Illuminated Manuscripts



0. Illuminated Manuscripts - Story Preface

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Photograph of an illuminated manuscript, "The opening of the Sixth Seal," from the *Morgan Beatus*, 10th Century. Maintained by the Morgan Library and Museum, New York. Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

The work of writing makes one lose his sight, it hunches his back, it breaks ribs and bothers the stomach, it pains the kidneys and causes aches throughout the body. Therefore, you the reader, turn the pages carefully and keep your fingers from the letters, because just as hail destroys the fields, the useless reader erases the text and destroys the book.

Munnio and Dominico

Monastery at Silos

April 18, 1091

On completing a copy of the "Silos Apocalypse"

As the 8th century approached its close, people thought the end of the world was near. Those fears prompted Beatus of Liébana to compile a *Commentary on the Apocalypse*.

In the centuries which followed, monks <u>created</u> many illustrations to <u>accompany</u> Beatus' words, originally written at the Monastery of <u>San Pedro de Cardeña</u>, in the <u>northern</u> Spanish province of Burgos. About 32 manuscripts and fragments remain, spanning the 9th to the 13th centuries.

One of those illustrations - from a 12th century copy of the commentary - is "The Seventh Angel of the Apocalypse <u>Proclaiming</u> the Reign of the Lord." In that same commentary, illustrated in approximately 1150, we also find "Locusts <u>Come upon</u> the Earth." (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.)

When one considers <u>how long</u> it has been since monks <u>illuminated</u> manuscripts, it is nearly impossible to believe that thousands of <u>stunning</u> illustrations (often referred to as "miniatures") <u>survive</u>.

Thanks to the generosity of <u>universities</u>, <u>libraries</u> and museums which have provided scans of these treasures (or their facsimiles) for on-line public review, we can examine artistic <u>beauty</u> from centuries <u>past</u>.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Illuminated-Manuscripts

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Illuminated-Manuscripts

Questions 2 Ponder

How Will Future Generations See Our 21st-Century Personal Writings?

In the Middle Ages, books were filled with beautiful illuminations, sometimes created with gold and silver. When people sent each other letters, they were written by hand.

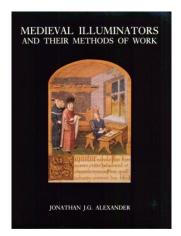
When future generations examine the books and ponder the archives that we have created, what will our endless pages of typewritten (or computer-printed) text tell them about us?

What will our lack of printed (let alone handmade) drawings and illuminations in books convey about how people learned in the 20th/21st centuries?

What will our lack of written notes and letters (in favor of quickly read, then tossed-out emails) convey about the emotions we feel for each other?

What written treasures, in short, are we creating for future generations to study and admire? Are we depriving ourselves (and them) of important information about who we are?

Media Stream

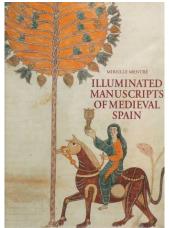


Medieval Illuminators and Their Methods of Work

Image online, courtesy the amazon.com website.

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Illuminated Manuscripts of Medieval Spain - by Mireille Mentre

Image online, courtesy the <u>amazon.com</u> website.

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San Pedro de Cardena

Image online, courtesy the panoramio.com website.

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Map Depicting the Province of Burgos

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Seventh Angel of the Apocalypse

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Locusts Come Upon the Earth

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Illumination Example

Image online, courtesy palazzo-medici.it website.

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Stunning Illumination

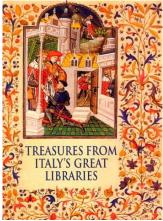
Image online, courtesy the Web Gallery of Art website.

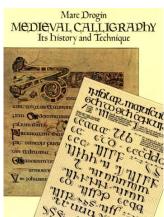
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Beauty of the Illuminations

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Treasures From Italy's Great Libraries

Image online, courtesy the <u>amazon.com</u> website.

Medieval Calligraphy Its History and Technique

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