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The Book Of Kells



Synopsis

A new book by the Keeper of Manuscripts at Trinity College Library that represents the glories of the Book of Kells for today's readers, revealing the astounding detail and richness of one of the greatest treasures of medieval Europe. One of the most remarkable manuscripts to survive from the early Middle Ages in Europe, the Book of Kells was probably painted around 800 in a monastery at Iona in Scotland or Kells in Ireland, or perhaps in both places. Extraordinarily inventive and intricate imagery accompanies the texts of the four Gospels: full-page depictions of Evangelists and their symbols, lavish honorific openings to the Gospels, extraordinary initials, and decoration that combines complex interlace, animals, and human figures. This newly photographed book explores the Book of Kells through its historical background; a display of the elements of the book at their actual size; the spectacular openings of the texts that precede the Gospels; a study of earlier and comparable manuscripts; detailed examination of symbols and themes, with special enlarged details; a look at the scribes and artists who worked on the manuscript; and a consideration of technical aspects, illuminated by recent scientific research. The rich illustrations feature more than fifty full-size reproductions of complete pages of the manuscript plus enlarged details that allow one to relish the intricacy of elements barely visible to the naked eye. Supplementary images place the manuscript in its setting and provide comparisons for its iconography and style. 250 illustrations, 230 in color

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Book of Kells has long been considered one of the greatest art pieces of human history, and

rightfully so. It was not properly studied until the mostly black and white Urs Graf reproduction of the early 1950s, and then seriously updated with the 1974 Thames and Hudson color work of 1974. In that volume Francoise Henry detailed the results of two decades of study that confirmed my research for a doctoral dissertation on the palaeography and calligraphy of the book and its antecedents. Now, in an even finer study of the book (that is best used with the excellent Trinity College CD reproducing all pages), we see the depth of material in the codex and its relationship to both Irish culture and the wider celtic cultural diaspora. Bernard Meehan, who has published an earlier, less scholarly volume on the Book of Kells, has given us an essential resource that permits a wide audience to explore and comprehend the glory of this work. No one interested in Irish art or fine manuscripts should be without this first class study.

Although I have not yet read the book cover to cover, it is exactly what I was expecting: a beautifully illustrated version of the Book of Kells. The external wooden case protects it and fits it well, while the pictures bring you the details of the Kells pages (that you're not allowed to take from the original book). This is also supposed to be the most thorough book out there about the Book of Kells, as the author spent over 30 years studying and decrypting the book. Congratulations to author and publisher for this one.

Very nice book, but not the reproduction I was looking for. Lots of high resolution full pages, and information that adds color to the pages, but I still am looking for a reproduction to page through without being interrupted by white pages of modern text.

It's like having the real book of Kells at your fingertips. This is a monumental and huge book, with beautiful printing and prose. For anyone who loves the book of Kells. Well worth every penny.

I have a book on Kells from about 1978 that was fabulous for its day, but this one by Meehan tops it by far. The reproductions are breath-taking and the text is scholarly to fault. The craftsmanship of fine printing, high quality paper, and excellent binding and book cover make this a museum piece. If you've fondness for this period of art, this book should be in your collection.

This book is totally freaking Awesome! Yes, it is rather expensive, but if you aren't stinking rich enough to afford the facsimile version this is a good alternative.

I was looking for an e-book that would provide commentary alongside the artwork in The Book of Kells. This is not it. The illustrations are inconveniently located in the back of the book and there are only a few of them. There must be a better option.

My only complaint is that it doesn't include the Chi-Ro page. Which is strange, since it's the most famous. The presentation and commentary are excellent. For a Book of Kells lover, this is a nearly perfect gift.

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