

**281. London, British Library Royal 1 B. vii**  
Early Northumbrian Gospel Book  
[Ker 246, Gneuss 445, Lowe 2.213]

**HISTORY:** Written in England in the late 7c/early 8c, probably in Northumbria. The text is akin to that of the Lindisfarne Gospels (London, BL, Cotton Nero D. iv [206]) and has the same lists of Neapolitan feasts (Morin 1891), but it is apparently copied from a common exemplar rather than directly from Lindisfarne. Use of red capitals in the *capitula lectionum*, etc., is an Italian practice (seen also in the Codex Amiatinus [Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Amiatino 1] and the Codex Beneventanus [BL Additional 5463]) rather than a Northumbrian one and suggests an uncial exemplar, a Northumbrian copy of a south Italian original (Kendrick et al. 1960: 2.44, see also 2.46). Other English manuscripts of similar date with south Italian connections are the Burchard Gospels (Würzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M. p. th. f. 68) and the Echternach Gospels and St. Willibrord's Calendar in Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 9389 and 10837). An added manumission (f. 15v) written about 925 (the earliest preserved A-S manumission) has been attributed to Christ Church, Canterbury (Wanley 1705: 181) without further substantiation. Listed in the Royal inventory of 1666 (Public Record Office, Augmentation Office, Misc. Books 160 [E315/160], f. 3r). Rebound in 1983.

**CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION:** Foliated 1–155. 3 modern and 1 earlier paper front flyleaves, 3 modern paper back flyleaves. Page size 285 x 224 mm. Parchment thick and stiff, smooth but matte; some leaves transparent in places (from greasiness), with great contrast between hair and flesh. Flesh faces hair. Flesh sides tend to be outside throughout the quires (*pace* Gameson 1994), although there is some variation (see below). Writing area 230 x 165 mm., laid out in double columns 72 mm. wide with number of lines varying from 30 to 32. Sheets ruled several at a time before folding. Double bounding lines both margins of both columns. Written *per cola et commata* in fine A-S majuscule in black ink. No punctuation, restricted abbreviations marked with conspicuous single or double tildes, fairly consistent word-separation. Decorated initials in

black penwork with restrained colors; in-text initials in silver (prefaces), or, throughout most of the text, in dark red. Indicated in the margins in a contemporary hand are pericopes, some of Neapolitan origin, others Gallican akin to some in Durham Gospels, Durham Cathedral Library A. II 17 [118]. Crosses of various designs also used to mark pericopes (cf. f. 87r) are a south Italian symptom (Lowe, *CLA* 2.xv–xvi). Canon tables have arches scored with a compass and main verticals and horizontals with a rule; black penwork, yellow, orange and green. Throughout, the use of color is sparing but effective. Most quires show signatures, Roman numerals, at bottom of last verso of each quire (added later?). Added indexical roman numerals at tops of folios, continuous within each Gospel text. New quires usually have a ‘+’ at top left of first recto. Ammonian sections marked in the margin by a contemporary, more cursive, hand. The Passion of Mark (ff. 73r–77r) has been prepared for recitation, with division of sentences marked with a stroke (/), positurae added, neumes (f. 77ra/6-7), and designation of parts: ‘+’ (Christus), ‘s’ (schola), ‘c’ (cantor, narrator). OE text of early 10c written in blank space on f. 15v does not follow the rulings but stays in the column.

**COLLATION:** I<sup>8</sup> (ff. 1–8); II<sup>6</sup> (ff. 9–14); III–IX<sup>8</sup> (ff. 15–70); X<sup>7</sup> 3 half-sheet (ff. 71–77); XI–XIV<sup>8</sup> (ff. 78–109); XV<sup>10</sup> (ff. 110–119); XVI<sup>8</sup> (ff. 120–127); XVII<sup>8</sup> 2 gone after f. 128 (ff. 128–134); XVIII<sup>8</sup> (ff. 135–142); XIX<sup>8+1</sup> 9 added (ff. 143–151); XX<sup>4</sup> (ff. 152–155).

