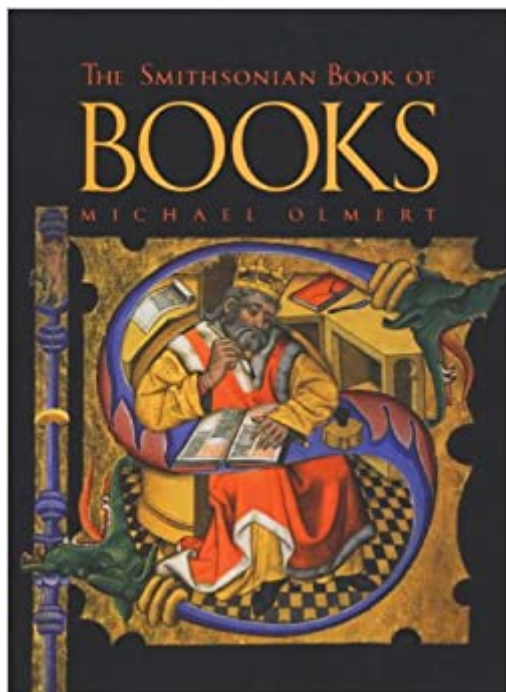


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The Smithsonian Book Of Books



Synopsis

Through more than 300 glorious illustrations from library collections around the globe, you'll discover a wealth of book lore in these pages and gain a new appreciation for the role of books in human society, from our earliest attempts at writing and recording information to the newest electronic books; from sumptuous illuminated and bejeweled medieval manuscripts to Gutenberg and the invention of movable type; from the diverse arts and crafts of bookmaking to the building of magnificent libraries for housing treasured volumes; from the ancient epic of Gilgamesh to the plays of Shakespeare and the tales of Beatrix Potter; and from the earliest illustrated books to revolutionary science texts.

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Customer Reviews

This copiously illustrated celebration of books and the printed word crams a wealth of information into 320 pages studded with 311 color plates. With infectious enthusiasm and an easy conversational flow, Olmert, who teaches Shakespeare at the University of Maryland, traces the history and influence of books from ancient Egyptian papyrus scrolls through Chinese movable type to the modern book fair. Sections cover a great diversity of topics: the origins of writing, medieval ledger books, the Gutenberg revolution, the Bible, Islamic books, Shakespeare's relationship to printing, Mother Goose and children's books, William Morris, the first great dictionaries and encyclopedias, the earthshaking tomes of Copernicus and Darwin, modern printing methods, the publishing industry. Illustrations feature Mayan codices, Indian miniatures, the earliest known

Beowulf manuscript, Durer, Raphael, Audubon, Thomas Hart Benton, Ben Shahn, Maurice Sendak. A feast for booklovers, this volume affirms the power of books to change the world and our lives. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

There is a common misconception about books which look good on coffee tables that they must be intellectually deficient and lacking in content. That premise certainly doesn't hold true for this enjoyable publication. Its scope is broad, for it includes information not only on the history of books but also on the evolution of the printing industry, libraries, medieval illumination and modern illustration, the book trade (including book fairs and bookstores), problems with bookworms (genus *Anobium*, not avid readers), and methods of conservation. The illustrations, most of which are in color, are taken from such sources as Pompeian walls, papyrus scrolls, medieval parchment and vellum manuscripts, woodcuts, frescoes, and panel paintings. If the author errs, it is in trying to present too much information and in sometimes failing to define terms adequately. Nonetheless, this is a fine addition to any library and should appeal especially to book collectors, librarians, and--because of its many illustrations--art historians and picture researchers.- Margarete Gross, Chicago P.L. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I am a self-confessed bibliophile, and anything pertaining to books fascinates me. This book of books by the Smithsonian is a delight for the senses. I say this because it is not a purely visual experience; I could almost smell the old books portrayed within the pages of this book, imagining myself leafing through time-worn pages, dreaming of exploring the contents of some of the ancient libraries of the world. But I digress... The Smithsonian Book of Books explores the world of books, taking readers on a fascinating journey through time, from the very beginnings to the present. The book is divided into the following: Prologue, Scrolls and Scribes (The greatest Story Ever Told: From the Old Testament to the New), People of the Book - takes a look at Muslim holy scripture and manuscripts; how despite long-term resistance to printing, Islamic books were eventually printed using movable type (from the 18th century on); the history of books in China, India, and other Asian countries (the Diamond Sutra is the world's oldest dated printed book), Illuminating the Dark Ages (From the Edge of Beyond: Medieval Glories of the British Isles; Debits and Credits: The Keeping of Accounts), The Gutenberg Revolution (Caxton and Aldus: Masters of the Press; A Brave New World: Printing in the Americas), "Yes, We Have Now Bananas" (Morison, Zapf, and Gill: Modern Masters of Typography), The Bookmaker's Craft (To Print or Not to Print? For Shakespeare, That Was the Question; By Its Cover: The Art of the Binder), "The Infinite Library, Timeless and Incorruptible"

(Heralds of Science: Books that Changed the World; The Best of the Past: A Medieval Revival in the Arts of the Book)A Picture's Worth (Mother Goose and Company: Books for the Young - and the Young at Heart)Every Word for Everyman (The Book Business: "Ah, You Publishing Scoundrel!

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