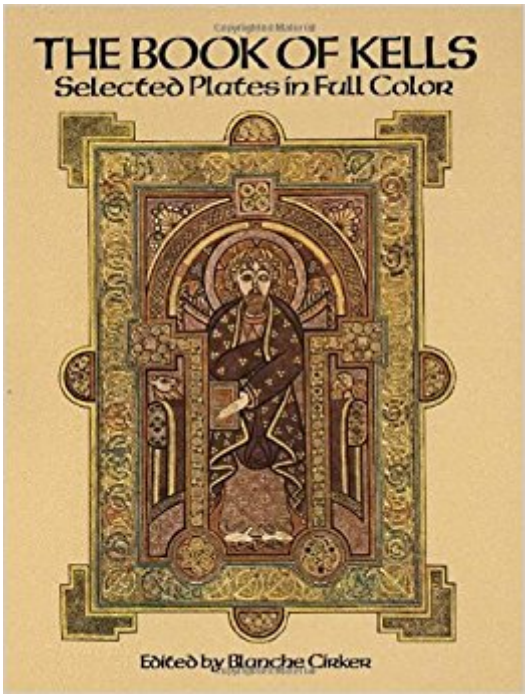
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The Book Of Kells: Selected Plates In Full Color



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Synopsis

"Here you may see the face of majesty, divinely drawn, here the mystic symbols of the Evangelists. . . . You will make out intricacies, so delicate and subtle, so exact and compact, so full of knots and links, with colours so fresh and vivid, that you might say that all this was the work of an angel, and not of a man." Ã¢â ¬â • Giraldus Cambrensis, Topographia Hiberniae, ca. 1185.Gerald of Wales wrote his ecstatic description of what is most probably the Book of Kells 800 years ago, some 300 years after the work appeared. It remains the best description; he felt and conveyed the Book's power, the mystery that made it even then unique among early medieval manuscripts.While clearly subject to international influence (Celtic, British, Norman; possibly Italian, Byzantine, and Coptic), the Book of Kells' painters and scribes illumined their work with a purely idiosyncratic beauty. The Book of Kells is more an icon than a typical evangelistary; indeed, the Saint Jerome text of the gospels is frequently corrupt or carelessly rendered, so intent were the artists on their ornament and iconography.One may still see the glorious ornament on display at Trinity College, Dublin; a more accessible version is this, newly reproduced from a rare facsimile edition. Thirty-two full-page, full-color plates have been selected and painstakingly printed to retain the ineffable handpainted impression of the original leaves. All the full-page decorations, portraits, and illustrations are included, as well as a representative sampling of the textual leaves, in their graceful Insular (half-uncial) calligraphy, interspersed and initialed with an imaginative, fanciful, and even humorous bestiary of lions, lambs, eagles, otters, cats, dragons, birds, fish, and snakes; strange men are seen in the cross-armed Osiris position, entwined in lion's tails, snakes, vines, and peacock feathers. The interlacing and spiraling follow the Insular tradition; in botanical ornament the Book stands apart from that school. The illustrations include vital specimens of Western art: the first image of the Virgin and Child in a Western manuscript, and numerous early representations of the Apocalyptic visionary symbols of the Evangelists; symbols that lost their eeriness in later, diluted form, but that in the Book of Kells, according to one scholar, "retain their wild, unearthly quality. They are perhaps the most striking element in the decoration of the Book."Perusers of this Book, casual and serious students of art, religion, or Western culture, will echo Giraldus, who wrote: "For my part, the oftener I see the book, and the more carefully I study it, the more I am lost in ever fresh amazement, and I see more and more wonders in the book."

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Customer Reviews

"Here you may see the face of majesty, divinely drawn, here the mystic symbols of the Evangelists. . . . You will make out intricacies, so delicate and subtle, so exact and compact, so full of knots and links, with colours so fresh and vivid, that you might say that all this was the work of an angel, and not of a man."Ã¢â ¬â •Giraldus Cambrensis, Topographia Hiberniae, ca. 1185.Gerald of Wales wrote his ecstatic description of what is most probably the Book of Kells 800 years ago, some 300 years after the work appeared. It remains the best description; he felt and conveyed the Book's power, the mystery that made it even then unique among early medieval manuscripts.While clearly subject to international influence (Celtic, British, Norman; possibly Italian, Byzantine, and Coptic), the Book of Kells' painters and scribes illumined their work with a purely idiosyncratic beauty. The Book of Kells is more an icon than a typical evangelistary; indeed, the Saint Jerome text of the gospels is frequently corrupt or carelessly rendered, so intent were the artists on their ornament and iconography.One may still see the glorious ornament on display at Trinity College, Dublin; a more accessible version is this, newly reproduced from a rare facsimile edition. Thirty-two full-page, full-color plates have been selected and painstakingly printed to retain the ineffable handpainted impression of the original leaves. All the full-page decorations, portraits, and illustrations are included, as well as a representative sampling of the textual leaves, in their graceful Insular (half-uncial) calligraphy, interspersed and initialed with an imaginative, fanciful, and even humorous bestiary of lions, lambs, eagles, otters, cats, dragons, birds, fish, and snakes; strange men are seen in the cross-armed Osiris position, entwined in lion's tails, snakes, vines, and peacock feathers. The interlacing and spiraling follow the Insular tradition; in botanical ornament the Book stands apart

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The Book of Kells was some what of a disappointment to me. The art work from this ancient book is beautiful,but I was expecting more commentary on the work. It also a very thin soft cover book which will in time be creased and damaged. I wanted more backstory since I tend to be a ancient art buff. But if all you are interested in is the art and only wanted to see the intricate designs its fine.

Large pages, to be sure, but the colors are dull and the pictures are not as sharp as I expected. Perhaps the actual colors are as aged and dull as they appear in this book. But I’ve often read of the amazing detail of the drawings in the Book of Kells, and in these pictures the fine details become blurs. Diagrams that were surely made with straight lines (e.g. the columns and frames of different pictures) in the original are bent in this book. I’d hoped to frame some of its pictures and display them in my house, but they don’t really look good enough for that.It’s OK if you buy it to avoid postage on another order, which is what I did.

This product arrived in a timely manor. It was in good condition and no pages were missing. My biggest complaint was the packaging it came it. The people in my home almost threw it away thinking the brown, flat wrapper was garbage. Maybe, adding a little bulk or color would make this less of a problem.

It is wonderful. I had just read about the monks who made the book of Kells and was really amazed.

The color is too washed out on these repros to be exciting. Interesting though.

32 full color plates from one of the world’s greatest books. Although it is Christian art, the Kells

reflects centuries of preChristian style & mystery in its bestiary of cats & dragons, its peacock feathers, poses & intertwining lines. There is something in this art that transcends time & religion. The price is a bargain.Bob Rixon

This book of color plates seems amazing, and almost is. However, the quality of the plates falls short of the mark. The colors are dull and faded, and the image resolution far lower than it should be. The Chi Rho page, probably the most beautiful page in the Book of Kells, shows almost none of the amazingly minute detail that it should. Other books--like the Thames & Hudson--show far more detail with more vivid colors than this. On the other hand, this book has larger pages than others, which is nice.

This book offers lots of visual examples of the topic. I was able to use it successfully in my classroom with my students.

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