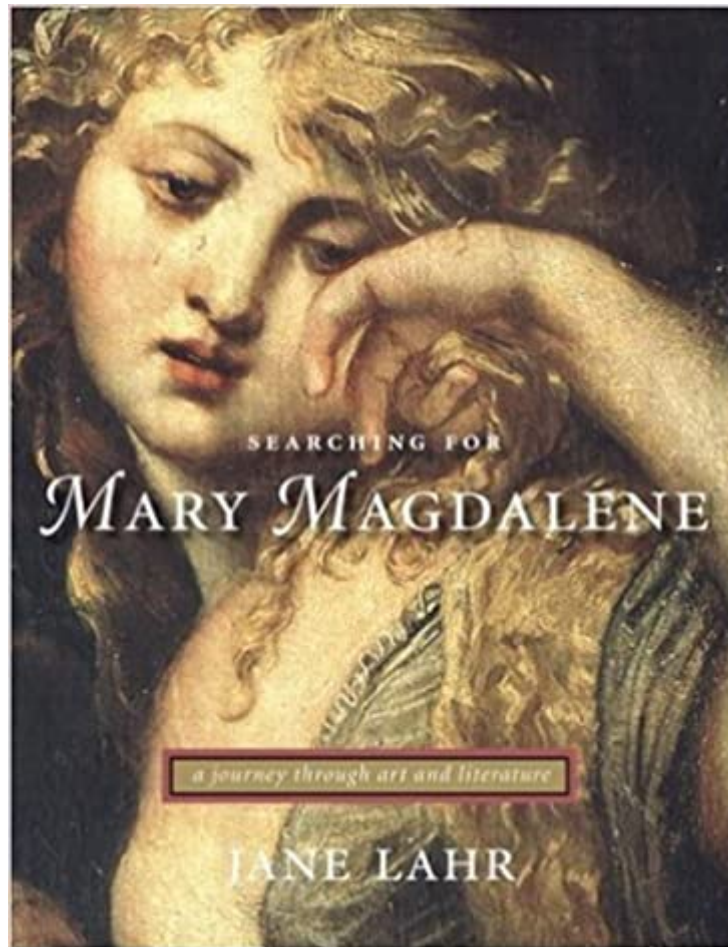




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# Searching For Mary Magdalene: A Journey Through Art And Literature



## Synopsis

Chasing down an enigma--the controversial Mary Magdalene--has recently become a national enthrallment due to books like Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code*. With the variety and quantity of magnificent paintings and sculptures in her likeness, it is apparent that the Magdalene has long been guiding the brushstrokes of our greatest artists, all of whom have rendered her unlike any other woman in the bible. Unlike Mary the mother--who is often expressed as an archetype, an ideal--the Magdalene is virtually always drawn as an individual, a woman of flesh and blood with feelings and emotions. Even in the earliest depictions she is seen at the foot of the cross, in deep crisis at the loss of her Beloved. It is as if these painters carried her in their hearts and rendered her honestly and compassionately. Even when the clerics devalued her, the artists continued to champion her. Editor Jane Lahr takes us on a visual and literary journey through the history and the lore, the facts and the myth, that surround Mary Magdalene. Beginning with the biblical cannon, continuing through Gnostic texts and ending with myths and literary works surrounding the Magdalene, Lahr presents a complete picture of her life, allowing the reader to decide for themselves who the true Magdalene was. Illustrated with images from the worlds greatest artists like Michelangelo, Rubens, Chagall, and Georges De La Tour, this lavish anthology is the most comprehensive and stunning look at the Magdalene ever published. Lahr begins each of the five chapters with an insightful and lucid introductive that provides the reader with guidance and context for the stories, texts, and images that follow. *The Indisputable Mary Magdalene*: With texts from the biblical canon including Mark, and Luke, discover each specific and indisputable reference to Mary Magdalene, with artworks from Fra Angelico to Jan van Eyck. *Mary & the Traditional Associations*: A woman, a sinner, and dryer of tears, these associations are found from John and Matthew to Luke and Mark. The paintings of Henry Ossawa Tanner, D. Bouts, Duccio, and Pieter Paul Rubens highlight the text. *Mary of the Apocrypha*: The ancient texts of the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Mary Magdalene, and the Dialogue of the Savior alongside the works of Georges De La Tour, Marc Chagall, and Massaccio. *Mary Magdalene in Myth & Legend*: Revel in literary wonders that celebrate the Magdalene from Christina Georgina Rossetti, Ranier Maria Rilke, and John Donne. *Mary & The Mystery of the Holy Grail*: Explore the Magdalene's possible connection to the mysterious Holy Grail through a variety of modern and ancient texts paired with the masterpieces of Michelangelo and Leonardo.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

JANE LAHR is the editor of *Celtic Quest in Art and Literature* (Welcome) and the coeditor of the bestselling anthology *Love: A Celebration in Art and Literature* (Stewart, Tabori & Chang). Working from St. Louis and New York, Lahr has a dozen titles to her credit.

