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Painting the Hortus deliciarum: Medieval Women, Wisdom, and Time

Danielle B. Joyner

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Between 1170 and 1190 in Alsace, Abbess Herrad compiled for her canonesses an elaborate manuscript, the *Hortus deliciarum*, which combined resplendent images with quotations from more than fifty texts to portray a history of the Christian church across time and through eternity. Destroyed in a bombing during the 1870 siege of Strasbourg, Herrad's lavishly illuminated manuscript was one of the earliest works created by a woman expressly for other women, the nuns training at the Hohenbourg abbey.

In this close study of the art and history of the *Hortus deliciarum*, Danielle Joyner shows how the book reflected twelfth-century concerns, such as emphasizing a historical interpretation of the Bible and reconciling scientific and theological accounts of the cosmos. She analyzes the images, texts, ideas, and processes at work in the manuscript and offers insights into how it configured a history of the Church in the temporal world as a guide to achieving eternal salvation.

By tracing the flexibility and efficacy of the multiple visions employed in the manuscript, Joyner explores how the *Hortus deliciarum* crafted a deeper understanding of the integral role of time in medieval constructions of history, the cosmos, and humanity's place within them. Scholars and students of art history, medieval and early modern studies, religion, gender, and the history of the book will find Joyner's work especially valuable, compelling, and provoking.

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