

# WHAT'S IN THE CUPBOARD? EZRA AND MATTHEW RECONSIDERED

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**T**he relationship between the *Lindisfarne Gospels* and the *Codex Amiatinus* has been presented with such detail and authority that challenge now seems unlikely. It has been argued convincingly that the *Codex Amiatinus* reproduces the concept of a 6th-century Bible pandect (the *Codex Grandior*) in Cassiodorus's library at Vivarium, and that its text is largely derived from a nine-volume 'Vulgate' (the *Novem Codices*) also from Vivarium. Less convincingly, it has been argued that the gospel volume was rejected at Wearmouth-Jarrow in favour of a 6th-century Neapolitan gospel book, which was also used for the *Lindisfarne Gospels* (Brown in Kendrick et al. 1960, 50). The situation is complicated by the suggestion that the *Amiatinus* Ezra is a direct copy of a Vivarium miniature that may have been a portrait of Cassiodorus himself (Bruce-Mitford 1960, 148; Courcelle, letter reported by Bruce-Mitford, op. cit., 148; Bruce-Mitford 1969, 14). This leads inevitably to the further inference that the *Lindisfarne* Matthew is an adaptation of the *Amiatinus* or Vivarium image, and that the remaining *Lindisfarne* Evangelists are culled from another source, different from the text (Bruce-Mitford 1960, 154–5, 156). So established are these views that doubts concerning them had to remain until recent work on Insular attitudes to art and authorship (Michelli 1996) brought new considerations to bear on the issue.

In the light of these studies it is now possible to suggest that the *Amiatinus* Ezra (Fig 28.1) is an Insular adaptation of a pure Ezra portrait invented by Cassiodorus, who derived it from a Greek Evangelist type, and that it makes a specific claim that all the *Novem Codices* were held at Wearmouth-Jarrow. It also seems likely that all the *Lindisfarne* Evangelists are derived from a single source,

almost certainly the same as the text of the book itself, and that this was not a Neapolitan book but the gospel volume of the *Novem Codices*, a work fully illustrated with Evangelist portraits and canon tables. Thus the *Amiatinus* Ezra and the *Lindisfarne* Matthew derived from independent models, both of which were Cassiodoran. Finally, it becomes apparent that the *Novem Codices* did not contain the Vulgate text, but a hybrid conflated by Cassiodorus and that this version has accidentally usurped the Vulgate identification in the minds of modern scholars.<sup>1</sup>

The development of scholarly debate on this topic is complex. It has been set out with admirable clarity by Neuman de Vegvar (1987, 143–9), and it would be superfluous to reiterate it here. Suffice it to say that it has two main origins: an iconographical idea by Courcelle and Bruce-Mitford which results in discrediting the *Novem Codices* gospel illustrations, and a textual idea by Julian Brown which results in discrediting the *Novem Codices* gospel text.

Courcelle was the first to suggest that the *Amiatinus* Ezra accurately reflects the frontispiece to the first volume of the *Novem Codices*, and he saw that original image as a conflation of Cassiodorus and Ezra (Courcelle 1949; 1969, 379). Bruce-Mitford preferred to see the original image as an actual portrait of Cassiodorus, and believed that it had acquired its Ezra veneer in Northumbria (in Kendrick et al. 1960, 146–8). In consequence, he had to see the Vivarium version as an original, creative work, and therefore the *Lindisfarne* Matthew, which looks so similar, was necessarily derived from it and could not reflect a pre-existing Evangelist tradition. He was thus forced to argue that while the other three *Lindisfarne* Evangelists were, in fact, based on the *Novem Codices* gospel volume, the Matthew image was not. As he put it, ‘we know . . . that this Matthew figure . . . was certainly derived from a source different from the rest of the portrait set, and not even an Evangelist’ (op. cit. 142).

