

Old Speculum Pages Drawings

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the author is helen gould sheppard professor of art history at new york university institute of fine arts and a leading authority on english medieval manuscript illumination this volume bring together twenty six of professor sandler s studies focusing on illustrated manuscripts produced in england in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries particularly on the illuminated psalters the marginal illustrations in these psalters are a topic of particular interest and there are a number of iconographic studies derived from this material a separate section deals with the illustrated encyclopedias of the period particularly the omne bonum

who were the medieval illuminators how were their hand produced books illustrated and decorated in this beautiful book jonathan alexander presents a survey of manuscript illumination throughout europe from the fourth to the sixteenth century he discusses the social and historical context of the illuminators lives considers their methods of work and presents a series of case studies to show the range and nature of the visual sources and the ways in which they were adapted copied or created anew alexander explains that in the early period christian monasteries and churches were the main centers for the copying of manuscripts and so the majority of illuminators were monks working in and for their own monasteries from the eleventh century lay scribes and illuminators became increasingly numerous and by the thirteenth century professional illuminators dominated the field during this later period illuminators were able to travel in search of work and to acquire new ideas they joined guilds with scribes or with artists in the cities and their ranks included nuns and secular women work was regularly collaborative and the craft was learned through an apprenticeship system alexander carefully analyzes surviving manuscripts and medieval treatises in order to explain the complex and time consuming technical processes of illumination its materials methods tools choice of illustration and execution from rare surviving contracts he deduces the preoccupation of patrons with materials and schedules illustrating his discussion with examples chosen from religious and secular manuscripts made all over europe alexander recreates the astonishing variety and creativity of medieval illumination his book will be a standard reference for years to come

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