

4-1-2016

## Global Medievalism: From Model Books to Manga

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### Recommended Citation

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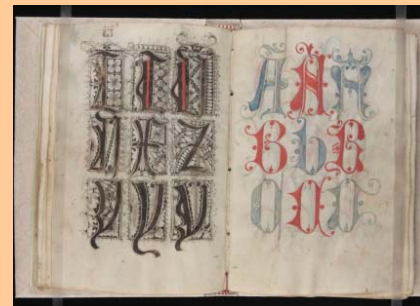
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# “Global Medievalism: From Model Books to Manga”

Dr. Leslie Ross,  
Professor and Chair of Art History  
Dominican University of California

Medieval Association of the Pacific Conference,  
Davis, CA April 1, 2016



# “Global Medievalism: From Model Books to Manga”

*or: “Art Comes from Art”*

*or: “Searching for the ‘Medieval’ in  
Medievalism”*



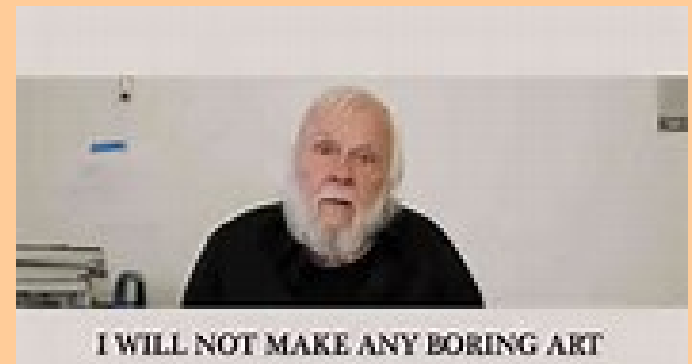


“Art Comes from Art”

-- John Baldessari  
(b. 1931)

“Art making is *about making a choice*.  
I don’t think any artist does anything new.  
Art comes from art.”

(2010, Met Museum talk)



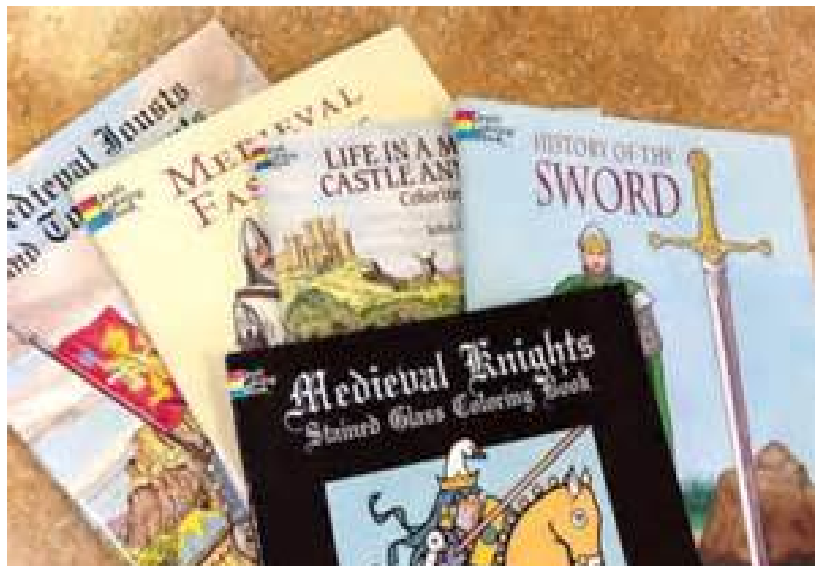


# Art Comes From Art – Making It Look “Medieval” –

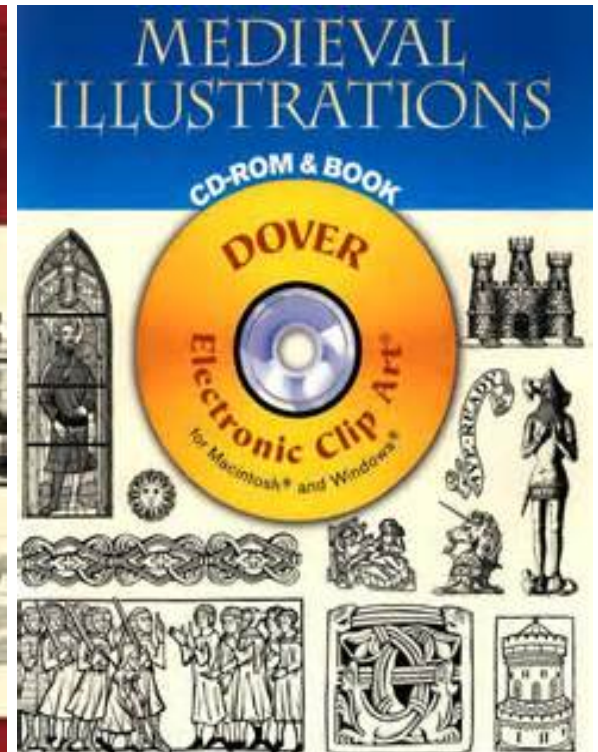
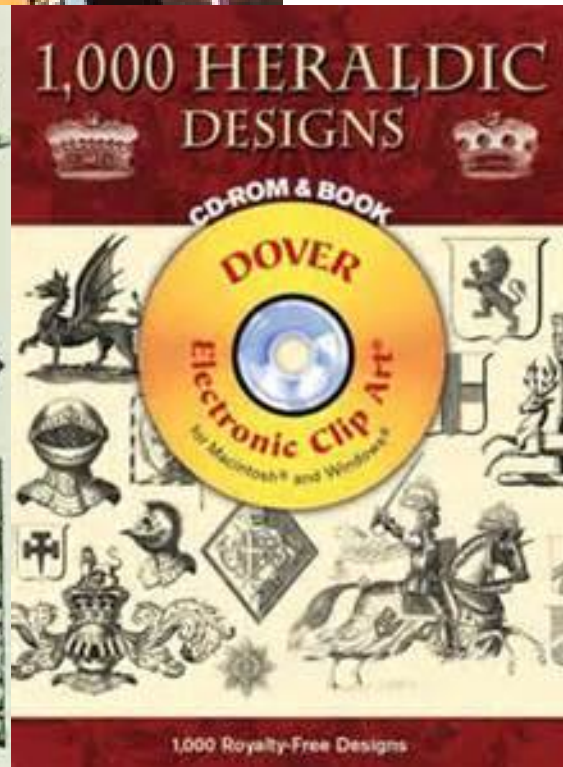
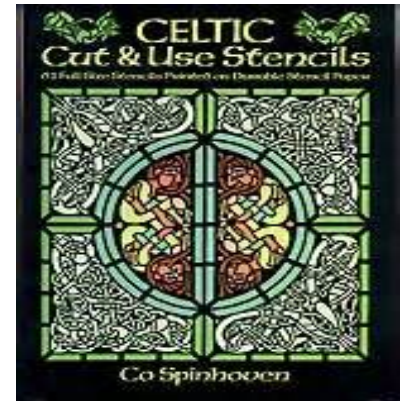
Artists and designers today – in search of  
“medieval” motifs – have no lack of  
resources...

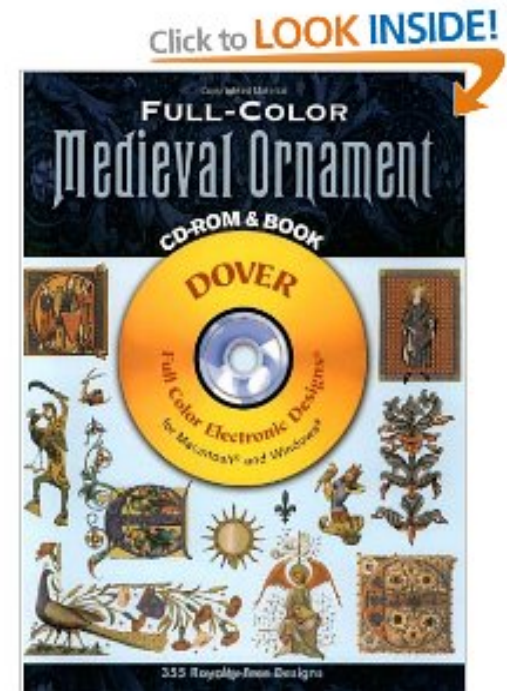
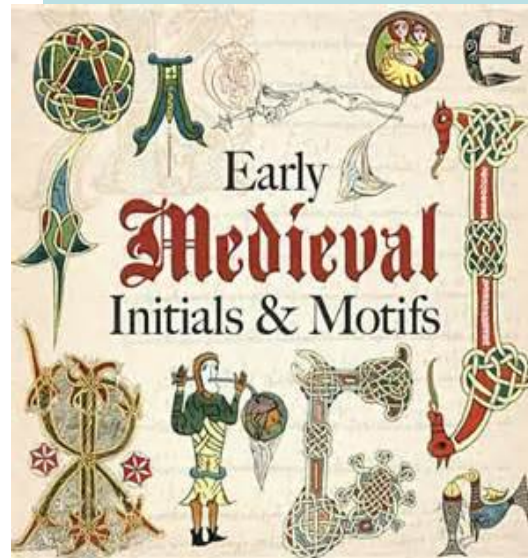






