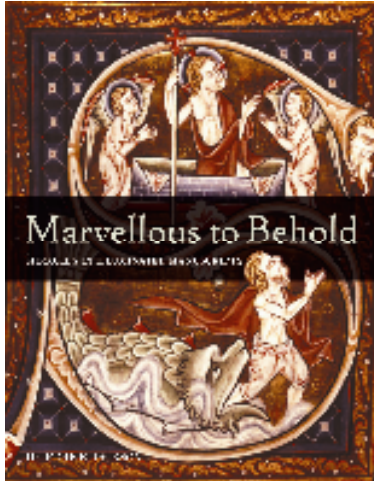


Marvellous to Behold: Miracles in Medieval Manuscripts / Deirdre Jackson.-- London, England: The British Library, dist. by The University of Chicago Press, March 2008.--160 p.: ill.--ISBN: 978-0-7123-4946-8: \$35.00.



Marvellous to Behold examines the role of miracles depicted in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic medieval manuscripts. Deirdre Jackson discusses over seventy manuscripts gathered from the eleventh to the fifteenth century and from across Western Europe and the Middle East. She evaluates the portrayal of miracles through religious miniatures in four chapters. "Natural Wonders" addresses the miracle of Creation, while "Healing Powers" focuses on the miracles of medicinal cures, both spiritual and physical. Resurrection is depicted through the miracles of Jesus Christ, the Muslim prophet Jeremiah, and Elijah, a Jewish prophet. The story of Jonah and the whale, a miracle celebrated by all three faiths, is examined in "Great Escapes." Finally, "God Provides" demonstrates the heavenly provision of food and water for the faithful.

The majority of the manuscripts depicted—many of which have never been published—are held by the British Library, along with examples taken from the collections of the Bibliothèque Nationale, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Edinburgh University Library. Some of the better known manuscripts illustrated are the *Holkham Bible*,

Luttrell Psalter, *Jacobus de Voragine's Golden Legend*, *Jami 'al-Tavarikh*, versions of the Arthurian Legend, and the Hebrew Miscellany.

For each of the 117 color reproductions, Jackson provides detailed captions. Plate 32 depicts a portrait of Saint Kevin and his blackbird from Gerald of Wales' *Topographia Hibernica*, but Jackson also uses the caption to note the visible hair follicles on the parchment that has been repaired with stitching. This attention to detail along with the selection of unique manuscripts and inclusion of necessary technical information provide the reader with a well-rounded text.

Scholarly works on medieval manuscripts have traditionally focused on a similar corpus of illuminations, whether connected by geography, holding institution, period, or type. Recently a few monographs have been published by the British Library discussing imagery (saints, magic, and beasts for example) found in medieval manuscripts that extend beyond chronology and places of production. Jackson's book stands out amongst these with her depth of knowledge, thought-provoking comparisons, and a great attention to detail.

Jackson provides an extensive bibliography for further reading, an index of manuscripts by institution, and a general subject index. This is a well-produced book with high quality color reproductions. The inclusion of never-before reproduced miniatures is a highlight. Both informative and a pleasure to read, this title is appropriate for undergraduate and graduate students interested in medieval art. It is highly recommended for academic research libraries that support the disciplines of art history or medieval studies.

Kasia Leousis, Reference/Subject Librarian, Kranzberg Art and Architecture Library, Washington University in St. Louis, kleousis@wustl.edu