

The Wayback Machine - <https://web.archive.org/web/20150531043916/http://www.bl.uk:80/manuscripts/FullDisplay.as...>



Cotton MS Nero D IV

Date c 700-3rd quarter 10th century

Title Gospel-book ('Lindisfarne Gospels')

Content (1) prefaces (ff. 3r-9r); (2) canon tables (ff. 10r-17v); (3) Gospel of Matthew (ff. 18v-89v); (4) Gospel of Mark (ff. 89v-130r); (5) Gospel of Luke (ff. 130r-203r); (6) Gospel of John (ff. 203v-259r); (7) a colophon (f. 259r). According to the colophon on f. 259r, this manuscript was written by Eadfrith, bishop of Lindisfarne from 698 until his death in or around 721. There has been considerable debate whether Eadfrith made the Lindisfarne Gospels before or after he became bishop: for recent interpretations, see Gameson, *From Holy Island to Durham*, and Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, pp. 13-83. The Old English gloss was added by Aldred, provost of Chester-le-Street (fl. c. 970), who was responsible for adding the colophon on f. 259r. This states (Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, pp. 102-04): "Eadfrith, bishop of the Lindisfarne church, originally wrote this book, for God and for St Cuthbert and - jointly - for all the saints whose relics are in the island. And Ethilwald [Æthelwald, Oethilwald], bishop of the Lindisfarne islanders [acceded by 731, died in 737 or 740], impressed it in the outside and covered it - as he well knew how to do. And Billfrith the anchorite [fl. 750 x 800] forged the ornaments which are on it on the outside and adorned it with gold and with gems and also with gilded-over silver -- pure metal. And I Aldred, unworthy and most miserable priest, glossed it in English between the lines with the help of God and St Cuthbert." The decoration comprises: (i) prefatory carpet page (f. 2v) and Jerome incipit page (f. 3r); (ii) canon tables (ff. 10r-17v); (iii) the Gospel carpet pages (Matthew, f. 26v; Mark, f. 94v; Luke, f. 138v; John, f. 210v); (iv) the Gospel incipit pages (Matthew, f. 27r; Mark, f. 95r; Luke, f. 139r; John, f. 211r) and the Chi-rho page (f. 29r); (v) the evangelist miniatures (Matthew, f. 25v; Mark, f. 93v; Luke, f. 137v; John, f. 209v); (vi) decorated initials (e.g. ff. 5v, 8r, 18v, 19r, 90r, 91r). For the decoration of the manuscript, see for example Gameson, *From Holy Island to Durham*, and Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels*, pp. 272-394.

View: bindings



Cotton MS Nero D IV, ff 2r-9v
Prefaces (ff. 3r-9r)



Cotton MS Nero D IV, ff 10r-17v
Canon tables



Cotton MS Nero D IV, ff 18r-89v
Gospel of Matthew (ff. 18v-89v)



Cotton MS Nero D IV, ff 89v-130r
Gospel of Mark



Cotton MS Nero D IV, ff 130r-203r
Gospel of Luke

Copyright © The British Library Board



Cotton MS Nero D IV, ff 203v-259r

Gospel of John



Cotton MS Nero D IV, f 259r

Colophon



Cotton MS Nero D IV, f 259r-v

Colophon (f. 259r)

Copyright © The British Library Board

LanguagesLatin
English, Old**Physical Description**

Condition: intact
Materials: parchment
Dimensions: approximately 365 × 275 mm
Foliation: ff. 259 (+ 5 unfoliated parchment endleaves: 2 modern endleaves at the beginning (ff. [i-ii]), 1 early modern endleaf (f. [iii]), and 2 modern endleaves at the end; f. 1 is an early modern endleaf)
Binding: Messrs Smith, Nicholson and Co. of Lincoln's Inn, London, 1853

Ownership

Origin: England (Lindisfarne Priory). Provenance: Eadfrith (d. 721?), bishop of Lindisfarne: identified by the 10th-century glossator Aldred as the manuscript's original scribe (see below for colophon on f. 259r). Aldred (fl. c. 970), provost of Chester-le-Street and glossator: added interlinear Old English glosses throughout the book; colophon: 'Eadfrīð biscop lindisfearnensis aecclesiae he ðis boc aurat aet fruma gode & sancte cuðberhte & allum ðaem halgum [gimaenelice]. ða. ðe in eolonde sint. & Eðiluald lindisfearnolondinga [bisc'] hit uta giðryde & gibelde sua he uel cuðae. & billfirið se oncrae he gismioðade ða gihrino ða ðe utan on sint & hit gihrinade mið golde & mið gimum aec mið sulfre of' gylded faconleas feh; & Aldred presbyter indignus & misserrimus. mið godes fultumae & sancti cuðberhtes hit of' glosesade on englisc. & hine gihamadi mið ðaem ðriim daelu'. Matheus dael gode & sancte cuðberhti. Marci dael ðaem bisc'. & lucas dael ðaem hiorode & aeltu ora seoulfres mið to inlade. & sancti iohannis dael f'hine seolfne [id est f'e his saule] & feouer ora seoulfnes mið gode & sancti cuðberti. þ'te. he habbe ondfong ðerh godes milsae on heofnu'. uisdom & snyttro ðerh sancti cuðberhtes earnunga; Eadfrīð. oeðiluald. billfirið. Aldred. hoc euangelium deo & cuðberhto construxerunt; & ornauerunt' (f. 259r; words in brackets have been added above the line; see Kendrick et al., *Codex Lindisfarnensis*). Durham Cathedral Priory, 12th century: described by Symeon of Durham (d. c. 1128) in his *Libellus de exordio atque procursu istius hoc est Dunhelmensis ecclesie*. Thomas Turner, early 16th century: inscribed 'Thomas Turner semel' (f. 211r; no longer visible, see Kendrick et al., *Codex Lindisfarnensis*); inscribed 'Thys byk hys ussys per hyly' (f. 9r). ? William Bowyer (d. 1569/70), antiquary, father of Robert Bowyer (see below): probable owner (see Kendrick et al., *Codex Lindisfarnensis*). Robert Bowyer (b. c. 1560, d. 1621), parliamentary official and politician: inscribed with his signature (f. 2v; visible under ultra-violet light; see Kendrick et al., *Codex Lindisfarnensis*). Sir Robert Bruce

