

Cambridge University Library, li.6.32

Evangelia, etc. (Book of Deer)

Scotland(?)

Late 9th – early 10th century

Parchment, 86 fols., 157 x 108 mm (108 x 71 mm written area), 22-6 lines ruled in hard point, above top line, 2° fol. *Omnes* (3).

LANGUAGE

Latin and Gaelic

CONTENTS

Excerpta ex Evangelio secundum Matthaeum (1-15); *Evangelio secundum Marcum* (16v-27v); *Officia divina pro infirmis* (28v-29); *Excerpta ex Evangelio secundum Lucam* (29v-40); *Evangelium secundum Iohannem* (41v-84v); *Symbolum Apostolorum* (85)

SCRIPT

Insular miniscule

DECORATION

Full-page miniatures

Tinted in yellow and orange (now much darkened), and framed by bars, often filled with geometric patterns and interlace: four figures, lower two with satchels, arranged around cross with star/flower in circle at intersection (1v); bearded, seated figure (head partially effaced by staining) holding sword and flanked by two small figures (4v); figure with halo and satchel, his hands reaching out through frame (29v); figure with satchel, flanked by six small figures (41v); two miniatures of four figures arranged around cross with circle at intersection, first showing three of them with their hands outstretched into frame, second including two figures in lower compartments with satchels (85v, 86).

Half-page miniature

Two figures with satchels at end of St John's Gospel (84v).

Ornamental and minor initials

Initials (2-5 lines) formed of black interlocking stripes, with geometric infill, tinted in yellow and orange, and human and animal heads projecting from finials, at beginning of Gospels and Creed (2, 5, 17, 30, 42); versals tinted in yellow and orange.

Border decoration

Full borders, tinted and/or decorated with knotwork, geometric designs etc., to all miniatures and openings of Gospels; numerous drawings of animals, birds, human figures or simple fan-like shapes in black ink, some tinted in yellow and orange (e.g. 41v, 44, 45v, 51v, 54v, 67, 71v).

PROVENANCE

The Columban house at Deer, Aberdeenshire; probably at Cistercian monastery of Deer, 13th-16th centuries; Thomas Gale, 1695; acquired in 1697 from Gale by John Moore (d. 1714); presented to University Library by George I, 1715.

BINDING

Full goatskin (Douglas Cockerell and Son, Letchworth, 1963), replacing sheepskin Bowtell-style binding of 18th-19th century, which is kept together with the manuscript.

NOTES

Widely regarded as the earliest manuscript produced in Scotland, providing the earliest specimens of vernacular and liturgy in use in Celtic Scotland. Interpretation of miniatures varies, and view that frontispieces to Gospels depict Evangelists is no longer universally accepted. Association with Deer deduced from additions in Gaelic or Middle Irish (**3-5**) and Latin breve of King David I in favour of *clerici de Der* (**40**).