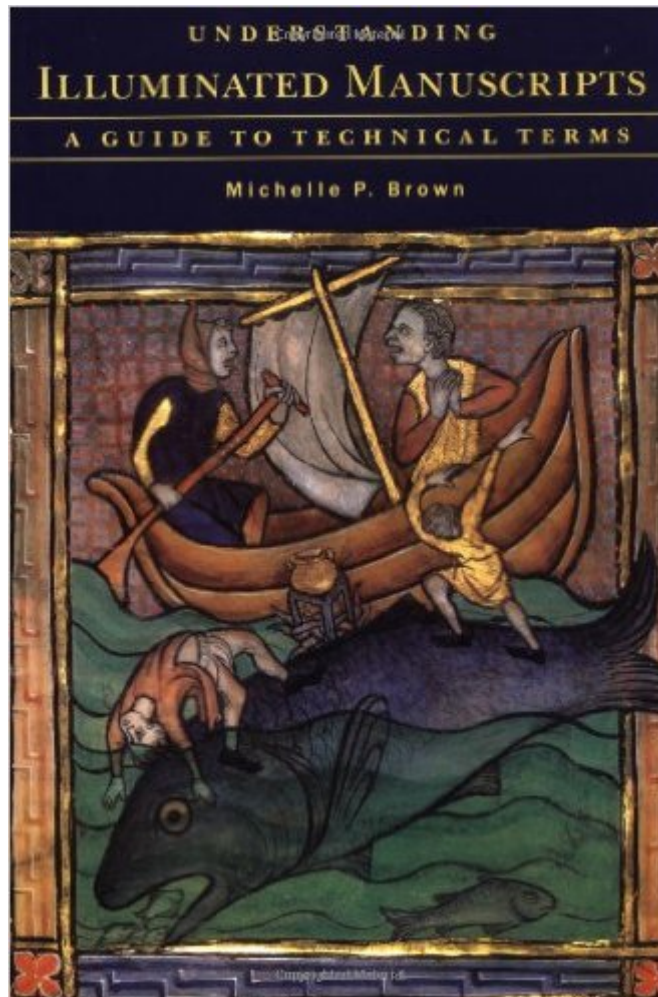


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Understanding Illuminated Manuscripts: A Guide To Technical Terms (Looking At)



Synopsis

What is a florilegium? What is an incipit? What is batarde script? This book--part of the Museum's popular Looking at series--offers definitions of these and numerous other techniques, processes, and materials used in medieval illuminated manuscripts. Concise and readable explanations of the technical terms most frequently encountered by the museum-goer are presented in an easily portable format. With numerous illustrations, many of them in color, this volume will be invaluable to all readers wishing to increase their understanding and enjoyment of illuminated manuscripts.

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Customer Reviews

This little volume provides brief definitions of all the important phrases and terms used in the study of illuminated manuscripts including forms, techniques, themes, and periods. Great for understanding the differences between an historiated initial and an inhabited initial - or between an antiphonal and a gradual. Most of the representative images are in color and are well chosen to illustrate the definitions. Perhaps their only drawback is their small size due to the size limitations of the book itself. A great companion while reading to "Medieval Illuminators & their Methods of Work" by Jonathan J.G. Alexander or "A History of Illuminated Manuscripts" by Christopher De Hamel.

This slim volume by Michelle Brown is an excellent resource for anyone who is interested in the study of books and manuscripts (codicology). In a succinct dictionary format, Brown gives definitions

of all of the major terms that may give trouble to someone visiting a museum or reading a work by such major writers in the field as Chris DeHamel. Suitable as both a textbook and a companion to books on manuscripts, this book is nearly indispensable to the beginner and the intermediate in allowing some understanding into the complex technical and art-historical vocabulary used in the field.

EXCELLENT reference for the student of medieval manuscripts. This book provides short descriptions of hundreds of terms associated with medieval manuscripts and their production. While this book is particularly relevant to those beginning a study of medieval manuscripts, it is also a handy tool for anyone who loves the subject, no matter what his or her level of knowledge. The format is easy to read, and the book itself is lavishly illustrated with color examples. You'll enjoy it.

I used this book and the Christopher De Hamel book while I was taking a graduate course on Illuminated Manuscripts. The information was indispensable for the entirety of the course, but it also helped me in future courses I took. It is wonderful to find an academic book that is fun to read! I would heartily recommend it to anyone, and especially to students who are studying manuscripts or merely the art history of the period! It is a most worthwhile investment!

127 pages, 60 color illustrations. This is one of the most beautiful books about illuminated manuscripts I know. The layout of the entries, the explanatory notes, and the many (mostly) color illustrations make this book a very handy and synoptic handbook. Because the editor planned an edition of rather moderate dimensions, some sacrifices had to be made. The rather important production of illuminated manuscripts by the Islamic world and far east countries like China and Japan are not included. I even wonder if they should have been included because the technical terms are more than sufficiently illustrated by the West-European examples. After all this is not an art history-book with an exhaustive intellectual content. Everyone with an interest in the Middle-Ages of western Europe should have this book in his library. A lot of technical terms provide also some insight in medieval society. I would like to give an example. An excerpt from the notes for the entry 'Breviary': "...From the eleventh century on, the various volumes used during the Divine Office (psalter, antiphonal, lectionary, martyrology, and others) were combined to form the breviary which was initially only used by monks but was popularized - in a slightly abridged form - by the Dominicans and Franciscans in the 13th century...." It's beautiful, it's interesting. What more can I say?

While I realize that the book is a guide to technical terms, you need to know what they are on a manuscript first before you can look it up! Think of it like a dictionary for manuscripts, if you're looking at a manuscript described as an octavo, you can look it up and find the definition in this book. On the other hand, if you're looking at a manuscript and have no idea what an element on the page is called, you're out of luck. I was hoping the book would be a breakdown of manuscripts by their parts in a more educational format, but alas, that is not the case. This book is for you if you have the technical terms presented to you and you are needing the definition. That said, it's got great information and wonderful illumination examples inside. I'll be keeping the book anyway.

Like another reviewer, this book was not entirely what I expected, since I glossed over the part which said that it was "A Guide to Gechnical Terms" suggesting a dictionary. The book is arranged entirely on an alphabetical listing of terms relating to pre-Guttenberg illustrated books. What was surprising, and possibly a bit "putting offish", is that the entries cover a wide range of material, roughly divided into the areas of 1) Bookbinding techniques, 2) Symbols painted on the pages and 3) Historical information about major Illuminated manuscripts. It is this variety which makes the book suitable for reading cover to cover. You never know what you don't know, or what may be relevant. I'm sure there are books which cover these three subjects individually. I was expecting that the book would cover the symbology and heraldry of the illustrations, but I welcome the others. If you have NO books on illuminated manuscripts, then I suggest this one. If you have lots already, this one may be too shallow. It is certainly a good "first book" on the subject.

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