

ST JOSEPH'S MALVERN

ST CUTHBERT AND THE LINDISFARNE GOSPELS



SUZE MATHEWS



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SPIRITUAL HERO

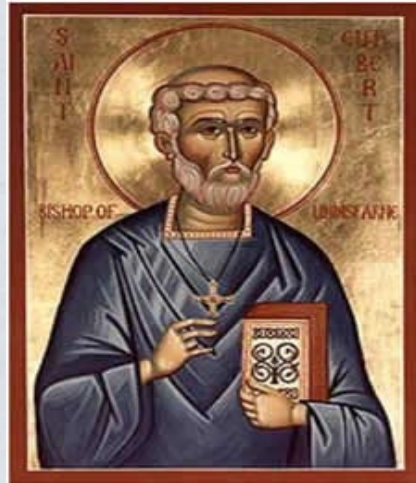
SPIRITUAL: 'Concerned with the spirit or soul , or with religion, not worldly minded, absorbed in high thoughts'

OED (1959)

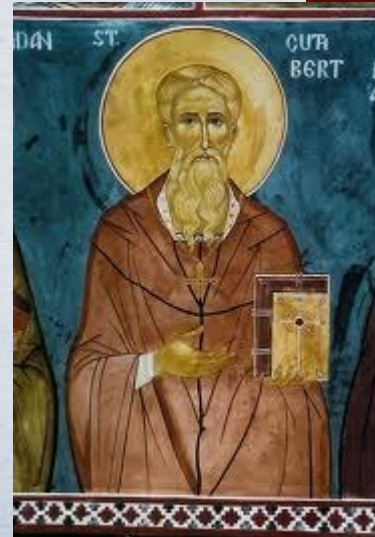
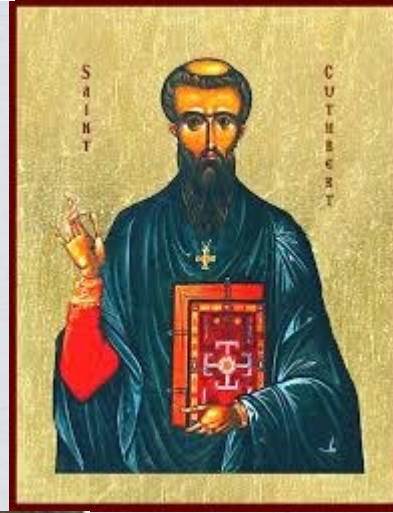
HERO: 'Demigod, man of superhuman qualities, man admired for great deeds and other noble qualities; chief man in play or poem'

OED (1959)

SAINT: Canonised person; one of the blessed dead or other member of the company of heaven; a person remarkably free from human weaknesses' OED 1959



St Cuthbert



ST CUTHBERT (635 -687 CE)

'He did not restrict his teaching and influence to the monastery (as Prior of Melrose) but worked to rouse the ordinary folk far and near to exchange their foolish customs for the love of heavenly joys'

'He used mainly to visit and preach in the villages far distant among high and inaccessible mountains which others feared to visit and who barbarity and squalor daunted other teachers'

'Like a good teacher he taught others to do only what he first practised himself'

'He regarded as equivalent to prayer the labour of helping the weaker brethren with advice, remembering that he who said 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God' and said 'Love thy neighbour'

Bede, Historia ecclesiastica gentis anglorum 731CE

ST CUTHBERT

Early life

- Cuthbert was born in 635 near Melrose, noble/Celt?? (the year K. Oswald summoned Aiden from Iona)

Melrose

- 651 entered Melrose (Celtic tradition) as monk age 16; after a vision about the death of Aidan. Late 650s expelled/left Melrose for Ripon but later returned
- 661 was appointed Prior at Melrose

Lindisfarne

- 664 Prior of Lindisfarne; much resistance from the monks about the change of rite (Whitby)
- 676 retired to the nearby island in order to live the life of a hermit
- 685 appointed Bishop of Lindisfarne

