WHAT WAS ANGLO SAXON ART LIKE?

Anglo-Saxon art

Anglo-Saxon art, manuscript illumination and architecture produced in Britain from about the 7th century to the Norman Conquest of 1066. Anglo-Saxon art may be divided into two distinct periods, one before and one after the Danish invasions of England in the 9th century.

manuscript illumination

Before the 9th century, manuscript illumination was the major art in Britain. There were two schools of illumination: a somewhat limited one at Canterbury, which produced works influenced by the Roman missionaries who began the Christian conversion of southern England and ensured that models within the classical tradition were used through the 8th century; and a more widely influential school that flourished in Northumbria. Manuscript illumination in northern England received its impetus from a revival of learning initiated in the 7th century by the establishment of monasteries on the island of Lindisfarne and at Wearmouth and Jarrow in Northumbria, institutions that were largely an extension of the Irish monastic system. The Irish monks carried with them an ancient Celtic decorative tradition of curvilinear forms—scrolls, spirals, and a double curve, or shield, motif known as a pelta—that were integrated with the abstract ornamentation of the native pagan Anglo-Saxon metalwork tradition, characterized particularly by bright colouring and zoomorphic interlace patterns. The additional influence, from southern England, of Mediterranean art introduced the representation of the human figure. The characteristics of Hiberno-Saxon art, however, remained basically those of pagan art: concern for geometric design rather than naturalistic representation, love of flat areas of colour, and the use of complicated interlace patterns. All of these elements appear in the great manuscripts produced by the Hiberno-Saxon school: the Lindisfarne Gospels (early 8th century), the Book of Durrow (7th century), and the Book of Kells (c. 800). The Hiberno-Saxon style (q.v.), eventually imported to the European continent, exercised great influence on the art of the Carolingian empire.

The Danish invasions had a disastrous effect on Anglo-Saxon art that was felt until mid-10th century, when the monasteries were revived and interest in architecture grew strong. Some idea of the architecture of the period can be deduced from contemporary descriptions and the excavation of remains. Many of the early stone churches seem to have depended upon the contribution of foreign masons, and Anglo-Saxon building, which consisted mainly of extremely small churches attached to monasteries, continued to be heavily influenced by continental types. By the 11th century, ties with continental architecture, especially that of Norman France, were strong; King Edward the Confessor's Romanesque Westminster Abbey (begun c. 1045–50, replaced in 1245 by the present Gothic church), for example, was similar in plan to French models, being cruciform with one central and two western towers. Certain features, however, distinguish Anglo-Saxon architecture: the frequent use of timber for construction; a square, eastern termination (a feature revived in English Gothic churches) instead of the almost universal apse, or semicircular projection, behind the altar; and certain distinctive masonry techniques.

The monastic revival resulted in a vast production of books and the flowering, by the second half of the 10th century, of the so-called Winchester school of illumination. The new style was based on the classical naturalism of Carolingian art, but it was highly individual and unusually vivacious, characterized especially by a nervous, highly expressive line. Masterpieces in both painting and drawing have survived; for example, the Benedictional of St. Aethelwold, produced at Winchester in the 10th century, and a copy of the Utrecht Psalter begun at Canterbury in about 1000. The Winchester style influenced French illumination to the extent that Norman art was reasonably acceptable to English illuminators after the conquest of 1066.

Extracted from https://www.britannica.com/art/Anglo-Saxon-art

Test what you have learned from the text!

1-We can divide Anglo-Saxons Art in:
A. Two periods: Before and after the Danish invasions
B. Two periods: From 7th Century to the 8th Century, and from the danish invasions to 10th Century.
C. We cannot divide Anglo- Saxon art in periods due to the fact that there are no clear distinctions between them.

2- Irish monks wore tunics with:
A. Celtic patterns of straight lines and squares
B. Christian symbols
C..Curvilinear elements

3- Southern England influenced Anglo-Saxon Art in:
A. The elements represented in paintings
B. The use of materials
C. Southern England did not had an important influence in Anglo-Saxon Art

4- The art style that started in the second half of the 10th century was inspired by:
A-Naturalism,
B- Clasicism,
C- insular art

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