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The Book Of Kells: An Illustrated Introduction To The Manuscript In Trinity College, Dublin (Second Edition)



Synopsis

"Beautiful & | by far the best modern short account of one of the great monuments of early Irish civilization & | required reading for anyone interested in the subject." •The Irish Times
The Book of Kells is a masterpiece of medieval art •a brilliantly decorated version of the four Gospels with full-page depictions of Christ, the Virgin and the Evangelists as well as a wealth of smaller decorative painting. The strange imagination displayed in the pages, the impeccable technique and the very fine state of preservation make The Book of Kells an object of endless fascination. This edition reproduces the most important of the fully decorated pages plus a series of enlargements showing the almost unbelievable minuteness of the detail; spiral and interlaced patterns, human and animal ornament •a combination of high seriousness and humor. The text is by Bernard Meehan, the Keeper of Manuscripts at Trinity College, Dublin. 110 color illustrations

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was glad I had this book along with me when I went to see the real Book of Kells at the Trinity College Library in Dublin. The lines of tourists waiting to view this famous eighth century manuscript were about a quarter of a mile long, and the museum proctors were really hustling us through the area where a small sampling of pages was actually on view. (If you take the tour, be sure to check out the main chamber of the Old Library with its first editions of Newton and Darwin, plus the harp that is (alas, falsely) attributed to Brian Boru, high king of Ireland). The first facsimile of the Book of Kells was published in 1974, and although this book only advertises itself as 'an illustrated

introduction to the manuscript...' it contains good color plates of many of the most famous pages, e.g. the symbols of the four evangelists and the beginning of the 'Breves causae' of Matthew, among others. Author, Bernard Meehan, the current Keeper of Manuscripts at Trinity College states that "the sacred text itself was copied in the Book of Kells with a remarkable degree of inaccuracy." It consists of the Latin text of the Gospels, illuminated in the very ornate Hiberno-Saxon style ('Hiberno' refers to the Irish, or Hibernians). Legend has it that the Book of Kells was produced by St. Colum Cille on the island of Iona off western Scotland. Although it was probably begun in the Irish monastery on Iona, it was taken to the monastery of Kells in County Meath, after a series of Viking raids. The monastery on Iona was pillaged in 795, and again in 802. According to the author, "In 806, sixty-eight of the community were killed in another raid. The following year, the survivors migrated to Ireland and began to erect conventual buildings at Kells..."

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