Death and afterlife

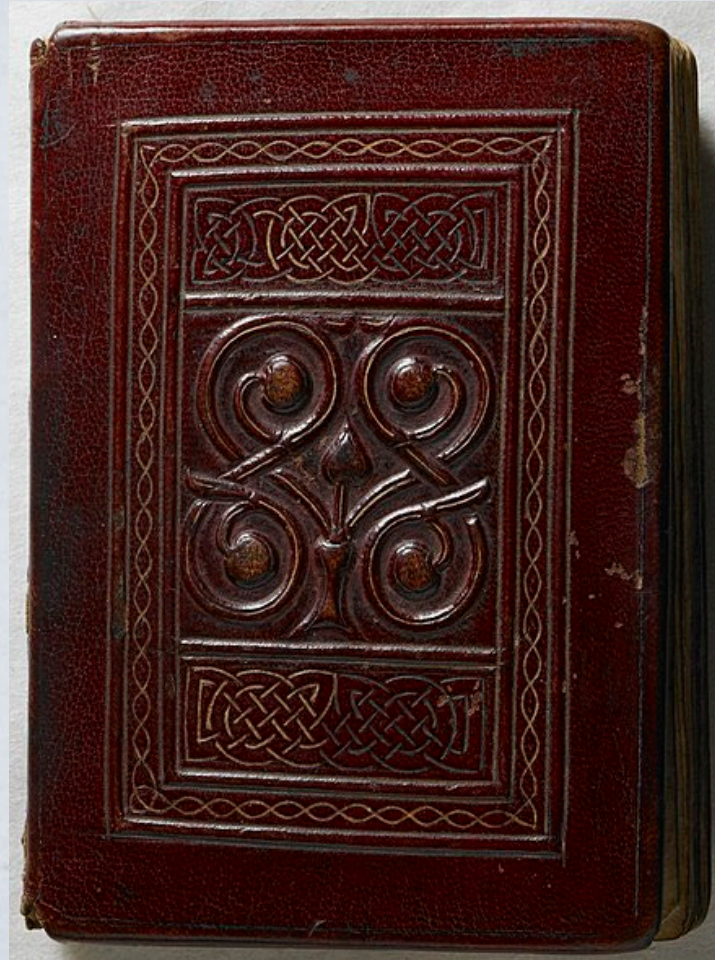
- 687 retired back to Inner Farne where he died that same year
- Body interred on the south side of the altar at the Abbey Church of St Peter's at Lindisfarne



*Cuthbert discovers a piece of timber, from a 12th-century manuscript of Bede's *Life of St Cuthbert**

- 11 years later his coffin was opened for the first (of 6 times) and placed in the wooden chest
- **875** monks leave Lindisfarne with Cuthbert's body, first to Chester le Street, finally to Durham

ST CUTHBERT – HIS INFLUENCE



The front cover of the St Cuthbert Gospel of St John, recovered from his coffin; the original tooled red goatskin binding is the earliest surviving Western binding.

WHY DO WE KNOW SO MUCH ABOUT ST CUTHBERT?

1. **3 WRITTEN 'LIVES': ONE NEAR CONTEMPORARY (698)**
2. **ONE METRICAL AND ONE PROSE BOTH BY BEDE (early 718/720)**
3. **12TH CENTURY ILLUMINATED VERSION OF BEDE'S PROSE LIFE**

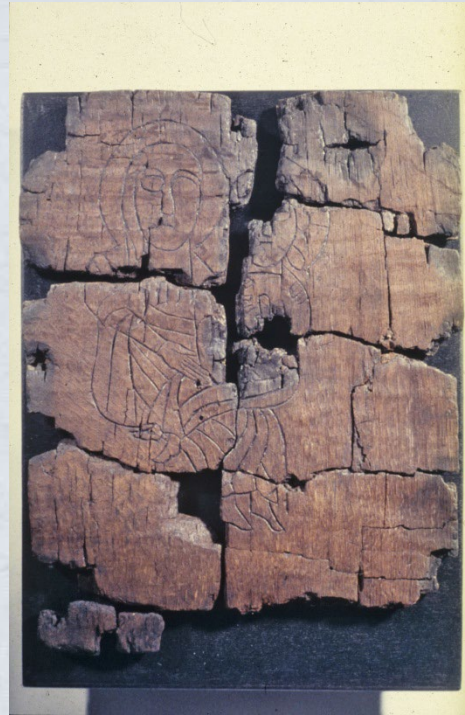
Miniature of a monk (Bede?) kissing the feet of St Cuthbert, from the preface to Bede's prose Life of St Cuthbert, England (Durham), 4th quarter of the 12th century

