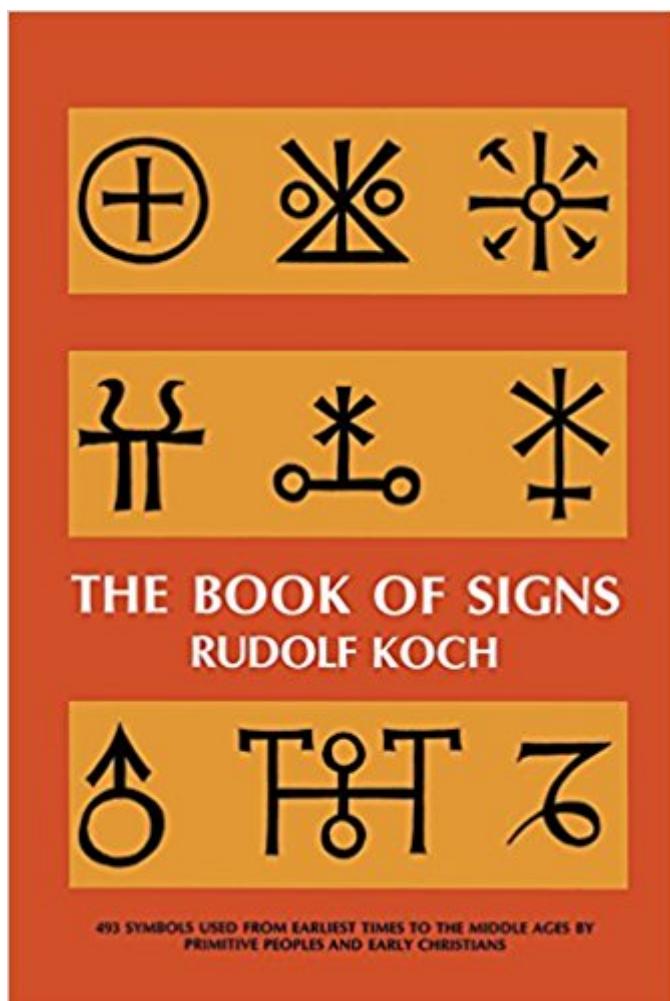


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The Book Of Signs (Dover Pictorial Archive)



Synopsis

This unusual collection of primitive and medieval symbols provides one of the most fertile single sources of decorative ideas available today. It is also a graphic history of the development of written communication and offers a singular insight into the psychology of the primitive mind. The Book of Signs contains 493 classified and documented illustrations, collected, drawn, and explained by the celebrated typographer Rudolf Koch. Divided into 14 different categories, it includes General Signs, The Cross, Monogram of Christ, Other Christian Signs, Monograms of Medieval Church and State Leaders, Stone Masons' Signs, The Four Elements, Astronomical Signs, Astrological Signs, Botanical Signs, Chemical Signs, House and Holding Marks, Miscellany, and Runes. "Provides the contemporary artist with a rich design vocabulary on which to improvise." —Art in Focus. "An inspiration to graphic artists everywhere." —Graphis. "An artistic and typographical achievement of considerable beauty and worth." —Psychiatric Quarterly.

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Customer Reviews

This unusual collection of primitive and medieval symbols provides one of the most fertile single sources of decorative ideas available today. It is also a graphic history of the development of written communication and offers a singular insight into the psychology of the primitive mind. The Book of Signs contains 493 classified and documented illustrations, collected, drawn, and explained by the celebrated typographer Rudolf Koch. Divided into 14 different categories, it includes General

Signs, The Cross, Monogram of Christ, Other Christian Signs, Monograms of Medieval Church and State Leaders, Stone Masons' Signs, The Four Elements, Astronomical Signs, Astrological Signs, Botanical Signs, Chemical Signs, House and Holding Marks, Miscellany, and Runes."Provides the contemporary artist with a rich design vocabulary on which to improvise."—Art in Focus."An inspiration to graphic artists everywhere."—Graphis."An artistic and typographical achievement of considerable beauty and worth."—Psychiatric Quarterly.Unabridged republication of the English translation originally published by the First Edition Club of London, 1930.

There are plenty of symbols included, they are organized according to shape and complexity, and there are meanings attached. But the meanings are the author's alone, have little relevance to other sources and there are no sources cited - these are the author's own ideas and don't have much relevance outside. The cons didn't matter much to me since I wanted it for design ideas, but anyone interested in the traditional meaning of symbols should look elsewhere.

"The Book of Signs" is an illustration-rich collection of Byzantine, medieval and related European symbols. The Dover Publications edition is a clean softcover edition of the work which is printed in the author Rudolf Koch's "magere deutsche" typeface (a Gothic / old-style German typeface similar to those used in Germany in the 19th century and earlier). Useful to the medievalist, the occultist as well as the fantasy roleplayer, the collection includes nearly 500 different symbols collected in 14 chapters. Symbols include Christian, astrological, botanical, and chemical ones from the Byzantine and European traditions; personal and family signs such as early monograms, stonemason's signs and armorial signs; and the Norse runes. The signs themselves are woodcuts, which combined with the older style Germanic typeface give the book a distinctive look. Chapters include a short introduction and most signs include a short description. The book's strength lies in its wide range of medieval symbols and its evocative visual look (woodcut symbols and German typeface). As a research tool it has limited utility, but for its graphic appearance it is a good choice for the layman. On a side note for AD&D gamers and World of Greyhawk enthusiasts, this work was used as inspiration by Gary Gygax for many of the symbols presented in the World of Greyhawk folio and 1983 boxed set.

books of this type are not very comprehensive.

This book is very small, which is not necessarily an indication of quality. However, this book is NOT an example of a carefully outlined and researched reference. Its scope is narrow, and many symbols are not labeled. There are other books out there that offer much more information at a better value.

Good for references on just the symbol itself but lacks depth and additional information. The alphabetical text was in medieval calligraphy that was sort of difficult to read. The book itself is small and the front cover is a representation of what you'll be seeing in the book.

I first found this book at my local library and fell in love with all the interesting and little known symbols. The author does put a Christian bent on a lot of the symbols that I could honestly due without. Even on some symbols with a clearly Pagan origin. For example The Triquerta, (a symbol of The Triple Goddess) he claims is for "banishing evil spirits". The book was written (clearly) a VERY long time ago by an obviously very religious man, but the symbols themselves are so interesting that it is necessary to not get stuck on one mans interpretation. Once you can get past that, the collection of symbolism is enjoyable.

Didn't realize these signs and symbols included religious and heraldic images. Extremely useful for those of us who focus so much on history.

Pretty Basic but I like it's simplicity. Clear concise and to the point. Definitely a great starting point for any historic symbol enthusiast. Great portable size and light to carry for quick reference. Highly recommended.

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