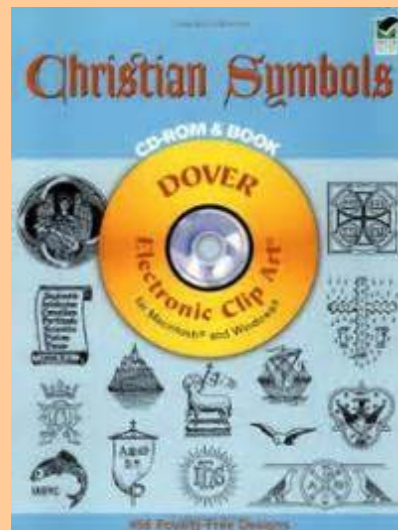
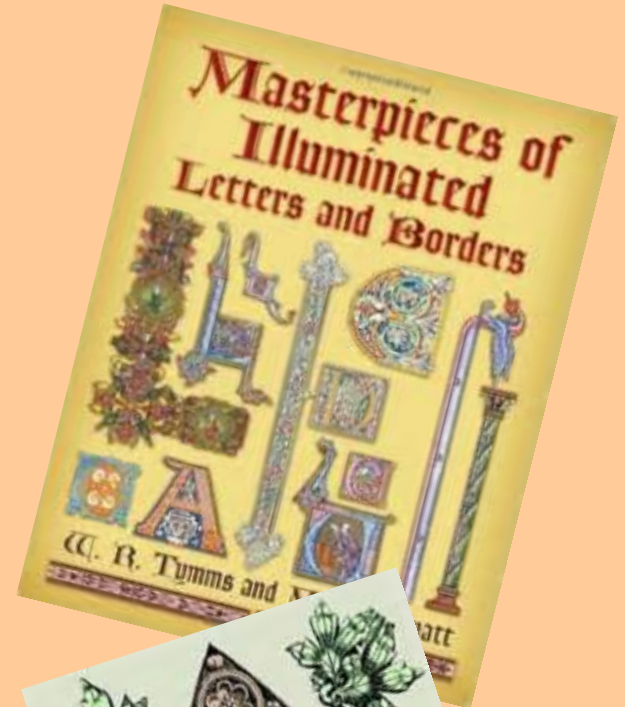
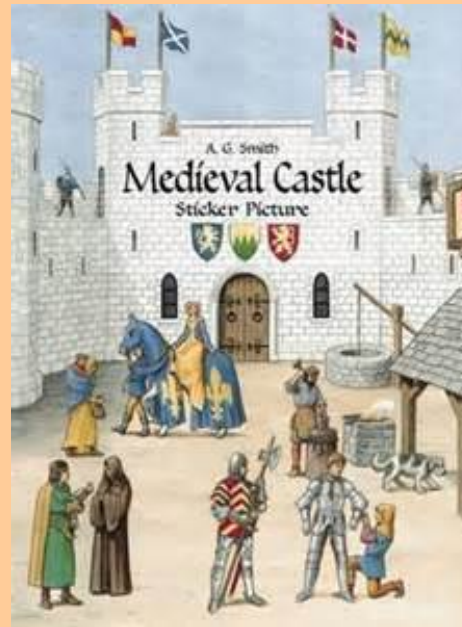
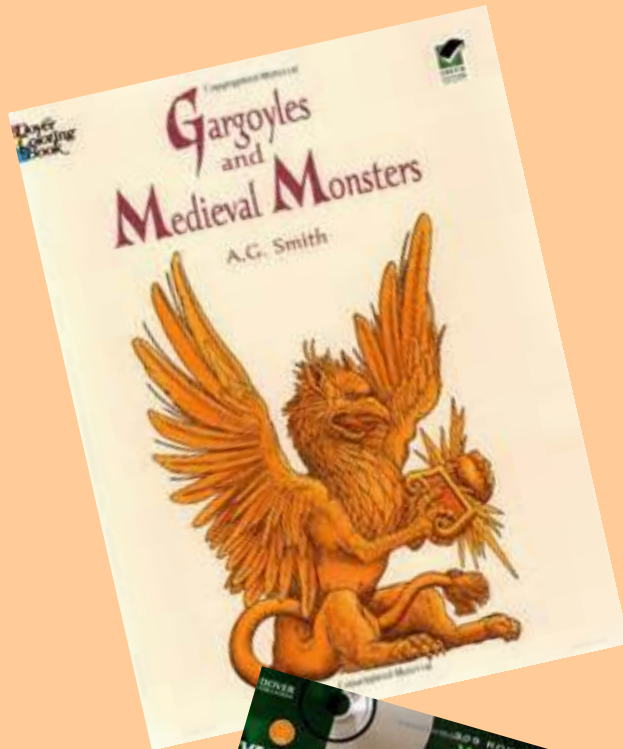
- copyright-free design source books
- coloring books
- clip art
- stencils
- pattern books
- electronic clip art





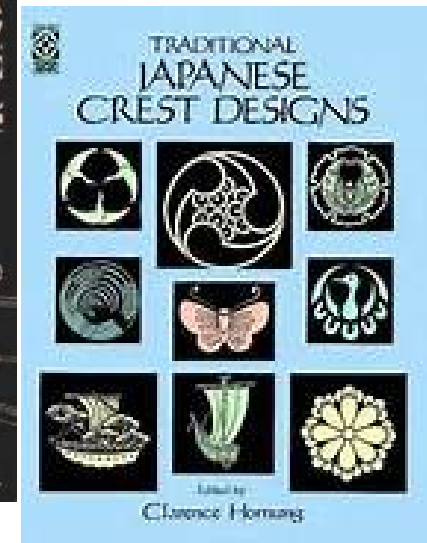
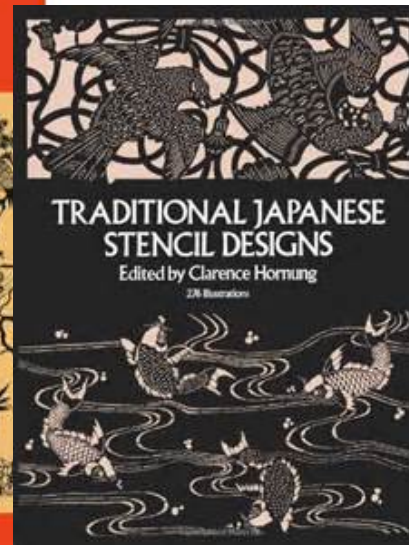
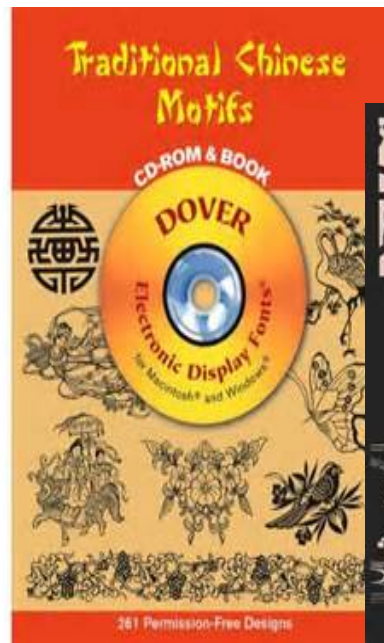
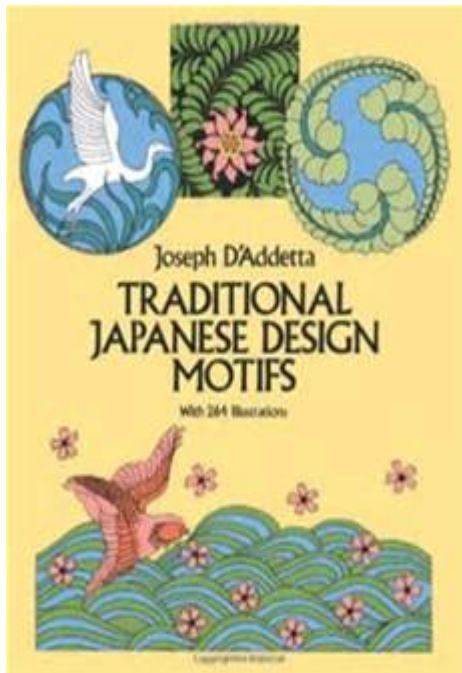
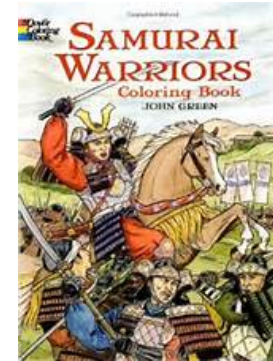


Some of these sources involve specialized motifs...





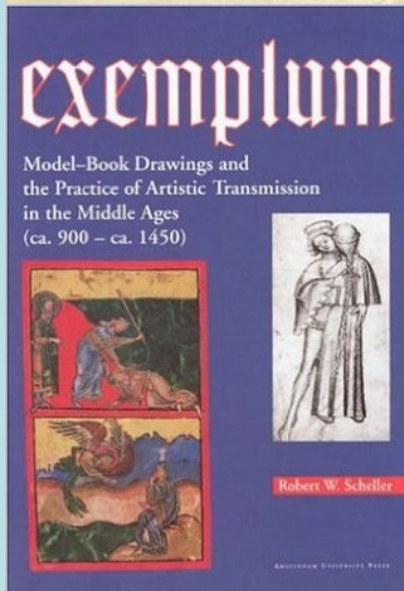
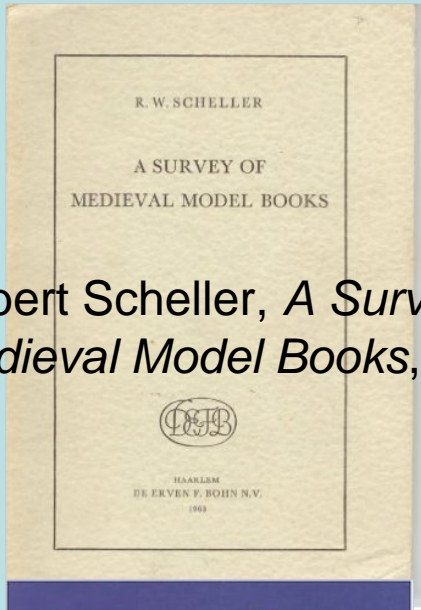
...both western and Asian “medieval”



# What are the some of the “sources” for these “sources” ?

**“Model books”** from the western medieval and early Renaissance periods –

Robert Scheller, *A Survey of Medieval Model Books*, 1963



Scheller, 2000



Some of these “model books” from the Middle Ages appear designed to show scribes and illuminators how to decorate letters, paint initials, or add large segments of decoration to the page. Precise copying versus personal creativity in replicating text and image.



Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum,  
MS 83-1972 (ca. 1150-1175)  
(Probably made in Florence)





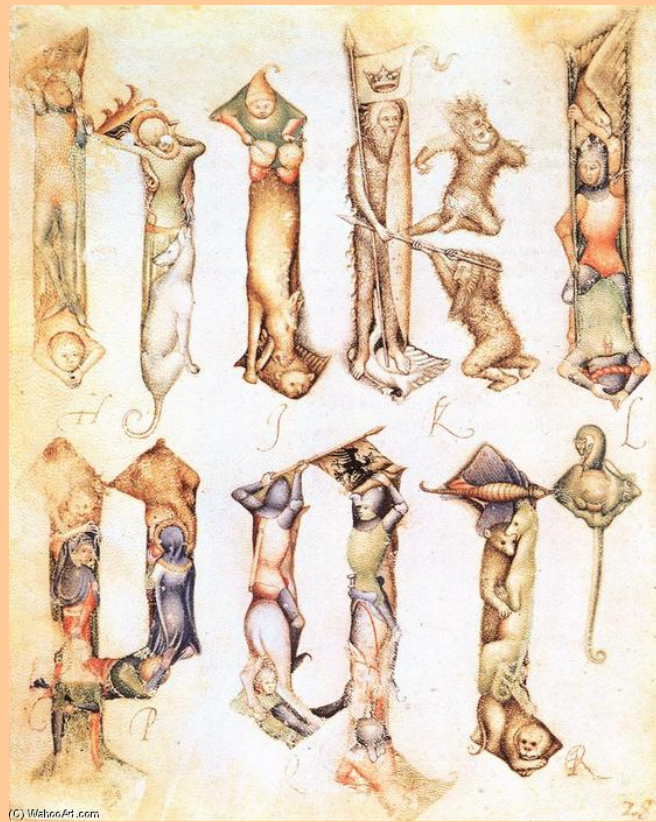
Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum,  
MS 83-1972 (ca. 1150-1175)

Many are: **“Alphabet Books”**  
-- concentrating on decorative treatments  
for text letters



Gregorius Bock, Medieval Scribal Pattern Book,  
1510-1517, Yale, Beinecke Library, MS 439,  
fols. 30v-31r





The “sketchbook” of Giovannino de’ Grassi  
Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica, MS Cassaf. 1.21 (ca. 1400)

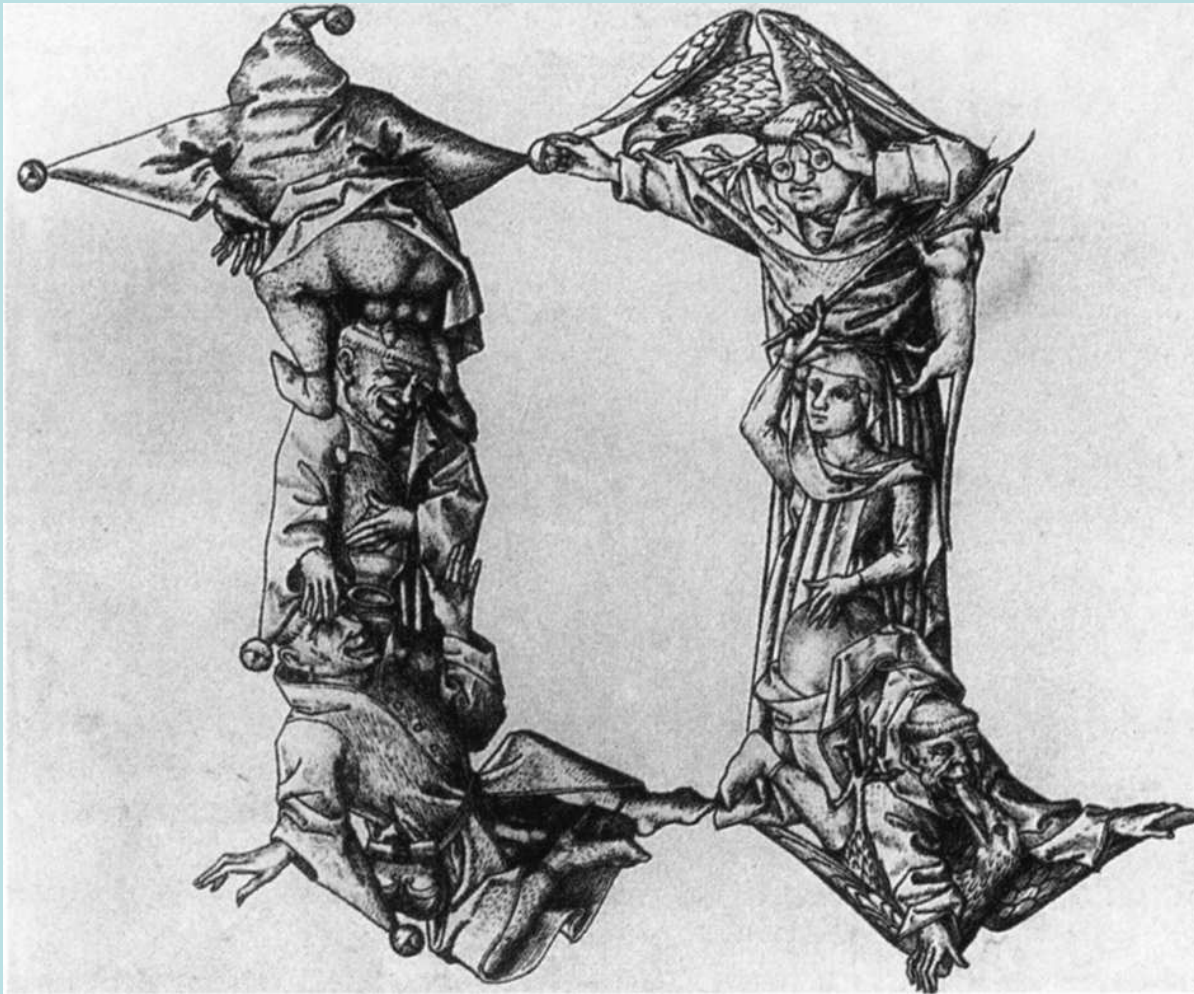
His pages presumably provided models for other artists who wished to replicate his depictions.











“Master E.S.” *Fantastic Alphabet*,  
ca. 1466 (engraved designs)



Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole  
1504 (1520-30)



Initial letter T, Gregorius Bock,  
Scribal Pattern Book, 1510-1517, Yale,  
Beinecke Library, MS 439, fol. 48r

**OF COURSE** today it is  
quite easy for designers  
to find “medieval-style”  
alphabet letters...







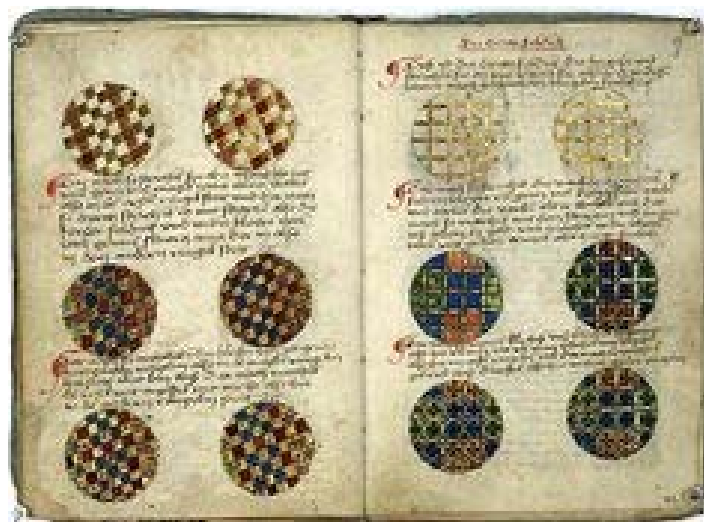
In addition to alphabet letters, other medieval “**Model Books**” also show specific motifs for designers of decorative embellishments...



The Göttingen Model Book, ca. 1450

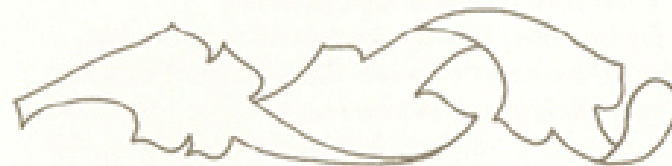
Göttingen, Universitätsbibliothek, Uffenb. MS 51 (left)  
and the same decoration executed in a Gutenberg Bible (right)

-- The Göttingen Model Book appears to have been designed as a “**how-to**” or “**step by step**” guide for the creation of diverse decorative motifs



## Foliage

The foliage one shall first draw with a lead or a point. Then one shall outline the foliage with a pen and with very thin ink or with thin black color. Then one shall polish the foliage with a tooth, so that the color can be applied smoothly, but not too firmly. Then one shall paint it with the colors, one side right and the other side left or reversed, with a brush, namely light red and green, that is to say green or slate green: The two colors belong together, one side light red and the turnover<sup>1</sup> green, as shown here, or one side green and the turnover light red, as you like. §



Then take dark red color and outline the light red with the dark red with a brush, so as if you wanted to outline it once again, all around the outside of the red. Then take dark green and outline the green or the slate green with the dark green, the same way as with the red, all around. Then make with a brush and with the dark red



## “Model Books” –

- ***instruction manuals*** (showing step-by-step processes.)
- ***sources of inspiration*** for designers of many art forms, presenting a wide array of shapes and drawings from which the artisans ***could take their pick***.

“Art making is about making a choice. I don’t think any artist does anything new. Art comes from art.” -- Baldessari



These “Model Books” from the medieval and Renaissance period are the ultimate ancestors of...

