Lindisfarne Layout for Award Scrolls

Dame Asa Gormsdottir - Ealdormere
Class Description

- Explore the layout of the Lindisfarne Gospels
- Practical tips on how to create the distinctive capitals, half-uncial calligraphy, border formation, and typical motifs
- Examples of Lindisfarne-inspired SCA scrolls included
- Handouts of the Lindisfarne capital and half-uncial alphabets as interpreted by the teacher will be provided
Early Medieval Insular Manuscripts

- Refers to those manuscripts made in the British Isles from 7th to 10th centuries (approximately)

- Famous examples:
  - Lindisfarne Gospels
  - Book of Kells
  - Echternach Gospels
  - Book of Deer
  - Book of Durrow
  - Codex Aureus

- Iona and Wearmouth-Jarrow particularly important centres for manuscript production
Lindisfarne Gospels – Overview

- Made in Lindisfarne, Holy Island, Britain
- Date range 710-725 CE
- Believed to be the work of a single scribe – Eadfrith, Bishop of Lindisfarne
- Intact and exceptionally well-preserved
- Made of the highest quality vellum, ink and pigments
- Intended to enhance the monastery’s prestige and its relationship to St. Cuthbert (tourist attraction)
Typical Layout for Insular Gospels

While the precise page order varies, several elements are usually found:

1. Cross carpet page
2. Incipit page
3. Apostolic portraits with their animal symbols
4. Body text pages
5. Canon tables

Paper size is roughly equivalent to 11x14”
Cross-Carpet Page

Carpet Pages

- Essentially the shape and artistic density of a Middle Eastern carpet
- Typically a rectangular or square layout broken into symmetrical geometric zones that include squares, rectangles, oblongs, crosses and circles
- Ornamentation can be simple and direct (The Book of Durrow, Echternach Gospels), or microscopically complex (Lindisfarne Gospels, Book of Kells)

- Beautiful way to add “wow” factor to an important SCA award scroll
Photo courtesy of Kyle Andrews. Used with permission.
Incipit Page

The Incipit Page

- A kind of title page
- Opening words of the four gospels
- Features one or two very large primary initials, heavily illuminated
- Followed by one or two sentences in Lindisfarne Capitals, descending size
- Usually decorated with a partial border

- Useful for shorter SCA scrolls
IN THE YEAR OF THE SOCIETY INC.
ARMATION 48 I HIGEL
WITH THE FAVOR OF
DISTIG "UM M ERUM MERIT: THE BOW RESOUNDING STRUE.

"M" SUGGESTS CHILD FLEE AND FEAR THE TEARS LESS RUIN.

GIFT OF GOLD WROUGHT WITH HONOUR RUST WITH HAMMER SWARE THE BOWMAN.

FOR EXCELLENCE IN ARCHERY WE CHAMPION KING AND KNEEL QUEEN OF EDORNE." "MISTICUM MERUM"

AT WHICH WAR IN OUR SHINE OF CRINOVARIA NOVA.

THIS SEVENTEEN DAY OF MARCH CUMBO SUCCESES FOURTY-THREE.

DO HEREBY INDUCT CASTUS SOCETAE GET THAUM MISTICUM MERUM

REX

REGINA
Design adapted from the "Quoniam" page from Book of Kells, f. 374 of 677. See http://digitalcollections.tcd.ie/ for a page-by-page look.
ERE SAT KING CENNEN NIOHN ESTINA TEO AR LESLIE SUSANA REYNOLDS
Pl. 13. Lindisfarne Gospels (BL, Cotton MS Nero D.iv), f. 90r, Mark prologue.
Text Pages

- Familiar format for SCA scrolls
- One or two illuminated initials
  - Kells is famous for its humorous stock of creative, often animal-based initials, some on virtually every line
- Two columns of double-spaced half-uncial script
DIVINE GRACE

Long of electrode and obviate my queen, led by divine love forwarbowed by the same divine right to the last hours of our reign, have we not been forgetful of the duties of government and have taken care to commit this to writing so that our words and deeds should not be forgot in the passage of time either through the lack of care of our successors or through some kind of early dishonesty.

With the agreement and authorization of many nobles within, our beloved companions of the realm, we, giving with sincere intent, do bestow upon mistress afirm a great of arms and do induct her into our order of the realm and grant unto her the right to wear the badge of the order, for she has performed exemplary and long-standing service to our kingdom as officer, marshal, artisan, leader, champion, always as one who provides an example of courtesy and charity worthy of emulation. On account of such faithful service and loyalty we do further grant this charter bestowing on her for all time that place which is called by justice the realm in order that the aforementioned mistress afirm should immutably possess without interruption this royal gift as long as electrode should continue all that is recognized as belonging to that same place by law both in large and in small matters, in fields, pastures, meadows, woods and fisheries may the aforementioned realm contain, be free from all worldly impediment, except these three: military service, and the construction of bridge and fortress. The aforementioned realm is soon to be surrounded by these bounds. From the mountainous south to Alexandria, in the east from the green dawn to the mountainous. If aid, however, should turn, against our wishes, to harm this charter, through the seat of oppressive cowardice, may they, falling down to the howling masses of wondrous darkness, be cursed, never everlasting time, where they may be consumed in a cruel punishment by demons with terrible instruments of torture if they do not change this before them and their children have them punished with appropriate punishment.

But, so that it will not be comminated as long as electrode proceeds, we have also recorded these things in writing; this aforementioned liberty was created in the year of the society's incamation 18, on this 26th day of open.