[**Note:** Flesh outside all sheets except II HFF, X FFHF, XII HFFF, XVII hair outside, sheet 7, XVIII FHF, XIX HFHF]

### CONTENTS:

- ff. 1r–2r Epistle of Jerome to Damasus: ‘Nouum opus face | re me cogis’ [of original incipit only **[be]ato** can be seen (*incipit epistola hieronimi presbyteri beato / papae damaso*)].
- ff. 2v–3v/27b Prologue to Jerome’s Commentary on Matthew: ‘Plures fuisse qui euangelice | Conscriberunt’ [of original incipit, only **[prae]fatio eiusde(m)** can be seen (*incipit praefatio eiusdem*)].
- ff. 3v/28b–4v/15a Epistle of Eusebius to Carpianus: ‘Eusebius carpiano fra | tri in d(omi)no salute(m)’ [original incipit illegible (*incipit praefatio eusebii*)].
- ff. 4v/16a–5r/19a Preface to Matthew: **inc(ipit) argumentu(m) mat(the)i** ‘Mattheus in iudea si | cut in ordine pri | mus’.

5. ff. 5r/b-8r/14a Table of chapters to Matthew: 'i Generationem quadra | ginta duarum'.
6. f. 8r/b-8v Table of feast days for lessons from Matthew: 'Pridu natale d(omi)ni'.
7. ff. 9r-14v Eusebian canon tables.
8. ff. 15r-51v Gospel of Matthew: 'Liber generatio | nis ie(s)u chr(ist)i filii | d(au)id filii abraham' [on f. 15v/1b another decorated initial, 'CHR(IST)I AU | tem generatio sic erat | cum ess& dispnsata'].
9. f. 15v/18a-31a OE manumission in name of King Æðelstan: 'æðelstan cyng gefreode | eadelm forraðe' (ed. Harmer 1914: 32-33 [no. 19] and 116; trans. Brown 1991: 44) [17c note identifying Æthelstan in left margin].
10. f. 52r-52v/a Preface to Mark: 'Marchus euan(gelista) d(e)i | & petri in babis | mate filius'.
11. ff. 52v/b-54v/7b Table of Chapters to Mark: '[i] Esaie testimonio ioh(an- nis) | angelus id est nunti | us'.
12. ff. 54v/8b-15b Table of feast days for lessons from Mark: 'Sabbato s(an)c(t)o mane | post pentecosten'.
13. ff. 55r-77v Gospel of Mark: 'INITIUMEU | angelii ie(s)u chr(ist)i filii d(e)i si | cut scriptum (est) in essa | ia profeta' [f. 77r/14-15b, = Mark 16:2a, added in another hand].
14. f. 78r Table of feast days for lessons from Luke: 'Secundum lucam | In ie iunium s(an)c(t)i iohannis | babis[ta]'.
15. ff. 78v-79r/4b Preface to Luke: 'Lucas syrus anthio | censis arte medicus'.
16. ff. 79r/5b-84r/a Table of Chapters to Luke: **incipi(t) [capitu]la lectionum | item indicia siue capitu(la) | euan(geli) lec(tionum) secun(dum) lucam** | 'i Praefatione lucas theo | filo euangelium indicat | p(er) ordine(m) descripturum'.
17. ff. 84r/b-127v Gospel of Luke: 'QUONIAM | quidem multi co | nati sunt'.
18. f. 128r Preface to John: 'Iohannes euangelista unus | ex discipulis d(e)i qui uirgo elec | tus a d(e)o est'.
19. ff. 128v-130r/16a Table of Chapters to John: **i In principio uerbum d(eu)s** | 'apud d(eu)m per quem facta s(un)t | omnia' [leaf lost after f. 128 which contained chapter headings ix-xxvi].
20. ff. 130r/17a-130v/a Table of feast days for lessons from John: **secundum iohannem** | 'In s(an)c(t)i iohannis apos(tol)os & euangeliste'.
21. ff. 130v/b-155v Gospel of John: **inc(ipit) euan(gelium) secundum iohan(nem)** 'IN principio erat uerbum & uer | bum erat apud d(eu)m'.



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