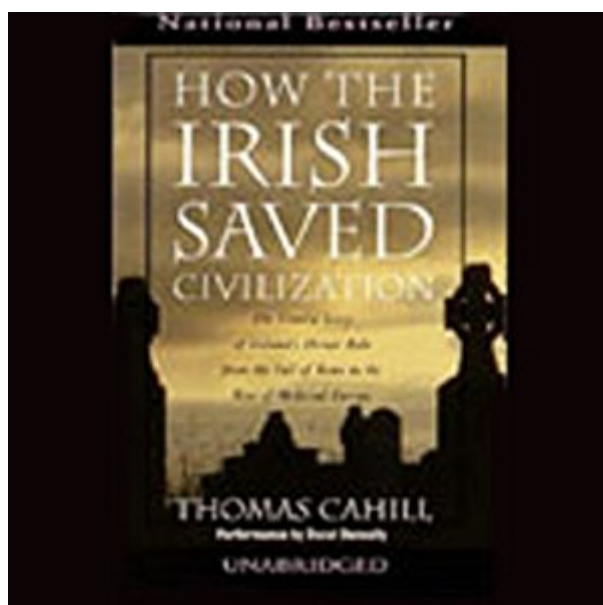


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How The Irish Saved Civilization



Synopsis

From the fall of Rome to the rise of Charlemagne-the "dark ages"-learning, scholarship, and culture disappeared from the European continent. The great heritage of Western civilization-from the Greek and Roman classics to Jewish and Christian works-would have been utterly lost were it not for the holy men and women of the unconquered Ireland. In this delightful and illuminating look into a crucial but little-known "hinge" of history, Thomas Cahill takes us to the "island of saints and scholars," the Ireland of St. Patrick and the Book of Kells. Here, far from the barbarian despoliation of the continent, monks and scribes laboriously, lovingly, even playfully preserved the West's written treasury. With the return of stability in Europe, these Irish scholars were instrumental in spreading learning. Thus the Irish not only were conservators of civilization, but became shapers of the medieval mind, putting their unique stamp on Western culture. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Thomas Cahill's history of Ireland during the middle ages is so well and cleverly written that you will never know you are reading nonfiction. The theme running through is as engrossing as "Vikings" on the History Channel. It is grounded in solid facts, many of which are not well known, making it a fascinating read. The author is a scholar, whose prose is not only lyrical and learned, but paints word pictures of western civilization after the fall of the Roman Empire. You will have a whole new regard for the contributions of the "Emerald Isle."

Thomas Cahill deserves more respect and recognition. In addition to his ability to write engagingly and clearly, his views on Western Civilization's key turning points are, in my view, spot-on. Reading all of this series is like getting a Masters in Liberal Arts (without having to read everything from Homer through Dante).

Fascinating story, which gave me insight into a dark period of Christian history. Puzzled by the seemingly gratuitous descriptions of sexual misconduct. Maybe a book needs such stuff in order to sell better? Overall a very illuminating work, however. I would recommend for mature readers.

A well written account of a lost identity of the Irish heritage. Going as far back as the origins of the Irish people, to their contributions to Catholicism as we know it today, to how Saint Patrick came to be the man an figure he was. Also the contribution the Irish had in preserving the literary works of the classical era. An excellent read for those who enjoy learning about the history and origins of individualized heritage. The first book in a series of such types of historical accounts and I plan to continue on with said series. Thumbs up to the author for an easy to read and enjoyable writing style.

An amazing, beautifully written history of Ireland...no tears in the Guinness - just the facts m'am, just the facts! A great read. I have set my friends presents of Ho the Irish Saved Civilization and they all LOVE IT.

"How the Irish saved civilization" ? ,.....beats me !They should have stayed in their pubs and drink their ale, instead of fighting those Vikings.'Just kidding !A very good book with clear descriptions of their country.Super !

How the Irish Saved Civilization Thomas Cahill published this slender essay in 1995. It stayed on the New York Times best seller list for two years, which gives us a reason to read it. Other reasons abound. Cahill has an accomplished background in the ancient languages of Latin and Greek. He spent two years studying Hebrew and theology at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. He also reads English, Italian and French, more modern languages. Cahill must be considered a complete and focused scholar. He has taught at several famous colleges and universities. His style is fluid and erudite without being pretentious and never becomes boring. This volume begins a so far six volume series he calls 'The hinges of History Series', all works on key elements of Western

Civilization. In *How the Irish Saved Civilization* he outlines the Western World as it existed around the year 400, its political structure, its religious basis in its magnificent achievements literature and philosophy. Then he shows us how this world disappeared under the waves of the Barbarian invasions. Literacy declined, books vanished into the fires of illiterate warriors and cities emptied. The Dark Ages overcame classical civilization. But in Ireland there was no fall. It had never been built up in the first place. The Irish squabbled happily among themselves, content with their bards and poets. Saint Patrick changed all that with his missionary conversion of the Irish. They took to Christianity at once, and once introduced to the idea, became not just literate but scholarly. Isolated monks gathered here and there to pray and study. And to copy. They had a fierce delight in the written word. Most importantly, they copied everything they could get their hands on from saintly lives to the works of Livy. A generation later, the monkish monasteries began to send out missionaries of their own. They colonized first Scotland then Northern England, planting monasteries in their mode, complete with scriptoriums. In another generation, Irish monks spread across Europe founding astonishing numbers of monasteries. Irish monk-scholars popped up everywhere, in France, in Germany, in the Alps and all the way to Italy. Some of the most famous and important monasteries in Europe were founded by Irish holy men. And in every one of these dozens, scores of holy retreats, young monks copied madly everything that they could get their hands on. Without the holy dedication and patience of these men much of the ancient lore of the classic age would be forever lost, as much as in spite of their efforts. This book, for all of its scholarly intent, is a fast read. And a fascinating one.

As an Australian with Irish heritage I found this to be a culturally and historically fascinating journey into my own culture... It is such a well written and easily digestible read that I bought a copy for my Mum and sister too!

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