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# Celtic And Anglo-Saxon Painting: Book Illumination In The British Isles, 600-800



## Synopsis

The art of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Painting and Book Illumination in the British Isles from 600 to 800 AD. Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Painting flourished during this period, and the pages reproduced in this volume represent the most unusual and dazzling of the painting and illuminations from this period. Within settings exquisitely portrayed, a world of great luxury and delicacy unfolds on every folio, all realized in shimmering, jewel-like illuminations that delight the eye, please the mind, and uplift the spirit. Carl Nordenfalk of the University of Pittsburgh, traces the historical development of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Painting and book illumination from 600 to 800 AD. Oversized Softcover, 8 x 11 inches, 127 pages; includes 48 color plates, numerous black & white illustrations, and commentary. Printed in West Germany.

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## Customer Reviews

The art of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Painting and Book Illumination in the British Isles from 600 to 800 AD. Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Painting flourished during this period, and the pages reproduced in this volume represent the most unusual and dazzling of the painting and illuminations from this period. Within settings exquisitely portrayed, a world of great luxury and delicacy unfolds on every folio, all realized in shimmering, jewel-like illuminations that delight the eye, please the mind, and uplift the spirit. Carl Nordenfalk of the University of Pittsburgh, traces the historical development of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Painting and book illumination from 600 to 800 AD. Oversized Softcover, 8 x 11 inches, 127 pages; includes 48 color plates, numerous black & white illustrations, and commentary. Printed in West Germany.

This book gives an excellent guide and overview for Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Biblical manuscripts. It provides illustrations of the scripts and examples of illuminated pages of many of the well known books of that period. It gives the reader a sense of the period as well as its place in time. It reveals the sheer artistry as well as the dedication of the individuals who produced these great works of art. This book also provides a wide sampling of this milieu which allows one to have a view of both the similarities and the differences in this form of religious scholarly and artistic endeavor. This book is a real addition to anyone's library and is a lovely keepsake.

This book is part of a fairly series of titles on Manuscript illumination published by George Brazziller in the US, at least some titles were published in the UK by Thames and Hudson. They have helpful introductions written by experts at the time. There is a 1-2 page bibliography and there is no index. The book contains a number of world famous illuminated manuscripts from the period. In this volume there are the "the Book of Durrow", "the Gospels of Saint Willibrord", "The Durham gospel 1 and 2", "The Book of Lindisfarne", "the Gospels of St Chad", "The Trier Gospels", "The Canterbury Codex Aureus" and "The book of Kells". This list is incomplete but lists most Manuscripts in the volume. Most manuscripts have two or more illustrations- several quite a few more. This is a good book on Manuscripts from an earlier generation and is still well worth considering. The illustrations are in colour and are very good by the standard of the time. The text related to the illustrations is well written.

This book is more of an overview of several books than focused on one in particular, but still nice for the plates and a good sampler if you're not sure what to get. The title of this book is not misleading if you know anything about the history of Celtic art and its later years in illumination, from my experience as a reviewer for the British Museum's publications and having worked in Ireland on archaeology digs as their sketch artist. ;-). During the Christian era of Celtic art they did have many influences of Coptic, Greek, Norse, \*and\* Persian design, especially in the Book of Kells. The Irish monks did quite a lot of travel during the dark ages to promote learning, and the monasteries in Ireland had students from countries all over the world, hence a good influx of other ideas which they of course fused into their own (masters of adaptation!). "The Old Philosopher"'s desire for Ogham to be used in the manuscripts is very far off... the latin uncial used in the manuscripts is standard for the period, as the ancient Celts (pre-Christianity) didn't have books per se, only a sort of "runic" writing system of slashes used on staves and stone. They \*had\* no manuscripts so expecting to see

Ogham in a manuscript would be ridiculous! I think "The Old Philosopher" misunderstands the period of Celtic history these books were created in, as the title is certainly reflective for the period listed. If you enjoy Celtic manuscripts such as the Book of Kells or Lindisfarne Gospels this will be a nice overview of some of the different evolutionary flavors the artwork went through. If you want more information on Celtic art then any book by Ruth and Vincent Megaw (such as "Celtic Art", available from [Amazon](#) as well) will cover the early periods (typically only up to the Christian era, or briefly entering the Christian era), and then any book published on the old manuscripts such as the Book of Durrow, Lindisfarne Gospels, and the Book of Kells are great. This book is more an overview of a bunch of books, so good for starting out your manuscript collection.

This book features forty eight color plates that are reproduced in high quality paper from original manuscripts from the seventh and eighth centuries. The author, Carl Nordenfalk, provides a historical background and commentary on each of the plates. The author's style of writing lends itself well to one not overly knowledgeable of the subject matter. The manuscripts are taken from the Gospel Books which were richly ornate, having almost talismanic qualities having been produced in the native art style of the Celts and Anglo-Saxons as the Christian missionaries were proselytizing in the British Isles. Most of the manuscripts come from the Book of Lindisfarne, the Book of Durrow and the Book of Kells. The manuscripts feature portraits of various Christian messengers such as Saint Luke, Saint John, Saint Chad and biblical figures such as King David, Madonna and Christ. There are also pages of the written word from the various gospels shown in the rich decorative style of the Celts. The looping interlocked letters and motifs are an amazing contribution to civilization that everyone can enjoy from these ancient, partially intact codex. The symbols and strange animation create symmetrical patterns that are highly imaginative and will astound the viewer with its complex primitivism. The intrinsic beauty and composition is sometimes in stark contrast to the flatness of the figures. You can literally get lost in the patterns, there are endless oblong patterns of scrollwork, tied together by knots, interwoven and intertwined animals stretching out and connecting to fancy letters or other motifs that will dazzle your senses. This is a great book to gaze upon and reassure yourself of the beautiful beyond that has inspired many centuries of art work. The book also provides a complete list of color and black and white plates and a selected bibliography for future reference. This is a great book to look at anytime, especially in those tranquil moments of peace and reflection. Recommended for anyone interested in book illumination, Christian art and the similarities between Celtic art from this period and Byzantine and Italian art and the inspiration of the Gospel.

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