Cotton (b. 1571, d. 1631), 1st baronet, antiquary and politician: owner. Cotton's collection was augmented by his son, Sir Thomas Cotton (b. 1594, d. 1662), 2nd baronet, and his grandson, Sir John Cotton. Sir John Cotton (b. 1621, d. 1702), 3rd baronet: bequeathed the entire Cotton collection of books and manuscripts to trustees 'for Publick Use and Advantage', 12 and 13 William III, c. 7. Formed one of the foundation collections of the British Museum in 1753.

Bibliography

- Catalogue of Ancient Manuscripts in the British Museum, II, Latin (London: British Museum, 1884), pp. 15–18.
- Augustus Hughes-Hughes, Catalogue of Manuscript Music in the British Museum, 3 vols (London: British Museum, 1906–09), III, p. 371.
- T. D. Kendrick et al., facs. eds., *Codex Lindisfarnensis*, 2 vols (Olten & Lausanne: Urs Graf, 1956–60).
- N. R. Ker (ed.), *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books* (London: Royal Historical Society 2nd edn., 1964), pp. 73, 119.
- N. R. Ker, *Catalogue of Manuscripts containing Anglo-Saxon* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957; repr. 1990), no. 165.
- E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, II, Great Britain and Ireland (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2nd edn., 1972), no. 187.
- Andrew G. Watson, *Catalogue of Dated and Datable Manuscripts c. 700–1600 in The Department of Manuscripts The British Library*, 2 vols (London: British Library, 1979), no. 544.
- Janet Backhouse, *The Lindisfarne Gospels* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1981).
- N. R. Ker & Andrew G. Watson (eds.), *Medieval Libraries of Great Britain: A List of Surviving Books. Supplement to the Second Edition* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1987), p. 30.
- Janet Backhouse, 'Birds, beasts and initials in Lindisfarne's Gospel books', in Gerald Bonner, David Rollason & Clare Stancliffe (eds.), *St Cuthbert, His Cult and His Community to AD 1200* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1989), pp. 165–74.
- Susanne Marx, 'The miserable beasts – animal art in the Gospels of Lindisfarne, Lichfield and St Gallen 51', *Peritia*, 9 (1995), 234–45.
- Janet Backhouse, *The Illuminated Page: Ten Centuries of Manuscript Painting in the British Library* (London: British Library, 1997), no. 1.
- Patrick McGurk, 'The canon tables in the Book of Lindisfarne and in the Codex Fuldensis of St. Victor of Capua', in his *Gospel Books and Early Latin Manuscripts* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), essay III.
- Michelle P. Brown, 'In the Beginning was the Word': Books and Faith in the Age of Bede, Jarrow Lecture, 22 (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: St Paul's Parish Church Council, 2000).
- Richard Gameson, 'Why did Eadfrith write the Lindisfarne Gospels?', in Richard Gameson & Henrietta Leyser (eds.), *Belief and Culture in the Middle Ages: Studies presented to Henry Mayr-Harting* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 45–58.
- Helmut Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2001), no. 343.
- Michelle P. Brown, facs. ed., *Das Buch von Lindisfarne: The Lindisfarne Gospels*, 2 vols (Lucerne: Faksimile-Verlag, 2002).
- Michelle P. Brown, *The Lindisfarne Gospels: Society, Spirituality and the Scribe* (London: British Library, 2003).
- Lawrence Nees, 'Reading Aldred's colophon for the Lindisfarne Gospels', *Speculum*, 78 (2003), 333–77.
- Scot McKendrick & Kathleen Doyle, *Bible Manuscripts: 1400 Years of Scribes and Scripture* (London: British Library, 2007), fig. 13.
- Richard Gameson, *Manuscript Treasures of Durham Cathedral* (London: Third Millennium, 2010), pp. 12, 28, 33, 38, 43, 90.
- Richard Gameson, *From Holy Island to Durham: The Contexts and Meanings of the Lindisfarne Gospels* (London: Third Millennium, 2013).

Copyright © The British Library Board