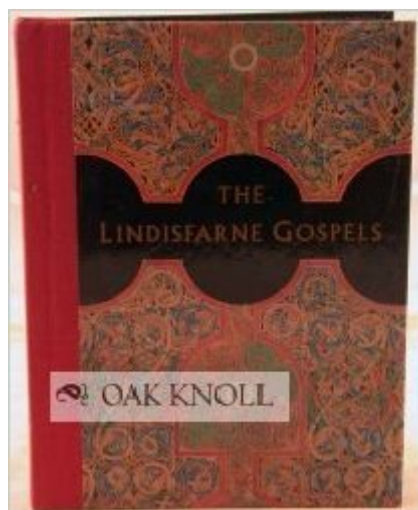


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The Lindisfarne Gospels: A Masterpiece Of Book Painting



Synopsis

"The Lindisfarne Gospels" is one of Britain's greatest artistic treasures, a surviving example of Anglo-Saxon book painting of the late-seventh century. Written and illuminated in honour of God and St Cuthbert, in about AD 698 by the monk Eadfrith, afterwards Bishop of Lindisfarne, it is famous for the quality and intricate design of its decorated pages. In this gift book, Janet Backhouse describes how the manuscript was made, placing it in the context of early Christian Northumbria. With all the major pages and many details reproduced in colour, this work represents an introduction for anyone interested in manuscript illumination, insular art and design and the early history of the book in Britain. An accompanying video, narrated by Kevin Whately, is available, ISBN 0-7123-0423-1 (PAL), 0-7123-0401-0 (NTSC).

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The scope of this book is best described by the chapter titles: 1) Lindisfarne and Saint Cuthbert 2) The men who made the manuscript 3) The text of the Gospels 4) The script 5) How the manuscript was made 6) The great decorated pages 7) The smaller initials 8) Some comparisons (with contemporary works) 9) The later history of the manuscript The text is lively, including, for example, an old riddle describing the wax table used for sketches. The Anglo-Saxon instruments used in illuminations are shown in a photograph; you aren't expected to have detailed knowledge of medieval tools. The color plates of the Gospels are magnificent. The art shown for comparison includes not only other manuscripts but metalwork etc. This book is not only an introduction to the

Lindisfarne Gospels but is a good starting point for illuminated manuscripts in general.

I cannot praise the Lindisfarne Gospels enough, although by that I mean the actual Lindisfarne Gospels, which in my opinion contain the greatest illustrations and insular majuscule script of any manuscript. Janet Backhouse's book has enough large, color photographs and details of the script to make it a worthwhile purchase for anyone interested in medieval illustration and calligraphy. Get it for your friend who thinks that the Book of Kells is the only illuminated manuscript.

This little introduction to the Lindisfarne gospels has clearly written essays and a nice selection of the carpet pages and illuminations. I don't know if the reproductions are true to life as I've never seen the Lindisfarne gospels but they are attractive and suitable for a book with such a low price. I would recommend this little guide if you are interested in insular manuscripts and want an introduction to the Lindisfarne gospels. Only one strange thing--the Book of Kells is never mentioned in the essays and I would think it would be, since they are such related works.

The version I read is a 60+ page hardcover copyrighted in 1995, so even though the title and author match this description, it appears to be a different text. There are no chapter titles in my book, so I'm sure that it differs from the version reviewed by others. I wanted to emphasize that there seems to be multiple versions of this book. The text was more charming and engaging than I had thought it would be, especially the passages discussing the fate of the monastery near the present day England / Scotland border during the 7th century and the illustrations. It was a quick read, making me wish for a little more. My only criticism is that the text could do a better job pinpointing what portion of an illustration it is commenting on. For example, when it talks about the scribe making a deliberate error or break in the pattern of an illustration, it could indicate "lower left quadrant of illustration x" instead of just "illustration x." Similarly it is frustratingly hard to locate the detailed section where one illustration is a close-up version of another one.

Not my book, but my husband's, he being into all sorts of things related to the Bible. He is apparently greatly enjoying it; spending a lot of time pouring over it.

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