



The Book of Kells: An Illustrated Introduction to the Manuscript in Trinity College, Dublin (Second Edition)

By Bernard Meehan

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"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

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The Book of Kells: An Illustrated Introduction to the Manuscript in Trinity College, Dublin (Second Edition) By Bernard Meehan Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #50735 in Books
- Brand: imusti
- Published on: 1995-02-17
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.80" h x .40" w x 7.50" l, .83 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 96 pages

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

This is essentially a scholarly introduction to the Book of Kells, the ancient illuminated manuscript of the gospels housed at Trinity College in Dublin. The text is laced with 117 mostly color photographs of the book's beautifully illustrated pages. For religious and art collections.

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From [Booklist](#)

For the fiscally conservative library, this fine, small book is an ideal substitute for the recent \$18,000 facsimile of Ireland's renowned Book of Kells, the most famous of all illuminated medieval Gospels. This representation might not include all 680 illuminated pages, but it does offer 110 color illustrations, including dozens of enlargements, that permit the reader to ponder the excruciatingly complex ornamentation which makes the Book a masterpiece of Celtic interlacing. Meehan, keeper of manuscripts at Trinity College Dublin, which has housed the Book since the seventeenth century, provides erudite but direct commentary about the Book's background, its motifs and themes, and even the material from which it is constructed.

Patricia Monaghan

From the Back Cover

The Book of Kells is the most spectacular of a group of manuscripts created in Ireland and northern Britain between the seventh and tenth centuries, a period when Irish monasticism was in the vanguard of Christian culture. Its earliest history remains controversial but it was in the keeping of the monastery of Kells, Co. Meath, for most of the Middle Ages - hence its name - and has been in the library of Trinity College Dublin, since the mid-seventeenth century. It is a masterpiece of medieval art - a brilliantly decorated copy of the four Gospels with full-page illustrations of Christ, the Virgin and Child and the Evangelists, and a wealth of smaller decorative painting that does not always relate to the sacred text. The strange imagination displayed in the pages, the impeccable technique and the very fine state of its preservation make it an object of endless fascination. This edition includes the most important of the fully decorated pages plus a series of enlargements showing the almost unbelievable minuteness of the detail - spiral and interlace patterns, human and animal ornament - a combination of high seriousness and humor. Accompanying the illustrations is a new, up-to-date text by Bernard Meehan, the current Keeper of Manuscripts at Trinity College Dublin. It provides a scholarly analysis of these exuberant inventions, the artists, the text and the writing, and a full account of the historical background to the miraculous world of the Book of Kells.

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John Barstow:

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