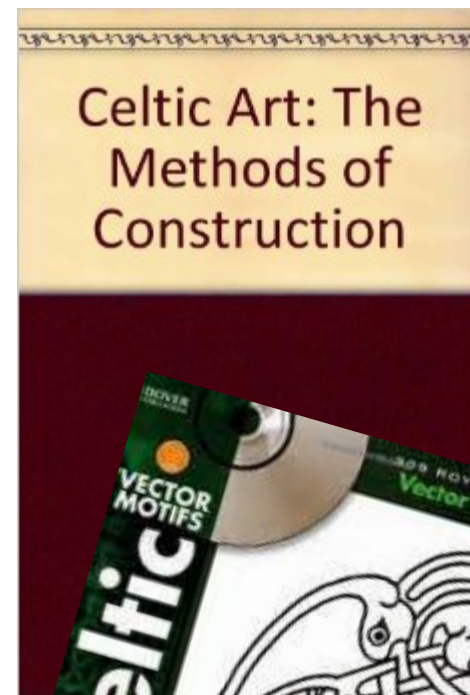
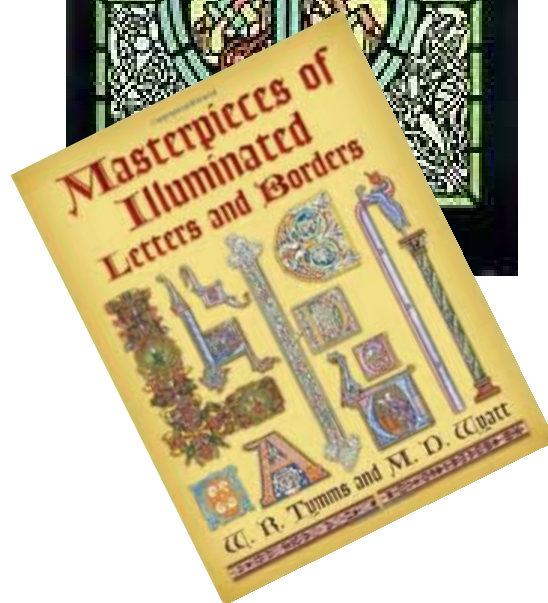
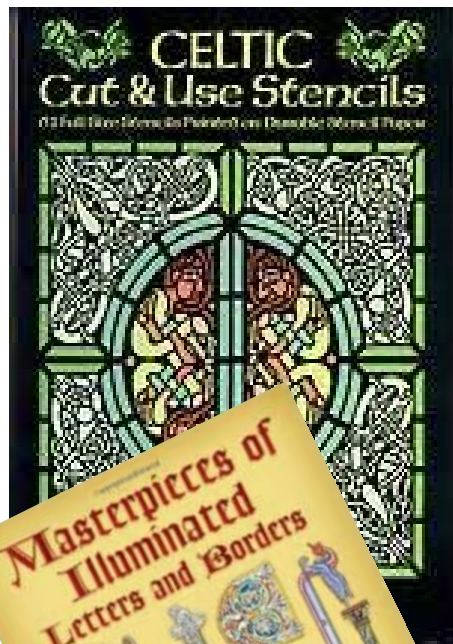
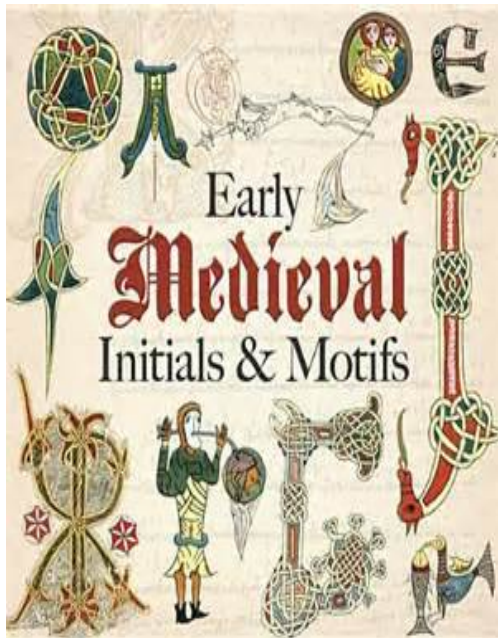




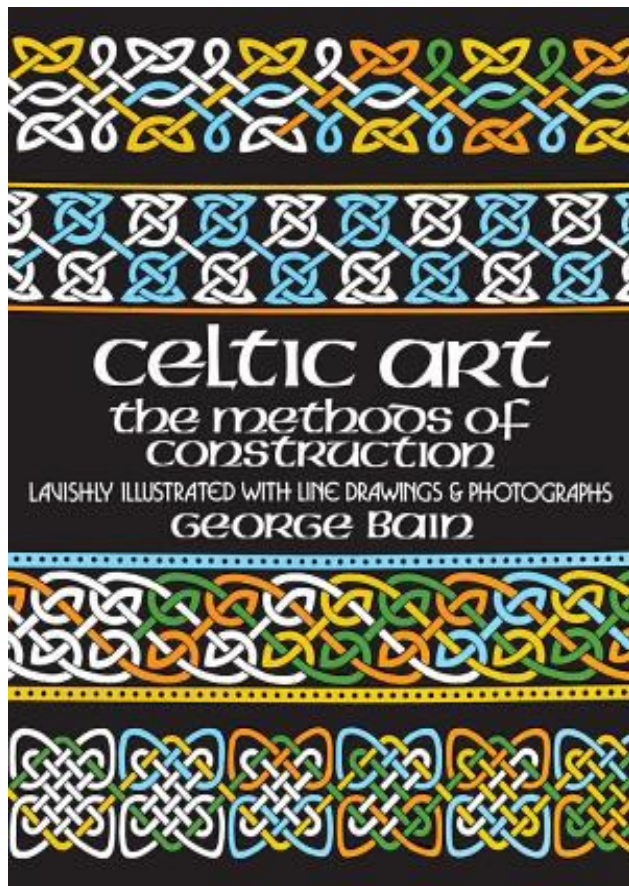


...the modern “motif/source books” --

-- but with some *important* additional contributions en route





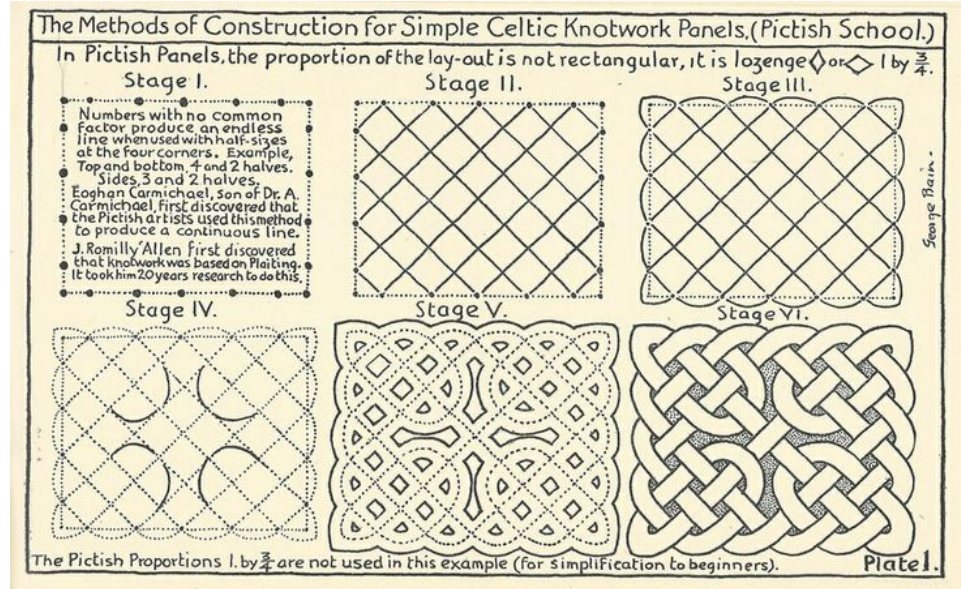
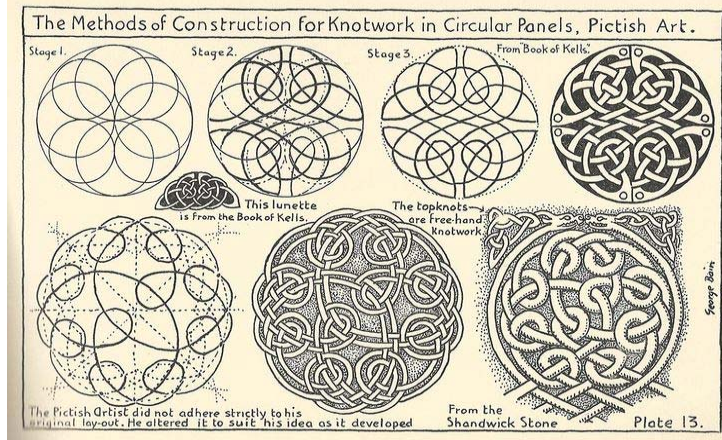


## Celtic Art: The Methods of Construction

A “how-to-do” manual first published in 1951 by Scottish artist and art teacher:

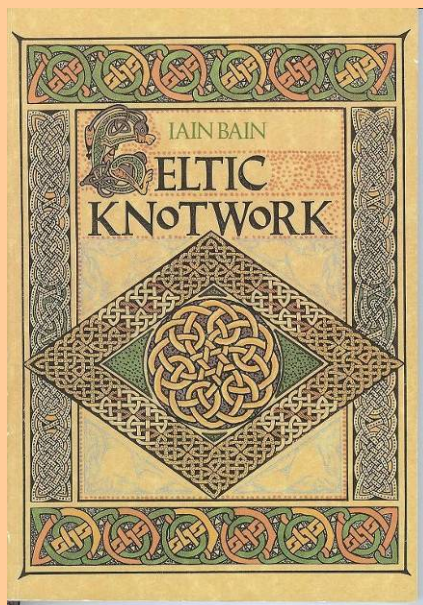
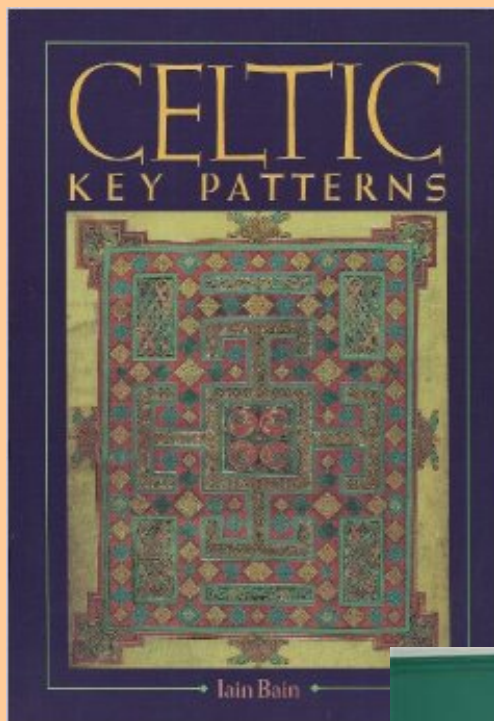
**George Bain** (1881-1968)