CUTHBERT'S LEGACY

He :

- showed how to be holy and practical at the same time.
- how to support the Roman Latin church in Northumbria, without denigrating Celtic rituals.
- Demonstrated how the Church modelled fair, just and law-based rule through his relationship with the Kings (and Queens) of Northumbria
- Balanced Wilfrid's approach with a more conciliatory understanding of the complicated mix of competing religions and political ambitions
- And he loved animals.....

ST CUTHBERT'S RELICS



ST CUTHBERT: A REAL ENGLISH SPIRITUAL HERO

- St. Augustine (of Hippo) ‘ We all want to live happily; in the whole human race there is no one who does not assent to this proposition, even before it is fully articulated’
- St Thomas Aquinas ‘God alone satisfies’

St Cuthbert demonstrates to us that the path to happiness is to be an authentic person, living one's life to the best of one capacities and capabilities, being resolute the face of difficulties, never sacrificing one's humanity and living God's message of the Gospels

LINDISFARNE

**A Celtic
monastery**



A royal chapel

WHAT ARE THE LINDISFARNE GOSPELS?

Created– c700 CE - at Lindisfarne to honour St. Cuthbert at the orders of Bishop Eadfrith,

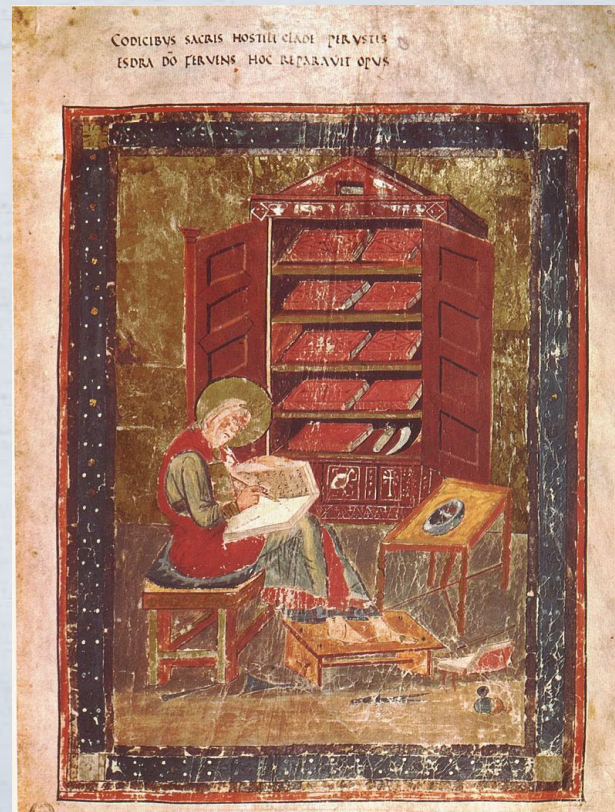


- There are two Gospels contained within it: one in Latin c700 written by scribe/artist EADFRITH and another written in 10c (970) in Old English by ALDRED , as an inter-linear OE gloss/translation (colophon) when the Gospels were in Chester-le-Street
- Earliest surviving example of Gospels in OE
- 150 male calves for their skins, probably more like 200 as any with marks or flaws would be rejected.

