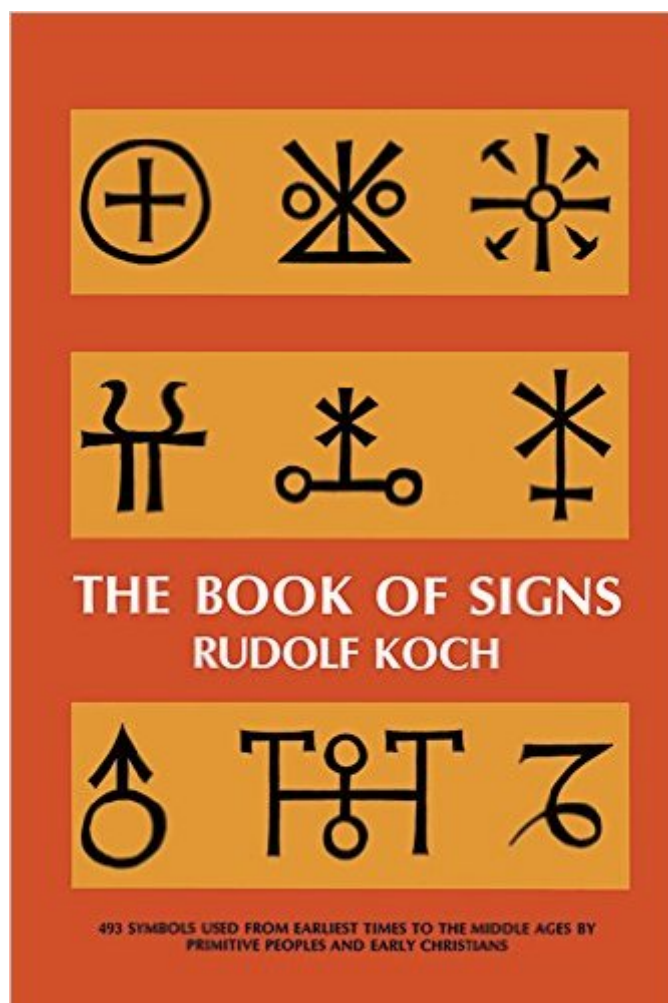


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The Book Of Signs (Dover Pictorial Archive)



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."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is, as its title suggests, an expansive collection of pictorial signs primarily from European sources. The signs are beautifully reproduced, but if you are looking for comprehensive genealogies of the signifiers, you should probably look elsewhere. This book has 493 well-reproduced signs, but their histories are minimally documented without any source/ primary documentation of their origins. The signs are described in short, declarative sentences which readers curious about the meaning of the signs might find discomfiting. The research here is not without merit or credibility, but the book

is for readers interested in signs for their visual grandeur rather than their significance. An interesting and affordable introduction to signs.

This is a well illustrated book on symbols. I would not call it an essential book for research purposes but it is a nice addition to the library. Some of the symbology is redundant (the furca is illustrated at least 3 times within the book) and I don't find all the explanations agreeable with other resources.

Koch was a type setter with qualifications in Theology. Primarily the work's value is aesthetic, I find it worth owning as a cheap collectable addition to my shelf. Brief histories of each sign have a slight Christian slant, although not overbearing. Illustrations are made from beautiful wood cuts and the type is of his own design. Besides peeking the interests of occultists and broad minded Christians it is considered of value by graphic artists.

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.

Rudolph Koch, graphic designer, typesetter and bookbinder put together these some 400+ signs along with a good historical capsule along each symbol. I found it to be useful when looking up a symbol and to understand some aspect of the sign, although not entirely in full, but a brief understanding of its roots. While not every sign of occultism is assimilated in this book, there is still plenty for one to be satisfied with. Most of the signs are from Early Christian traditions and those that have stemmed from that religion. Originally these designs were woodcuts by Frik Kredel, Offenbach and Main. The font used to print in the book was created by Koch himself known as magere deutsche type. Originally published in 1930, this Dover edition is worth every penny, for the artist and the occultist.

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.

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.

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.

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