Lahr's book is a real treat. Not only are there dozens of full page reproductions of some of the most famous art works containing images of Mary Magdalene, the text itself is well written and, for the most part, historically correct. Then there are the occasional gems - an 11th century mosaic portraying Mary and the angel more like aliens. Moreover, Lahr offers large selections of text from just about every major document dealing with Mary Magdalene, from the 1st century through the 20th century. One criticism of this extremely valuable book is that a lot of the artistic analysis seems to be based on Lahr's own impressions, rather than giving us the painter's perspective. While Lahr's opinion is obviously of interest, I'd also like to know what the artists' intentions were. Another shortcoming is that there are many paintings of Magdalene that are not covered (I'm thinking, for example, of Rosetti's 1877 stunning portrait of the curly haired woman, or Da Vinci's sketches, or his very sexual Mary with breasts exposed). Instead, she has many paintings that do not include Mary, but focus instead on Jesus or the disciples. While this makes for a well rounded book, the title suggests that we'll focus on Mary. Another problem is that Lahr sometimes gives us a painting with no explanation, and often it's difficult to understand what's going on and to distinguish Mary Magdalene from the other characters. This problem happens, for example, in Ruben's "Resurrection of Lazarus." None of these minor criticisms should stop any serious student of Mary Magdalene from

buying this book. It is a one-of-a-kind and very well done.

My granddaughter's name is Magdalene and I love anything that tells the TRUE story of Mary Magdalene, but this book has a fantastic legacy as it follows this Saint through everything the Catholic Church put her through before her true story became common knowledge. Also, I don't think I could live without this AMAZING art work! Absolutely beautiful! Perfect for any history buff!

Not a great book if you are looking to \*learn more about Mary Magdalene. But I love the set up of this book, it feels like a meditative aide. You just can't take everything in it as fact. Shipping and product just as promised!

Weaving Biblical and Gnostic texts, myths and legends, surrounding the Magdalene, together with the finest artistic interpretations of them, Lahr searches through world art and literature to the present for this enigmatic woman and the Feminine Principle she embodies. Indeed, her comprehensive journey extends to such diverse manifestations as the Black Madonna, Mary as Wife and the Grail itself, and reincarnate testimonial. A fan since LOVE BOOK days, I find this Lahr's best work to date, due in large measure to the scholarly yet easily readable and fascinating commentary with which she clarifies the text and art where needed and enriching.

Beautiful book, as well as poetry and commentary on Mary Magdalene.

Beautiful book, prompt delivery, easy order. Thank you.

The book is absolutely superb, printing, presentation, etc. Nevertheless, it is strange to find two different titles: one on the cover and the other on the first page inside the book. Consequently, it is not clear whether the author is searching to discover the real Mary Magdalene herself or the picture given to us by the artists and writers. In any case the illustrations presented in the book are either incomplete or unnecessary. For instance, What are doing in the book Constantine, Pontius Pilate, Lazarus and even so many pictures of Jesus himself? On the other hand, I missed Domenichino. Tizian, etc.. Despite of this, the author deserves real congratulations. Dr. James O. Pellicer

The book studies how Mary Magdalene has been presented in art and literature throughout history. This is a larger book that is printed on glossy, thick paper. There are many reproductions of

paintings in the book, each labeled with the name of the painting, the artist, and the year it was done. On the high quality paper, the painting reproductions are beautiful and if one looks at the book just for that, it is well worth it. The chapters are separated into the different ways Mary Magdalene has been viewed throughout the ages, from Chapter One "The Indisputable Mary Magdalene" with its New Testament references and quotes to Chapter Four of "Mary in Myth and Legend" with excerpts from stories, poems, and songs by people like Kahlil Gibran to Tim Rice. Each chapter contains reproductions of the paintings or other art work, quotes or excerpts that tie in with the chapter topic, and occasionally some analysis on the writing or the artwork by the author. Ms. Lahr seems very knowledgeable of art and how to analyze it, as well as being knowledgeable on Mary Magdalene, so what she writes is quite interesting to read and certainly adds to the information provided. But Ms. Lahr does not provide much analysis in the book, leaving the reader to draw their own conclusions and feel their own feelings as they read the words from literature and look at the paintings about Mary Magdalene. The author does present all the information needed to understand the chapter yet leaves the reader with lots of room to stretch their own mind. Highly recommended.

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