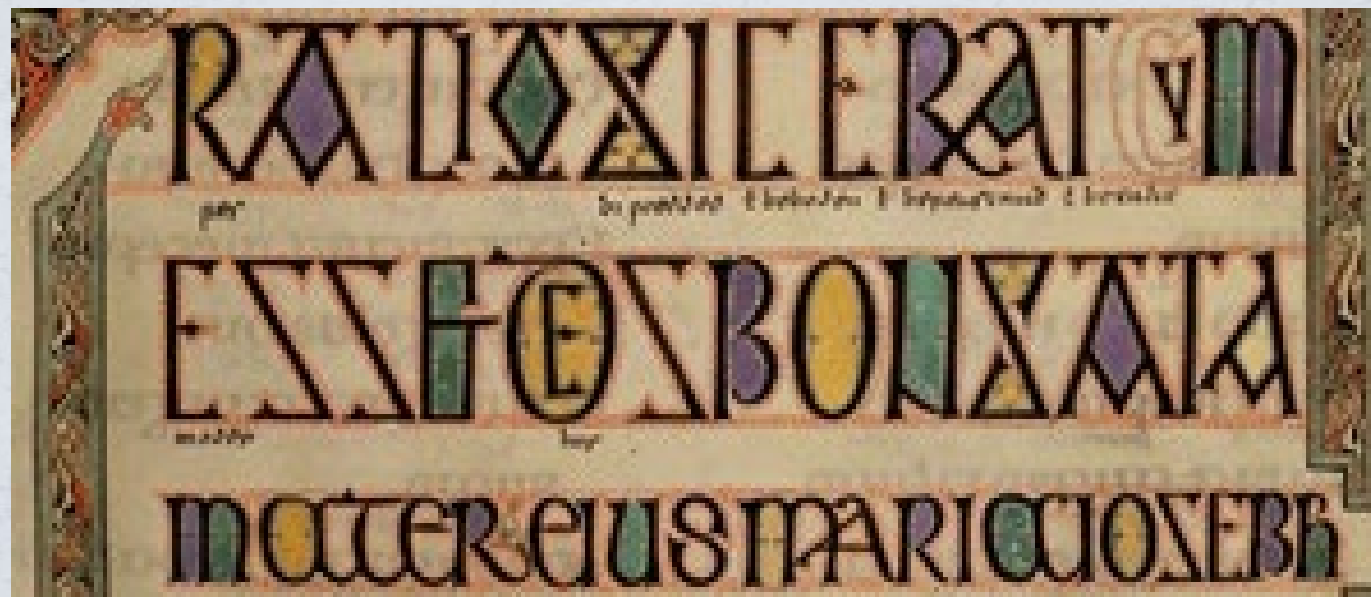
THE INSPIRATION FOR THE GOSPELS?

- Based on gospel books collected by Cassiodorus (late 5/early 6c Eg Codex Grandior, brought by Benedict Biscop and abbot Ceolfrith

Codex Amiatinus(Jarrow Codex), 716CE: Portrait of Ezra, at the start of Old Testament



WHY WERE THE GOSPELS CREATED?



**Gospels represent God, light and
redemption**

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD' JOHN 1:1

FOR YOU WERE ONCE DARKNESS, BUT NOW YOU ARE LIGHT IN THE LORD. LIVE AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT Letter of St Paul to the Ephesians, 5:8



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YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET Psalm

KEY FEATURES OF THE GOSPELS

1. A copy of St. Jerome's Vulgate a revision of the Latin Bible made in late 4th c and largely adopted throughout the western world, with some Greek
 2. St. Jerome's letter to Pope Damasus in which this revision was commanded to be carried out
 3. Prologue to St. Jerome's commentary on Matthew
 4. 16 pages of Eusebian Canon Tables (tables of Gospel concordance) prefaced by the explanatory letter of Eusebias
 5. Each gospel is prefaced by a short introduction the 'argumentum'
 6. A list of passages used as liturgical readings (capitula lectionum)
 7. A list of festivals on which passages from that particular Gospel should be read
 8. 15 decorated pages: Portrait , Carpet and Incipit for each Gospel (Matthew has two Incipit pages), plus Carpet and Incipit Pages for the St Jerome letter)
- 150 calf (male) skins to make the vellum = 1 skin for every double page
 - Several of the decorated pages are left unfinished, e.g. Matthew Carpet Page
 - We know who contributed to its making (a comment in 10c colophon by Aldred):
 - EADFRITH – SCRIBE and BISHOP OF THE LINDISFARNE CHURCH
 - EDILUARD – METAL WORK, BISHOP OF THE LINDISFARNE ISLANDERS
 - ANCHORITE BILFRITH – DECORATED THE COVER

