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# The St. Albans Psalter: Painting And Prayer In Medieval England



## Synopsis

The St. Albans Psalter is one of the most important, famous, and puzzling books produced in twelfth-century England. It was probably created between 1120 and 1140 at St. Albans Abbey, located on the site where Alban, England's first saint, was martyred. The manuscript's powerfully drawn figures and saturated colors are distinct from those in previous Anglo-Saxon painting and signal the arrival of the Romanesque style of illumination in England. Although most twelfth-century prayer books were not illustrated, the St. Albans Psalter includes more than 40 full-page illuminations and over 200 historiated initials. Decorated with gold and precious colors, the psalter offers a display unparalleled by any other English manuscript to survive from the period. In 2007 the St. Albans Psalter was removed from its binding and in 2012 the disbound leaves traveled to the J. Paul Getty Museum, where scholars, conservators, and scientists conducted a close examination. New evidence revealed here challenges several prevailing assumptions about this richly illuminated manuscript. The St. Albans Psalter is published on the occasion of the exhibition *Canterbury and St. Albans: Treasures from Church and Cloister* on view at the J. Paul Getty Museum from September 20, 2013, to February 2, 2014.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"[St. Albans Psalter is] both impressive in its scholarship and perfectly readable for the interested layperson." —Los Angeles Times  
"[This book] reveal[s] new information on . . . the fine art of manuscript illumination. . . . In a mind-boggling act of restoration,

the Getty removed the painted leaves of the book from its original binding in order to study and compare them. *St. Albans Psalter: Painting and Prayer in Medieval England* investigates the style, iconography, themes and different sections of the manuscript, its original purpose and several of its continuing mysteries. *Church Building & Heritage Review*

Kristen Collins is associate curator in the Department of Manuscripts at the J. Paul Getty Museum. Peter Kidd is a freelance researcher specializing in medieval manuscripts. Nancy Turner is manuscripts conservator in the Department of Paper Conservation at the J. Paul Getty Museum.

This book is a wonderful experience, about the best one can do to recreate the glory of an illuminated manuscript at an affordable price.

A good book about Medieval Manuscripts, good illustrations!

This is a beautiful volume and a wonderful addition to any medieval manuscript book library. The images are lovely, great color. A great learning tool for artists and calligraphers.

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