Inspired a great revival of interest in Celtic and Insular art...especially after the book's re-issue in **1971**

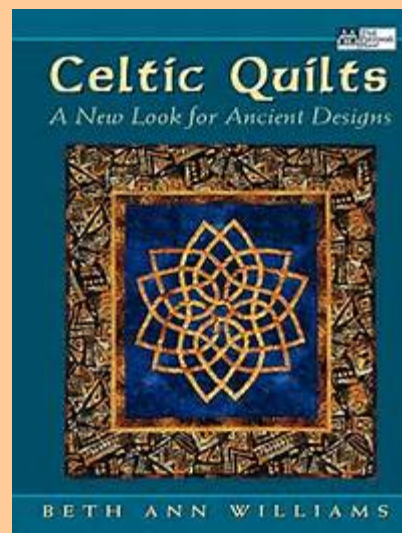




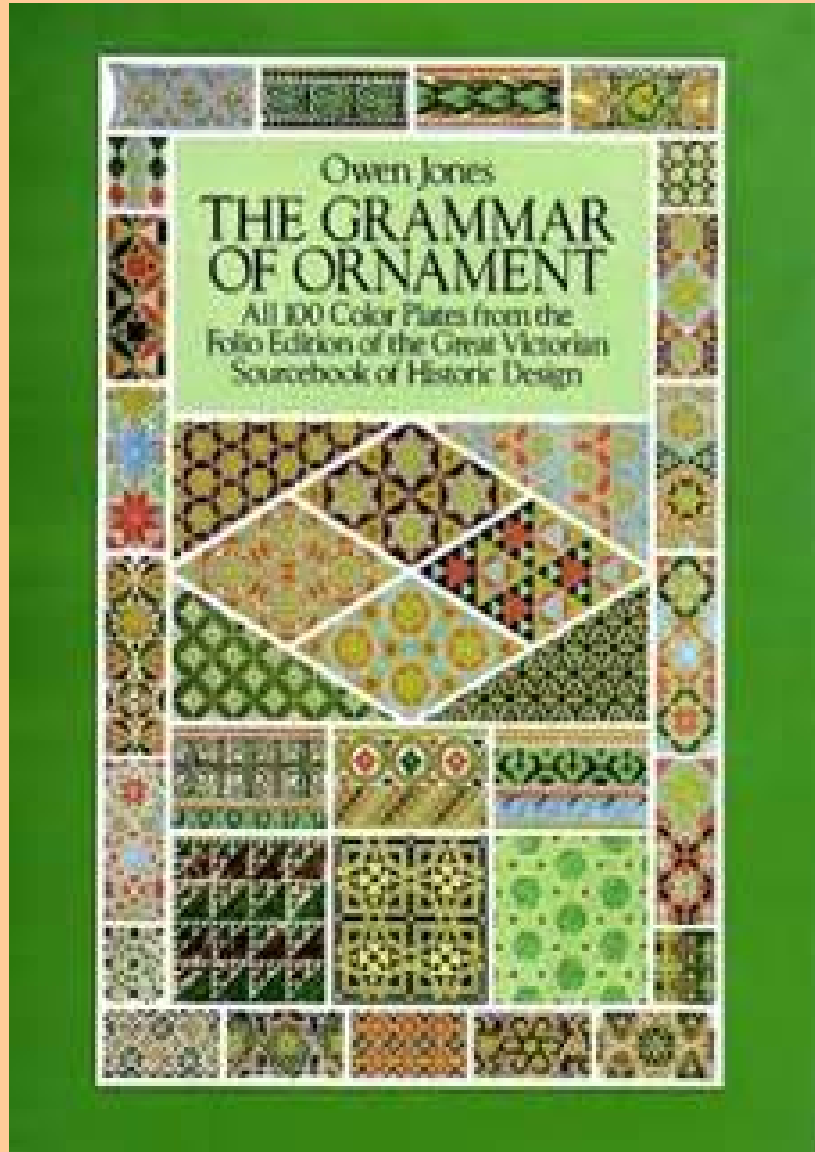
His son, Iain Bain, later published:



Excellent sources for designers of:



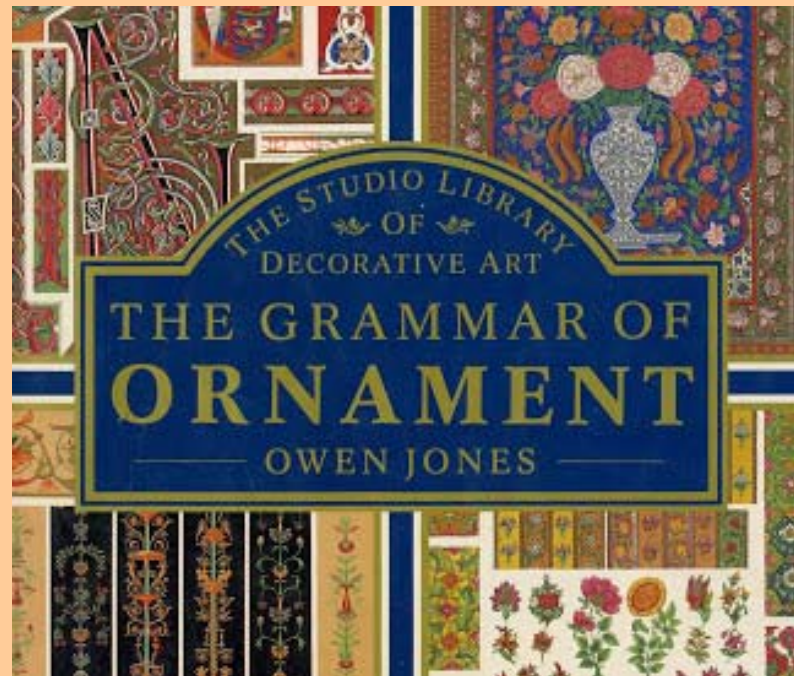
Another very important *intermediary source*:



## ***The Grammar of Ornament,*** 1856

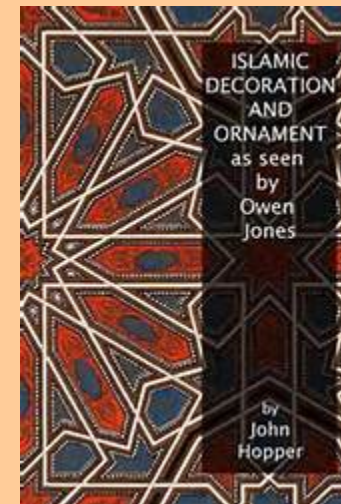
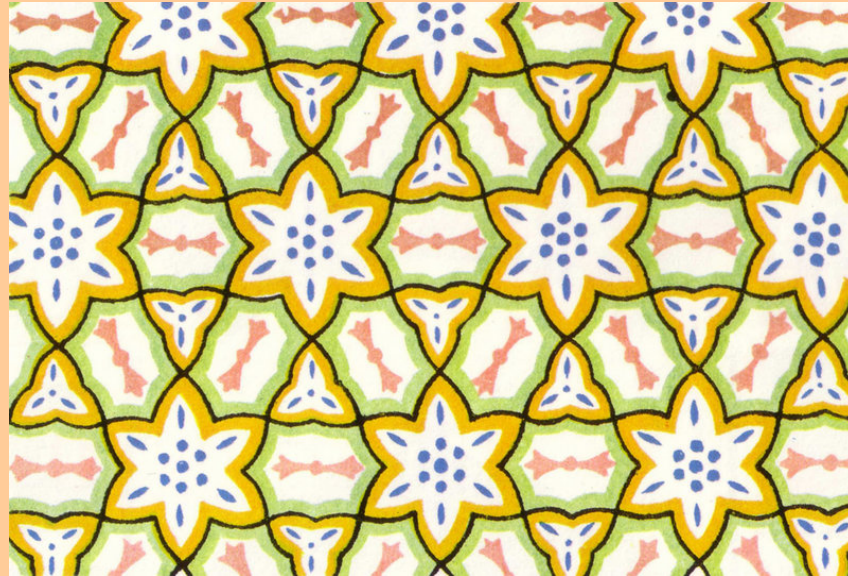
by **Owen Jones** (1809-1874)

-- highly influential British design theorist  
and architect





Jones was especially fascinated with medieval Islamic surface pattern design (e.g., the Alhambra, Granada)





His source book also includes many pages of:

Chinese motifs



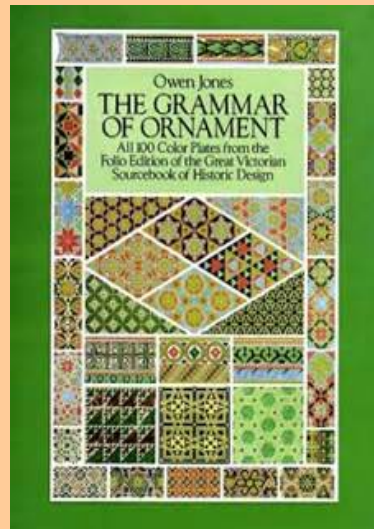
Egyptian motifs



Medieval Illuminated Manuscripts



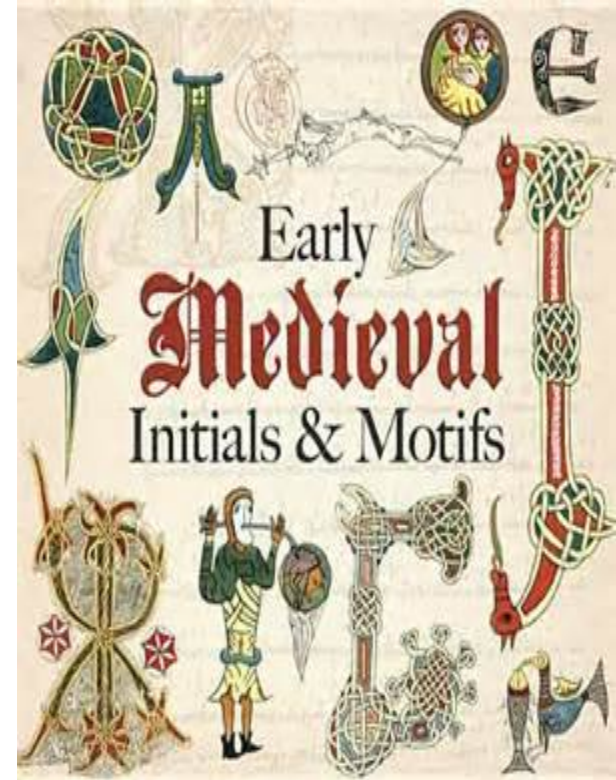
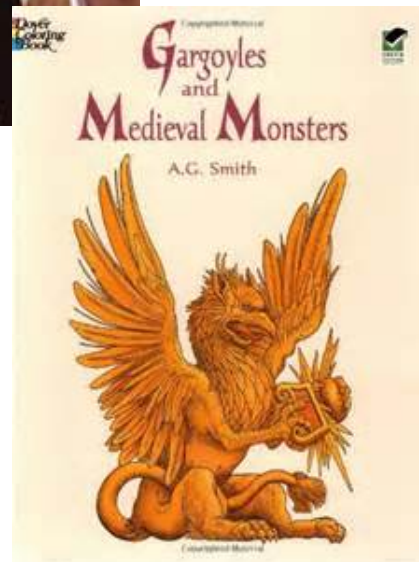
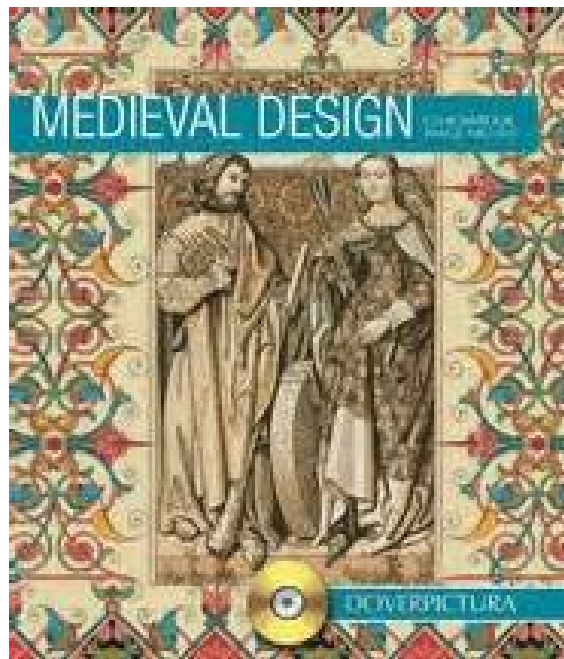
Celtic motifs





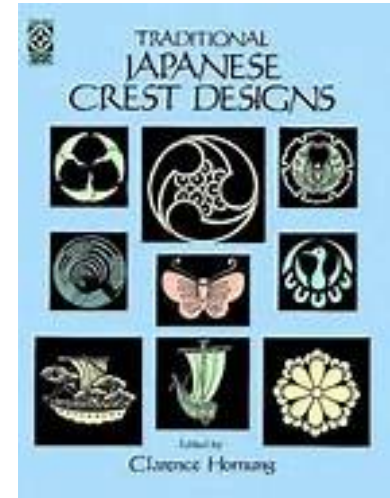
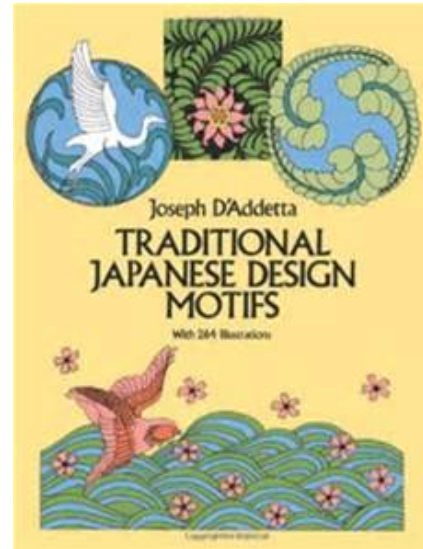
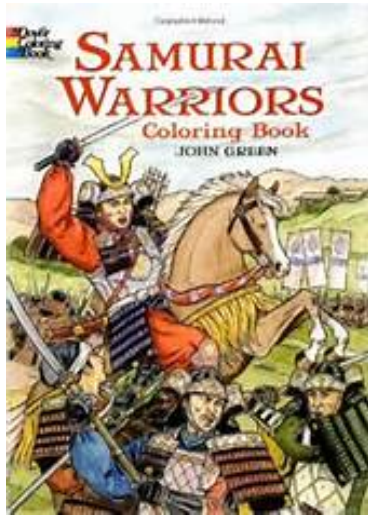


Our modern-day examples of **medieval** “Pattern and Design” source books of various types follow this format.



Replicating and perpetuating IMAGES of the medieval eras often in rather fantastic forms...

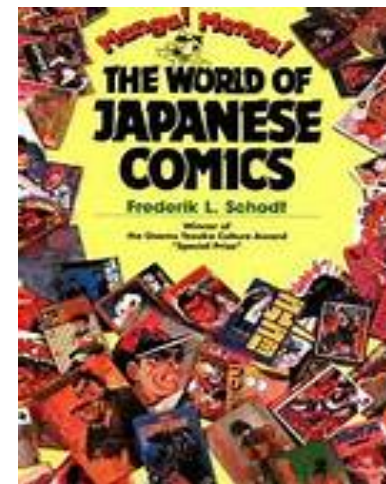
The same applies to modern design sources for Japanese medieval art:



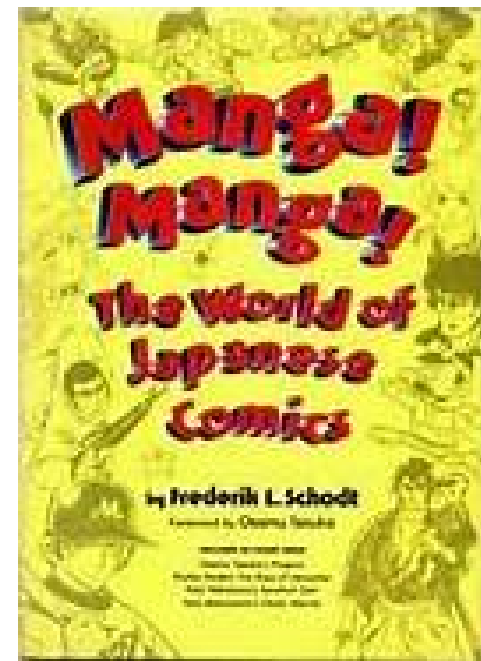
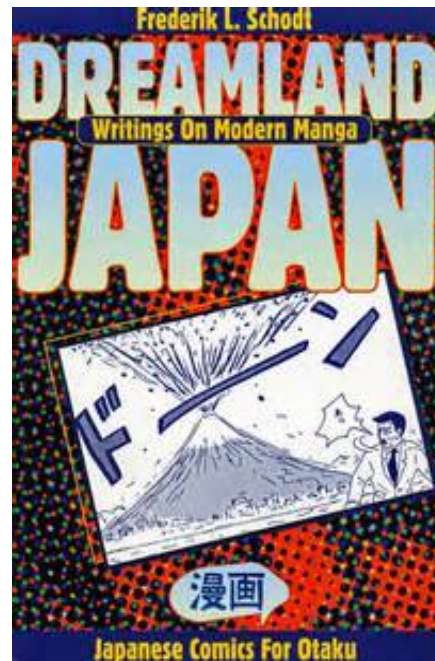
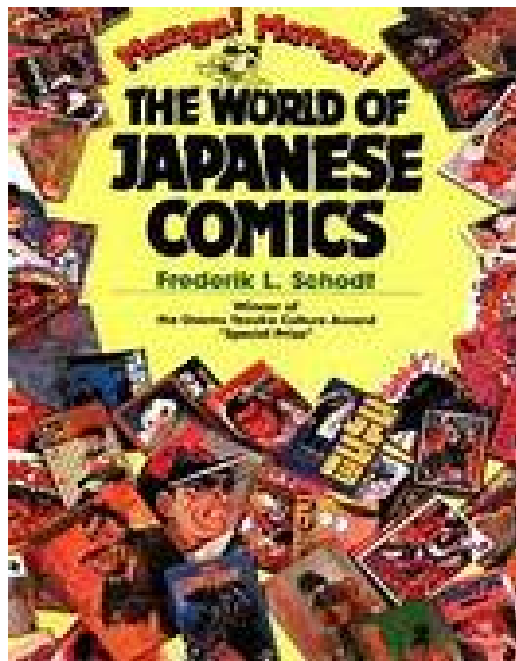
## HOW TO MAKE ART THAT LOOKS MEDIEVAL AND JAPANESE TOO

What are the “sources” for **Asian** medieval motifs – in particular the Japanese form of **MANGA** ?

**MANGA** = graphic based stories (“comic books”) in which narratives are conveyed primarily in pictures and short texts.







