

**BOOKS IN MANUSCRIPT:
A SHORT INTRODUCTION
TO THEIR STUDY AND USE**

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Books in manuscript: a short introduction to their study and use by Falconer Madan

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FALCONER MADAN

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BOOKS IN MANUSCRIPT

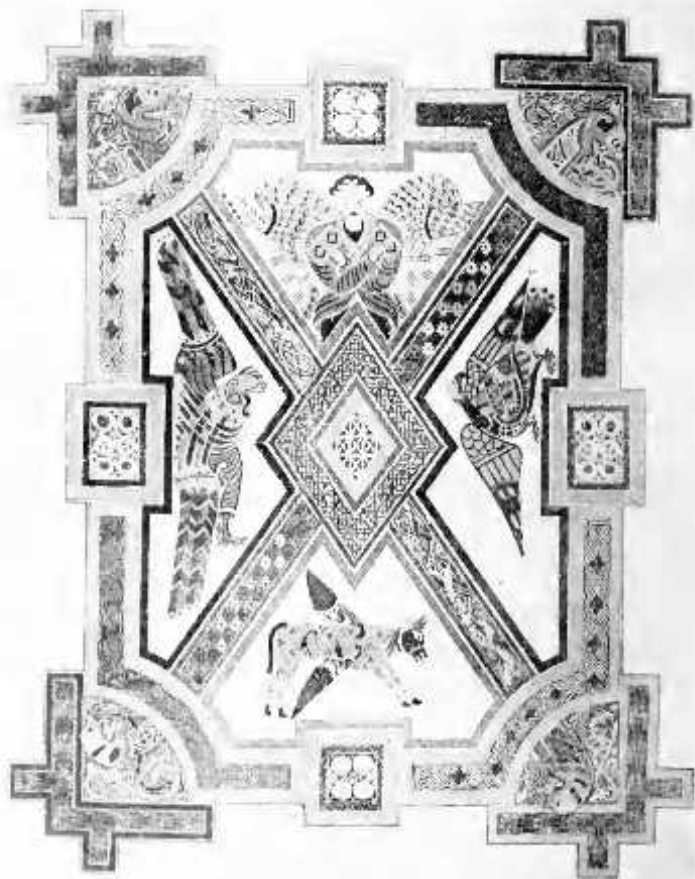


PLATE I: BOOK OF KELLS (Ivory, Irish).

Books in Manuscript

A Short Introduction
to their Study and Use.
With eight Illustrations.

By Falconer Madan, M.A.

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in the University of Oxford

Second Edition, revised.



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Second edition revised and corrected, 1920.

Preface

THE study of Manuscripts has a peculiar fascination for that fortunate minority of literary workers who have to do with them. There may be much to attract us in the external beauty of the writing or ornamentation. Their contents also, being often unpublished matter, may be fresh and stimulating objects of original research. But there is this special point about a manuscript, that any one is unlike every other, is unique, has a distinct individuality of its own. A written record, which is handing down the ages some literary treasure, does invest itself with a special colour and complexion, we may say, derived partly from the place and time and circumstances of its production, and partly from the personality of the man who wrote it. If we treat a manuscript as Henry Bradshaw treated a printed book, studying its peculiarities, making friends with it, and watching its features, as a portrait-painter his living subject, it will at length take us into its confidence, and will seem, as Ruskin said of the Alps, to "mutter and whisper to us

garrulously, in broken and dreaming fits, as it were, about its childhood."

The present elementary work is intended to be a plain account of the study and use of manuscripts, such as may interest both the amateur who possesses manuscript treasures, but lacks the time or opportunity to go deeply into the subject, and the student who may wish to have a first view of the character and methods of the study, before entering on the endless details of palæography and textual criticism. There is little room for original matter, or for references to substantiate the statements made; but the writer has attempted to be clear and readable, and to avoid exaggeration and prolixity. If the book leads collectors of manuscripts, or students either of the classics or of historical records, to take a keener and more intelligent interest in their work, its object will be attained.

F. MADAN.

Oxford, May, 1920.

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