THE SPIRITUAL AND SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE OF BOOKS AND SCRIPT/WRITING

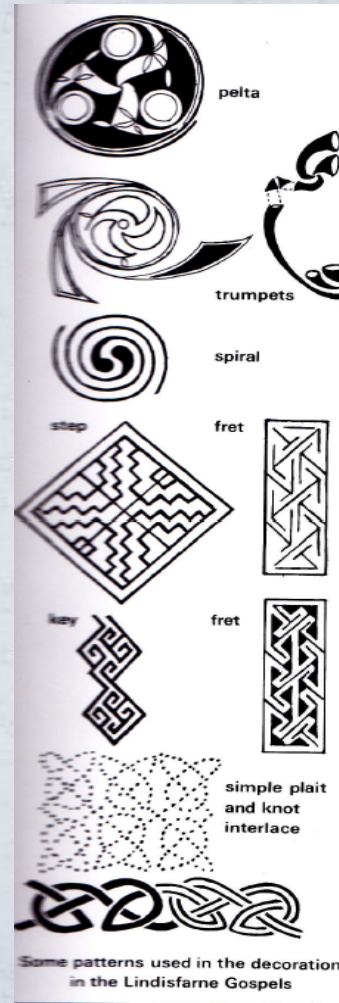
LINDISFARNE GOSPELS ARE
IN INSULAR MAJUSCULE –
HALF UNCIALS



St John's
Gospel,
Incipit page

- John 1:1' In principio erat Verbum, et Verbum erat apud Deum, et Deus erat Verbum.
- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God'

SOME OF THE MOST FREQUENT PATTERNS USED IN THE GOSPELS



**ANGLO-SAXON PATTERNS:
Zoomorphic**

**CELTIC PATTERNS:
Geometric, abstract or
regular patterns**



THE PORTRAIT PAGES

PORTRAIT PAGE – ST MATTHEW’S GOSPEL

PORTRAIT
PAGES
TEND TO
BE MORE
BYZANTINE



Imago
hominus

Byzantine/Greek:
O Agios - Hail
Holy/blessed

Byzantine-
late classical
antiquity

AS Zoomorphic

PORTRAIT PAGE –ST MARK'S GOSPEL



ST JOHN PORTRAIT PAGE



THE CARPET PAGES

CARPET PAGE – ST LUKE’S GOSPEL

CARPET
PAGES
TEND TO
BE MORE
CELTIC-
AS



AS: Zoomorphic

Celtic: Holy
caskets-
reliquaries

Christian
crosses

Celtic: peltas
and spirals; frets

Signs of
heavy use

CARPET PAGE – ST LUKE’S GOSPEL

CARPET
PAGES
TEND TO
BE MORE
CELTIC-
AS



AS: Zoomorphic

Celtic: Holy
caskets-
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Christian
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Celtic: peltas
and spirals; frets

Signs of
heavy use

THE INCIPIT PAGES

INCIPIIT PAGE- ST. LUKE'S GOSPEL

'Lucas urculus
'Luke the Bull
(Wild Ox)

How many
dots?

**CAN YOU SEE
THE CAT?**



'Incipit euangelium
secundum lucam'

The beginning of the
Gospel of Luke
follows'

'Quonian quidem multi
conati sunt ordinare
narrationem'

'Forasmuch as many have
taken in hand to set forth
in order'



MAKING MANUSCRIPTS

CANON TABLES

Size

Method

Colours
Pigments

Pens

Ink

Materials

CANONIC BRITANNIC
IN QUO QUATTUOR

MAT MAR LUC IOH

MUSEUM
BRITANNICUM

A memorial

A teaching tool

Demonstrates exceptionally high levels of literacy

International in inspiration

The Gospels are a synthesis of Celtic and Anglo-Saxon Art

Promotes Roman Christianity

Made from local materials

Demonstrates economic power

CONCLUSION

- ALFRED: “The saddest thing about any man is that he be ignorant, and the most exciting thing is that he knows”
- ALFRED: “ It seems better to me... that we should translate certain books which are most necessary for all men to know into the language that we can all understand, and also arrange it... so all the youth of free men now among the English people....are able to read English writing as well.”

