



The Book of Kells and the Art of Illumination

By Brian Kennedy, Bernard Meehan, Margaret Manion

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The Book of Kells and the Art of Illumination brings together the Gospel of St. Mark from the 1200-year-old Irish masterpiece with a selection of medieval and Renaissance manuscripts which demonstrate the legacy of Kells throughout the centuries, both in terms of Gospel illustration and of the illuminated book.

Not only does the Book of Kells testify to the vitality of Celtic art in the Early Middle Ages, but its fortunes also reflect the turbulent nature of the period in which it was created. This was an age in which the British Isles were ravaged by Viking raids, and monastic settlements, the cultural heart of the country, uprooted. Yet, against these odds, the Book of Kells survived. In later times it suffered further disturbances, and in the middle of the 17th century, during Ireland's battles with Cromwell, it was transferred from the ruined parish of Kells to Trinity College, Dublin, where ever since it has had a secure and distinguished home.

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About the Author

Margaret Manion is professor emerita of the University of Melbourne.

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