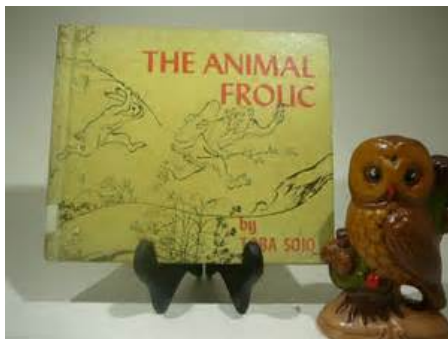
A wildly popular art form in Japan...



MANGA has many variations and themes



The form itself *may* be traced back to at least the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> century in Japan.

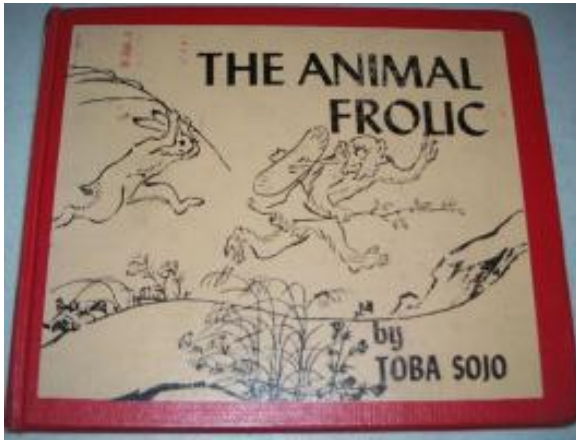


Entertaining brush and ink drawings of anthropomorphized animals created on long scrolls.

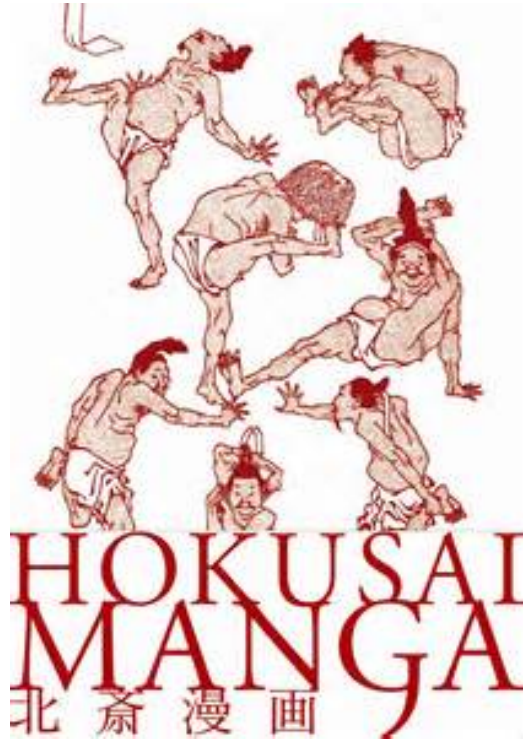


# ("Animal-person Caricatures")

- a famous set of four brush and ink picture scrolls often attributed to a medieval Japanese monk, Toba Sojo
- ***Scrolls of Frolicking Animals***



However, the term **MANGA** (as meaning: “Whimsical Sketches”) was first used by the well-known Japanese artist, KATSUSHIKA **HOKUSAI**, in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hokusai produced numerous printed volumes (woodcuts.)

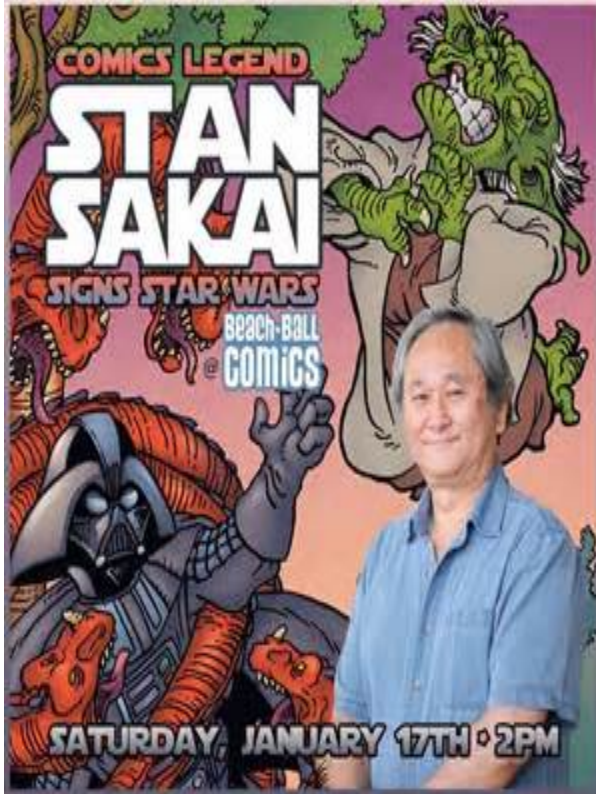


These designs were meant to serve as inspiration and instruction.





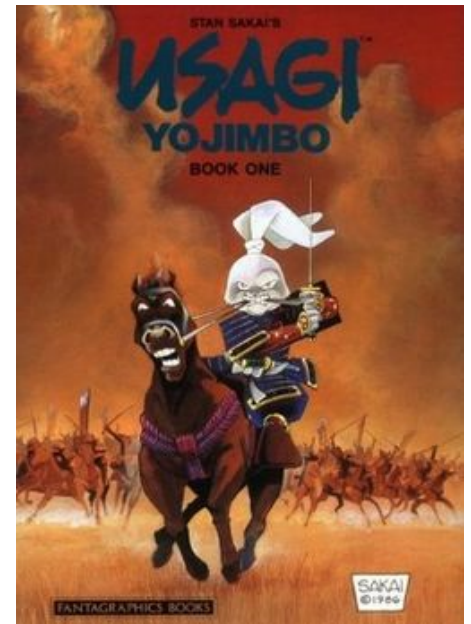
Modern day **MANGA** has many forms and motifs – but the medieval period plays a significant role. Japanese **MANGA** often draws from medieval sources for themes and designs.



Stan Sakai (b. 1953)

## **USAGI YOJIMBO:** *The Samurai Rabbit*

Series published in  
multi-vols. mid 1980s



The **SAMURAI RABBIT** stories include many references to Japanese history and folklore. The clothes, weapons and other objects are drawn with a faithfulness to period style. (EDO – medieval/feudal Japan 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century)  
The series received an award in 1990 for its educational value through the "skillful weaving of facts and legends."

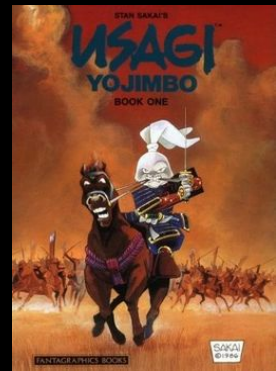
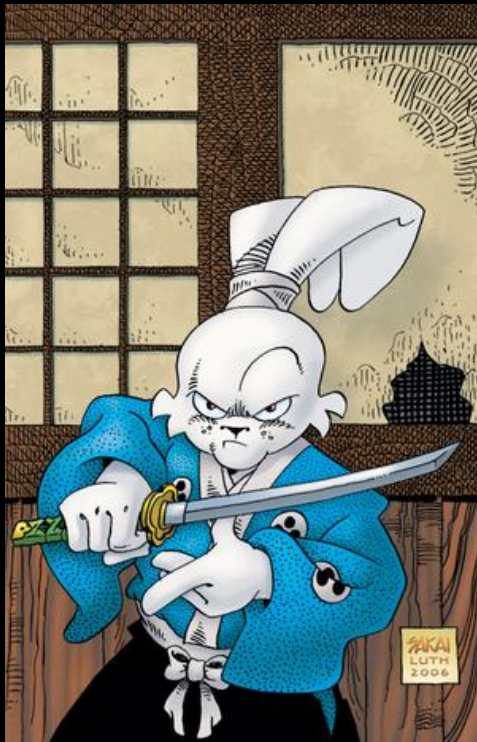
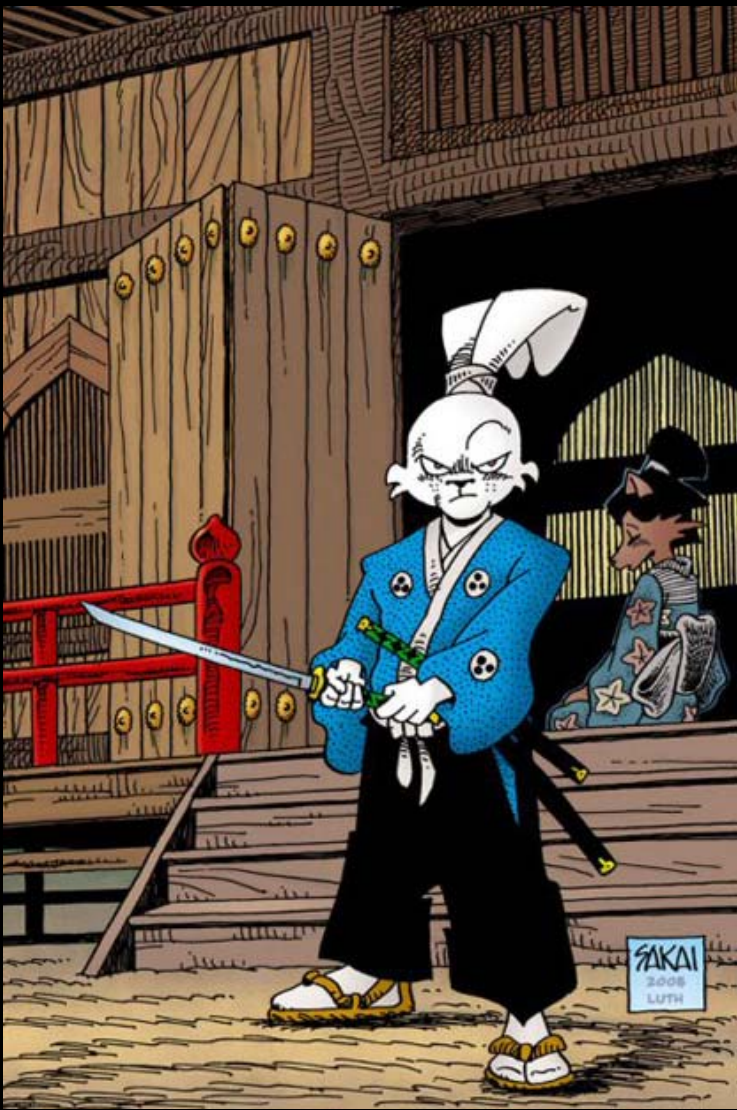


