

Beatus

The Spanish Apocalypse



The Apocalyptic Visions of Heaven and Hell which Shaped Medieval Art
Film screening and Q&A

Monday 12 October 2015

18.00, Kenneth Clark Lecture Theatre, The Courtauld Institute of Art,
Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN



The Tábara scriptorium. Detail from the Las Huelgas Beatus, 1220. Courtesy of The Morgan Library and Museum, New York

An exploration of the series of medieval manuscripts, known as Los Beatos, which revel in the imagery and mysteries of the Apocalypse, as foretold in the Book of Revelation. The abbot Beatus compiled his illustrated commentary on the last book of the Bible around 775, to prepare his fellow monks for the end of the world in 800. Although his original is lost the tradition flourished, leaving us a treasury of early Spanish art through the Romanesque to the early Gothic. Visiting many of the places where these illuminated manuscripts were made, the scholar John Williams, author of the five-volume corpus *The Illustrated Beatus*, travels back over a thousand years across northern Spain to link the Beatus copies to their often remote scriptoriums. Directed by Murray Grigor, with luminous cinematography by Hamid Shams, key folios are explored in close-up, complemented by Rory Boyle's evocative score, which underpins the apocalyptic texts delivered by Neil Nunes.

Music composed and conducted by Rory Boyle. Performed by musicians and singers of The Royal Conservatoire of Scotland.

Organised by Tom Nickson (The Courtauld Institute of Art) and Wolf Burchard (National Trust)

Open to all, free admission.

BIOGRAPHY

Murray Grigor's first film on Charles Rennie Mackintosh helped to rescue the architect's work and reputation in the Sixties during Glasgow's era of urban demolition. It led to a career of film-making in the arts and architecture, which includes films on Frank Lloyd Wright, Sir John Soane, Carlo Scarpa, John Lautner, the Vorticists and Eduardo Paolozzi. Following Grigor's Book of Kells film, he was introduced to John Williams, the author of the five volume Illustrated Beatus. Their Beatus film would take 15 years to complete, surviving the cancellations of two Beatus exhibitions at the Morgan Library and the Biblioteca Nacional de España.