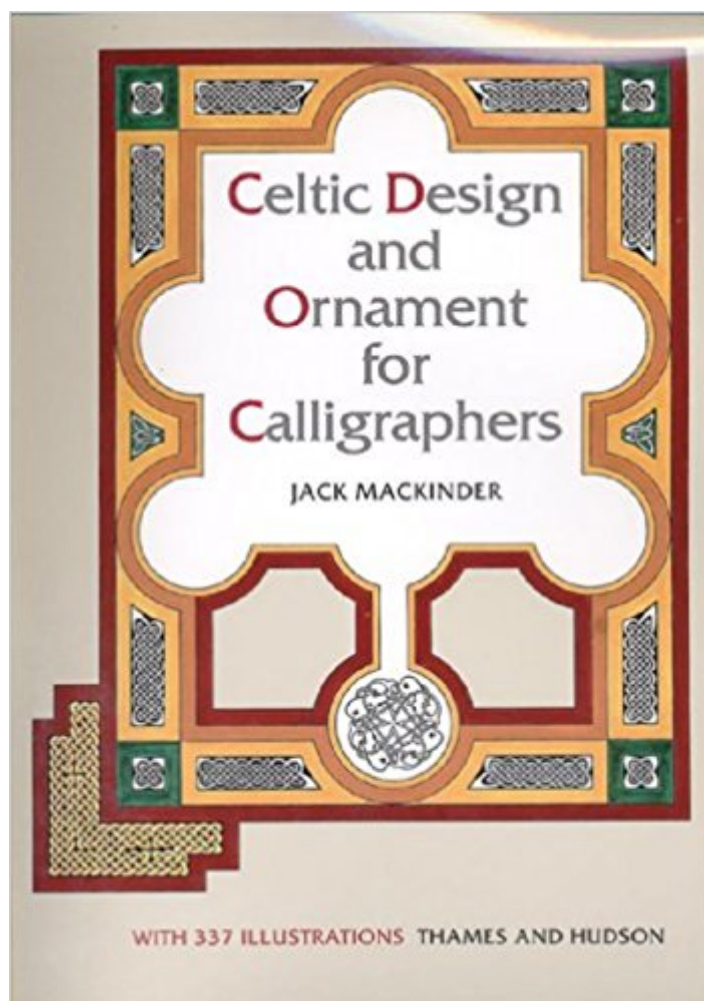


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Celtic Design And Ornament For Calligraphers



Synopsis

A study of Celtic design and ornament for calligraphers. It is divided into two parts. Firstly, it explains how the pages of the "Book of Kells", the "Book of Durrow" and the other great Gospel manuscripts of the 7th to 9th centuries were set out by the ancient scribes. The author has recreated the precise geometric methods they used, explaining how these strategies can be applied. Secondly, it shows how to draw step patterns, key patterns, interlaces and spirals to fit into the shapes created in the manuscripts. By following the step-by-step demonstrations and diagrams, readers should be able to make their own designs.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I was looking for something that focused a bit more on the ornament side when I purchased this book, but much of the book is focused on the design/layout of Celtic-style manuscript pages. There are some very clever tips in this book that really are more design/layout focused. I was actually very pleasantly surprised at what I learned from these sections. The sections on Celtic ornament were very clearly written and I found them much easier to follow than those in George Bain's book on Celtic designs. The first part of the book focuses on geometric constructions for several rectangles and then how to use those to duplicate the general layout of many of the carpet pages (including the Chi-Ro page) from the Book of Kells. The second part is focused on making the various patterns common to Celtic art and fitting those patterns into the layouts produced in the first. I thought that the sections on zoomorphic designs and key patterns should have explained how to do variations on

the included patterns. The explanations for the few included key patterns were very good and it made the lack of suggestions for variations a bit frustrating. The sections on interlace and spirals were clear and I was satisfied with the suggestions for possible variations. Overall I am glad that I was able to get my hands on this book and it definitely has added some nice skills for adding decoration to my calligraphy practice.

I like calligraphy and drawing Celtic knotwork and have been doing simple designs in knotwork for about a year. I'm not an artist, so I depend heavily on books to learn about the art subjects that interest me. This book differentiates between the design and the decoration, meaning that the design is how the decoration is arranged. It shows how to achieve some of the well-known layouts from the Book of Kells and other Celtic/Pictish works, and how to fit the decoration (knotwork, key patterns and spirals) into the design. This is not a tracing book, but a way to design layouts any shape or size for original works, and how to calculate the way to fit designs in perfectly. This book uses a mathematical approach, with drafting tools, with every step shown in a developing design. I have a pretty good collection of books on calligraphy and on Celtic knotwork and decoration, but this is one I wish that I'd known about sooner. In this book, the method for drawing the knotwork uses boxes instead of dots. The books by George Bain (*Celtic Art The Methods of Construction*) and Sheila Sturrock (*Celtic Knotwork Handbook*) use dots. Either method works well for me. The math used in the book is easy. This book also shows how to use an Ames lettering guide. For people who are interested in creating artwork with calligraphy and or Celtic decoration, this book is invaluable.

This book basically shows the basic border layouts to use for Celtic designs but doesn't really give any examples of knotwork, etc. used to fill in the borders. For example, the design on the front jacket of the book is not indicative of what's inside. The basic template of the jacket decoration (ie - the shape of the border) is shown, but not the detail work of the knotwork, etc. If you can use a ruler and circles template, you don't need this book.

This book deserves more attention than it has gotten. The reason for that, and key word, is: COMPOSITION. The entire first half of Mackinder's book gives a thorough and excellent presentation of issues of composition. There are plenty of books showing how to produce Celtic knots, key patterns, spirals, and calligraphy. But this book is practically alone in its extensive discussion Celtic carpet page composition.

Your reviewer from Chandler has missed it entirely. Anyone considering buying my book should be aware that it is all about creating your own designs in the style of the 8th century Insular manuscripts, not about copying someone else's examples. "basically shows the basic border layouts" What the book shows is the precise, geometrically defined rectangles that the 8th century Irish scribes used. "doesn't really give any examples of knotwork, etc." The 10 pages of knotwork describe a method for designing your own knotwork rather than merely copying someone else's examples. If the "etc." means step patterns, key patterns, and spirals then 20 pages are devoted to creating these designs to neatly fill in the frames. Notice that the frames are drawn first and then ornamented - it is not a case of ruling up a frame of arbitrary size and shape around an ornament. "If you can use a ruler and circles template you don't need this book." Quite right. If a ruler and circles template is all you can use then this book is no use to you. Only if you can use a T-square, set square, and a compass (a circles template won't do) will you get any benefit from the book. Jack Mackinder, author

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