1980s



12<sup>th</sup>  
century



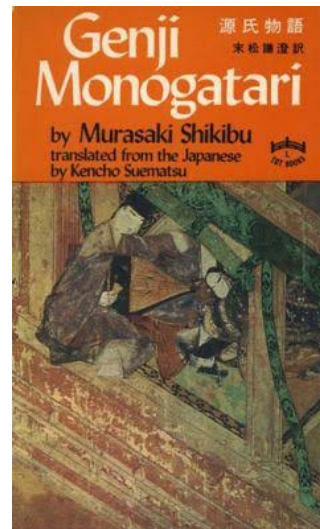
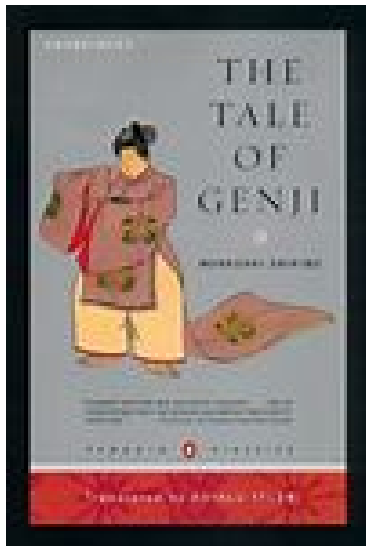




The highly significant epic from medieval Japan – *The Tale of Genji* -- written in the 11<sup>th</sup> century (HEIAN period) by the notable female author Murasaki Shikibu (ca. 973-1014) – has also been re-formatted into **MANGA**. Illustrated in various formats through the centuries:



*The Tale of Genji* (“The Shining Prince”) is a complex story with many characters.





The first illustrations of this saga appear in the 12<sup>th</sup> century --



12<sup>th</sup> century scroll -- reflects the **HEIAN** era court costumes and visual conventions.

Preserving these conventions and ambiance, the 1980s **MANGA** version of the:



**GENJI MONOGATARI**

by

**WAKI YAMAMOTO**

(b. 1948)





Represents an adept transformation of this medieval tale/epic into modern form in the 1980s/90s.

源氏物語  
The Tale of Genji





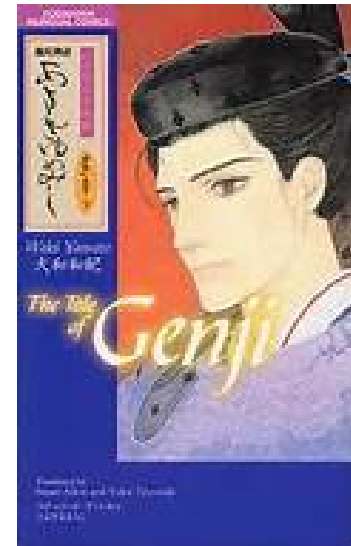
It replicates and updates the visual conventions of the first illustrations:



12<sup>th</sup> century scroll



1980s **MANGA** version



## ***Via:***

- “Bird’s eye view” of settings
- Use of stock iconography (identification of figures by costume and attributes)



An **UPDATED** version of this **MEDIEVAL** Japanese epic.





木木木木....

ot!  
was  
ning  
e  
s,

But I do  
remember  
hearing...

There's  
no need to  
show off at  
her age, is  
there?

...of an  
affair  
between Lady  
Naishi and  
Lord Genji  
once...

No one  
believed  
it,  
though...



# GLOBAL MEDIEVALISM FROM MODEL BOOKS to MANGA – Art comes from art...



So, what can we as **MEDIEVALISTS** -- glean from **MEDIEVALISM** ???

Stock sources? Good ideas? Nostalgia and re-translation cautions?  
*Why* is the medieval period of such enduring appeal for us and many others?







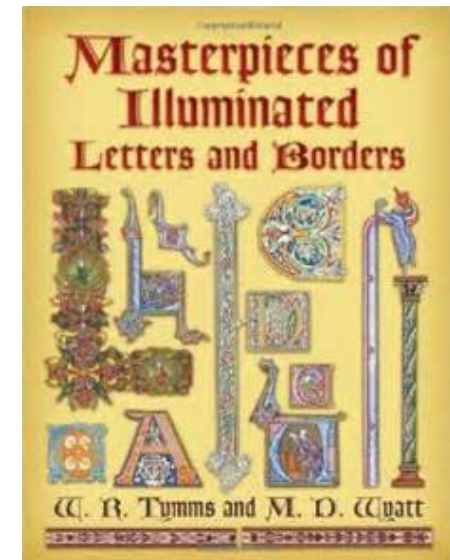
12<sup>th</sup> century



19<sup>th</sup> century



20<sup>th</sup> century



# “Several things You Must Know About Medieval Times” --



There is a FALCON.



All the knights have long hair.



It's so majestic.







**Brave warriors**

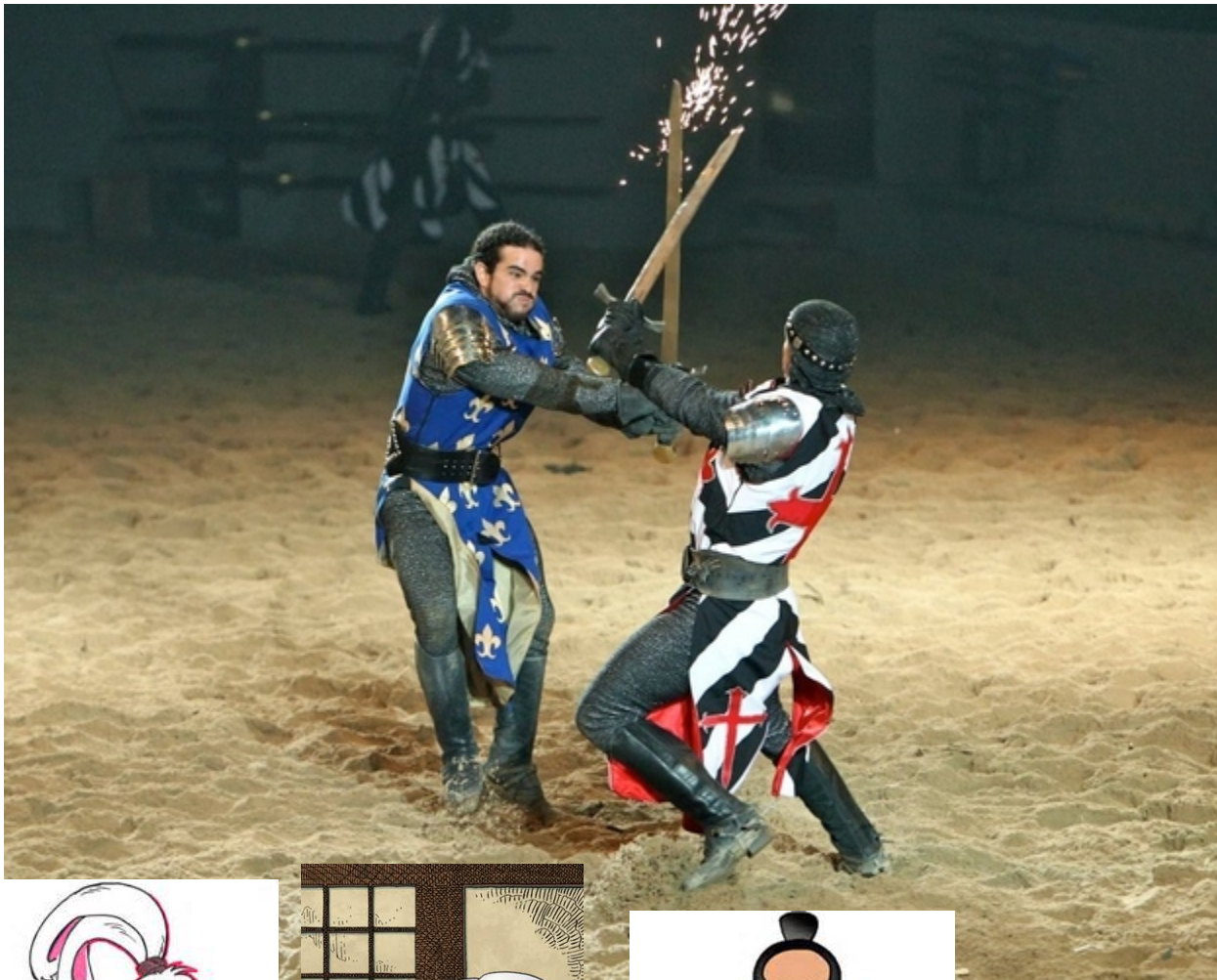
***[even if they are Rabbits]***

**rescue damsels  
in distress**

**and they fall in  
love..**

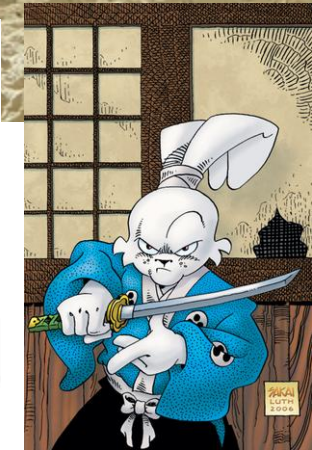






## Battles ensue

- bravery,
- strength
- will





**You can spend only \$20 on the souvenir photo that reminds you that you had “A Knight to Remember.”**



# Thank you !!!

Dr. Leslie Ross,  
Professor and Chair of Art History  
Dominican University of California

[Leslie.Ross@dominican.edu](mailto:Leslie.Ross@dominican.edu)