Rex

Regina
Apostolic Portraits

Apostolic Portrait

- Posed or iconic figure, sometimes with apostolic animal symbol
  - e.g. Lion of St. Mark
  - The Book of Kells includes the “Doubtful Christ” portrait
- Sometimes the animal alone is present
- Presented within a border
- Accompanying text is usually limited

- Can be a fun format for SCA scrolls
STELLAR

O iron-born forest
roary nears the
header, winter pilgrim
people come out to
on the homeward leg:year
your harness raufl with silver bells and
he snow be seen beneath your
horse's feet. the
exhausted lake now
wames at your approach:
flowers traced out,
the
knight of
kaldarnere
beloved knight
father and
husband:
be to
kaldarnere as
you are to us.

Fall patience
with gentile
whatever
with us all
our love
Dax StellWarmore

in this shire of bastille du lac
Christian twenty-fifth day of april anno soc. 49.

ACCARSON
Canon Table

Canon Table

- Intended to serve as a table of contents or page guide
  - Not always functional
- Arched format with pillars
- Two or more columns of text

- Useful format for SCA scrolls
quick the kine's good
unsong stonies
we bound boundsmen
let the halls hear
life and lifeblood
in halls hallowed
ask but this boon
marked grace greatly

dower as duty
asked again
to and gather
mark this maug

alming answered
rule and rexy
if bound boundsmen
in grace remain

let it be done this day. let woe gan away this night. eurin, by his owen hand
twice made. kine, yeow is honoured with estates and duche fitting his warm
take from our hand this coronet, and know that through your service to
the people of the wemen you have earned the title, yards and all who see you
shall know your grace and honour.
sung out! let the halls mug! today is a good day!

done by our hand and seal this twenty-eighth day of april, anno socatus
john at spring, coronation in our kingdom of ealdormere.

edward the red II

robert buchanan II
reign.
Lindisfarne Capitals

Lindisfarne Capitals

- Distinctive Pictish-Celtic-Germanic alphabet
- Tall, narrow angular letter form
  - Roughly 3:1 height-width ratio

- Embellishments may include:
  - Internal space filled with colour
  - Special handling of the terminals, e.g. animal heads, triskele shapes, knotwork
  - Red dotted outlines
IN THE YEAR OF THE SOCIETY INC.
Lindisfarne Half-Uncial

Lindisfarne Half-Uncial

- Straight, not slanted
- Fairly fast script to work with
- Most letters require only two strokes
- C-series nibs, especially C-4 or C-5 work well
therefore do we wish to recognize him with our award of the Orion, and give him the right to wear the badge of the award.

done by our hands and seal this 25th day of August, anno societatis XLI while sitting in our court of Brugia at Middle Ages on the Green.

But, so that it will not be terminated as long as ealdormere prevails, we have also recorded these things in writing. This aforementioned liberty was created in the year of the society's incarnation 48, on this 26th day of April.
Colour Palette

- Early insular manuscripts typically use a limited palette
  - Orange (red lead)
  - Yellow (ochre or orpiment, sometimes gold)
  - Green (verdigris)
  - Black (various recipes)
  - White (white lead, bone white or natural parchment)

- Richer manuscripts (including Lindisfarne and Kells) may include:
  - Blue
  - Folium (plant-based) pinks and violets
Inks

- Rich black ink for letters
  - Lindisfarne’s ferrous-oak gall recipe is still intensely black 1300 years later

- Weak oak gall or brown calligraphy ink for outlining
  - Less harsh/recedes well with reds, yellows and golds
Gold

- Actual gold is initially rare in insular manuscripts

- Lindisfarne Gospels has only two initials done in chrysography (gold ink)

- Book of Durow uses orpiment to great effect as a gold substitute

- The Codex Aureus (mid-8th century, originally Canterbury), lavishly used gold (and silver) in major capitals and gold ink on dyed purple parchment
Tools

- 11”x14” Pergamenata (or actual parchment, if available)

- Pencil/lead point, white eraser, compass and ruler
  - The Lindisfarne Gospels is considered to be the first evidence for the use of a lead point in illumination
  - Also has evidence of compass use (pricked shapes)

- C-4/C-5 nibs work well for half-uncial calligraphy
- 20/0 brushes for fine detail work
Handling the large capital

- The large capital on an incipit page is generally an enlarged/elongated version of the regular Lindisfarne Capital.

- Typically features a variety of fill designs in layers of outlining:
  - Gripping beasts
  - Intricate knotwork shapes (often in mirror-reflection)
  - Fractal-like triskeles
  - Cartouches (narrow rectangles) which may enclose any of the above.
Outlining

- Major initials, borders, and motifs may have up to seven layers of outlining:
  - A thin black line
  - A gold/yellow line
  - A thicker black line
  - A void or thin white line
  - A thin black line
  - A void or thin white line
  - Two rows of red dots (said to be a Coptic inheritance)
Border Fill/Motif Ideas

- Simple knotwork
- Greek key designs
- Garnet/gemstone and gold cloisonné
- Gripping beasts (zoomorphs)
Anglo-Saxon border fill and modern adaptation.

Excerpt from The Hereford Gospels, f.102.
The function of these garnet-inlaid gold strips is not known, but suggested uses include scabbard mounts, book-cover mounts and saddle fittings.
Adapting a gripping beast

- Gripping beast shapes in metalwork, including crosses, jewellery, arms and armour are related to those found in contemporary illuminations

- Knotwork and gripping beasts follow a sine wave design with a kink
Staffordshire Hoard Cross

- Similar to an animal interlace design found in The Book of Durrow
Photo courtesy of Kyle Andrews. Used with permission.
Further Reading


Thank You