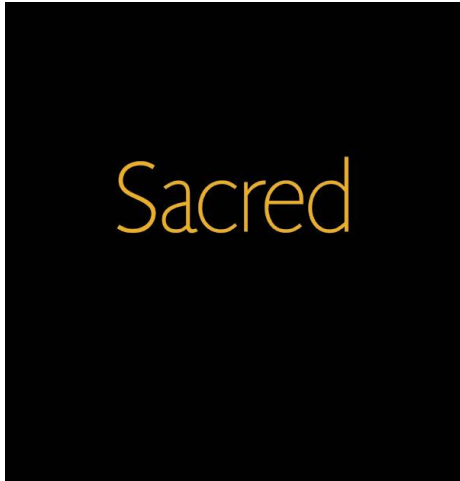


Sacred: Books of the Three Faiths: Judaism, Christianity, Islam / Edited by John Reeve.—London, England: British Library, dist. by The University of Chicago Press, March 2008.—208 p.: ill.: ISBN 978-0-7123-4955-0 (pa., alk. paper): \$25.00.



Illustrated on nearly every page, this catalog contains significant examples of Jewish, Christian, and Islamic manuscripts, early books, and other objects that were on display at the British Library for much of 2007. The book as a whole aims to educate the reader on the fundamentals of the three religions' holy texts. The result is a wholly accessible volume for the lay reader.

Each item has an accompanying illustration and a substantial catalog entry authored by British Library staff members. The catalog is preceded by three essays by notable religious scholars: Karen Armstrong, on the three faiths and their respective relationships to their holy books; Everett Fox, on the major Jewish texts; and F. E. Peters on the Qur'an and its characteristics. Catalog entries follow, organized by theme and religion, with short essays on the following: general similarities and differences (Judaism, Christianity, Islam); illumination and religious texts; and religious life as represented by ritual, festival, and protective objects, including pilgrimages to holy sites. The majority of examples in the catalog are from the British Library's

rich collection, along with a handful of other institutional and private donors. Short glossaries, a list of further reading, a map, an index of manuscripts, and a general index, conclude the volume.

The catalog highlights some of the most significant and unique religious textual examples known. As for its appeal to librarians, the catalog is replete with notable manuscripts, like the Codices Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus, Chester Beatty Papyri, Lindisfarne Gospels, Lisbon Bible, and numerous psalters, Qu'rans, and Jewish haggadahs. It would be a worthy addition to any historically comprehensive art or university library collection, as well as those with significant collections of manuscripts and early printed books, illuminated or not. The soft cover book is solidly bound on heavy, glossy paper. The illustrations are in full color and high resolution, so as to best display the intricate details of the examples. All in all, *Sacred* serves as a reference to some of the most notable early manuscripts and printed books in existence. Certainly this is not the only example of a text seeking to find common ground among the three Abrahamic religions in recent years, but it is a worthy souvenir of the Library's most well-attended exhibition ever and a comprehensive record of what is known about the three religions' holy books through examples.

Rebecca K. Friedman, Assistant Librarian, Marquand Library of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University, rfriedma@princeton.edu

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