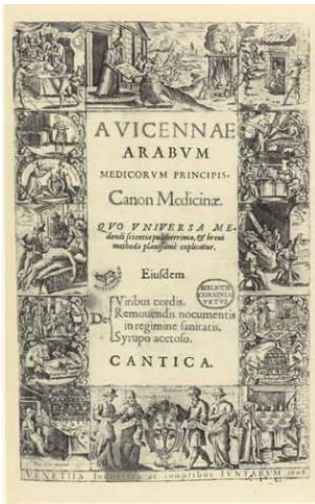


Avicenna - 11th Century Persian Philosopher

Image online, courtesy the muslim-academy.com website.

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Canon of Medicine - by Avicenna

Image online, courtesy trauma.org website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Canon-of-Medicine-by-Avicenna>

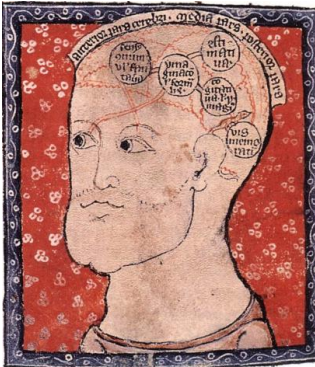


Diagram of the Brain - 1300

Image, described above, online via University Library at Cambridge University.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Diagram-of-the-Brain-1300>



Book of Hours - June

Image online, courtesy the [publicdomainreview.org](http://www.publicdomainreview.org) website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Book-of-Hours-June>



Knight Kneeling - Manesse Song Collection

Image online, courtesy the University Library, Heidelberg.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Knight-Kneeling-Manesse-Song-Collection>



Legend of Saint Ladislav - Anjou Legendarium

Image online, courtesy the Vatican Library.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Legend-of-Saint-Ladislav-Anjou-Legendarium>



Lives of Saints - Anjou Legendarium

Image online, courtesy Vatican Library.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Lives-of-Saints-Anjou-Legendarium>



Map Locator - Oxford, UK

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-Locator-Oxford-UK>

Physician in the 11th Century - Illumination

Image of an illustration, called "The Doctor's Visit," which was included in Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine* (from the 11th Century).

The U.S. National Library of Medicine (at the National Institutes of Health) [tells us more](#) about this important work:

Avicenna, a renowned Persian Muslim scientist has written numerous scientific papers and valuable medical books that are respected worldwide. For centuries his masterpiece, the "Canon of Medicine," has been used as a major medical reference.

The Canon, as a prime encyclopedia on medicine is comprised of five books. In the introduction to the Canon, Avicenna has described the purpose of medicine as the preservation of health if it is already attained and its restoration when it is lost.

He defines health as a trait or state, which results in the normal functioning of the human body and presumes that health is a steady state, whilst disease is more of a variable concept. Thus whenever we depart from a healthy state, we approach disease.

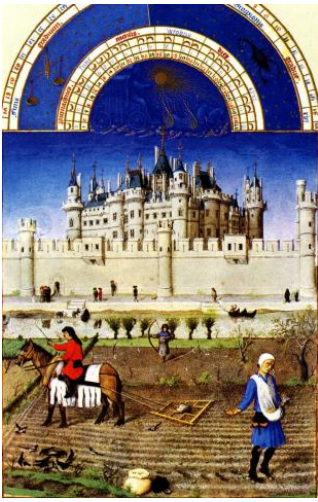
A comparison of current views regarding definitions of health, disease and their components as defined by Avicenna could open new horizons for ancient, traditional medicine. The Canon contains numerous implications concerning the infrastructures of public health-related issues. For example the specifications of healthy water and air are well described in the "Canon of Medicine." ...

Click on the image for a better view of this image.

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Book of Hours - October

Image online, courtesy the publicdomainreview.org website.

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Book of Hours - March

Image online, courtesy the publicdomainreview.org website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Book-of-Hours-March>



View of High Street - Oxford

Image online, courtesy the University of Texas, Department of English website.

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/View-of-High-Street-Oxford>