To challenge this, we must examine the early Insular definition of art and its purpose. The Insular concept of art embraced all kinds of creation, whether visual, literary, mathematical, or scholarly. It is set out fully in the 11th-century preface to the *Martyrology of Oengus*, which states that ‘four things are required by every work of art, to wit a Place, and a Time, an Author and a Cause of invention’ (Stokes 1905, 3). The writer then explains that these establish the value, origin and date of the work – in other words, its credentials. The concept seems to be very old. It is found in an Irish letter, written by Cuimíne c 632 concerning the Easter calculation at Iona (Walsh & Ó Cróinín 1988). To support his preferred calculation, Cuimíne cited ten alternatives, together with their authors (op. cit. 84–6, lines 208–20). He did not mention where and when they were produced because this information was either included in their prefaces or could be deduced from the identities of their authors (op. cit. 29–47). Most only had a single author but the ninth, dictated to Pacomius by an angel, had two; and the tenth, ‘the cycle of the 318 bishops’, had 318 (op. cit. 44–6)! This huge number was the authority Cuimíne claimed against the computation used at Iona,

which he denigrated as 'one whose author, place and time we are uncertain of' (op. cit. 86–7, line 221).

This approach to authorship and credentials seems to have been international. There are clear indications of it in Carolingian circles but the present discussion can be illustrated with Cassiodorus. His *Institutiones* sets out a study programme, and every work he cites is qualified with information about the identity, reliability and skill of its author and translator. When he recommends a worthy anonymous commentary on Job, he raises its potential credibility by suggesting, on stylistic grounds, that its author might be Hilary of Poitiers (Mynors 1937, 26, 6.3). He also says that ideally his monks should consult the Greek Fathers because they are well established, although he acknowledges that most will be limited to Latin translations and the Roman authorities which were newer and less satisfying (op. cit. 6, Pref 5).

In Insular circles, this attitude seems to have applied to Cassiodorus himself. Courcelle (1969, 82) notes that although the *Codex Amiatinus* reproduces almost everything we know of the *Codex Grandior* and the *Novem Codices*, Cassiodorus's own material (some chapter summaries he wrote to fill gaps in his exemplar) was 'consistently omitted'. Laistner (1966, 95–7, 102) also notes that apart from his commentary on the Psalms, Cassiodorus's own works were never popular, but his compilations, like *Institutiones* volume II, and his editions of important works were well known and often copied. Thus it seems that Cassiodorus's main credibility lay in the editing and transmission of authenticated texts, rather than in his new scholarship. This inference, that authorship, origins and credentials were all-important, must be of crucial relevance to the claims made by the *Codex Amiatinus* and the *Lindisfarne Gospels*.

These findings undermine current theories about the Ezra portrait (Fig 28.1). Bruce-Mitford wanted to see the original image as a portrait of Cassiodorus himself (in Kendrick et al. 1960, 146–8). His evidence was the nine-volume Bible in the cupboard which seems to correspond with our understanding of the *Novem Codices*. Thus, the image appears to be a portrait of the author of the *Novem Codices*. But there is a significant problem with this. Neither Ezra nor Cassiodorus was the author of the *Novem Codices* in any terms which would have been accepted at Vivarium.

In *Institutiones* Cassiodorus states that he was the author of several works (for example, his commentary on the Psalms, and the diagrams, commentary material, and tabernacle image in the *Codex Grandior*). But although he claims directly to have written out the *Novem Codices* and the *Codex minutiore manu conscribendum* himself, and implies that he also transcribed the *Codex Grandior* (Mynors 1937, 5, 7–9, 22–3, 37, Pref 4, 8, 9, *Inst* 5.22, 12.3), he never suggests that he was their author. In fact, he maintains that the scribe's prime duty is to transmit texts honestly and accurately, and not to interfere with them in any way (Hodgkin 1886, 512–13, XII, *Letter* 21; cf Mynors 1937, 41–51, 75–8, *Inst* 15, 30). So



Fig 28.1. The 'Ezra Portrait', *Codex Amiatinus* (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea-Laurenziana *Amiatinus* 1), fol Vr. (By permission of the Ministero per i Beni Culturali e Ambientali)

Cassiodorus could hardly have set himself up as the 'author' of a Bible, and thus it is unlikely that the image was ever a pure portrait of him.

Nevertheless, Cassiodorus could be connected with the image in another way. His classical education, his desire to create a specifically Christian version of that education, his concern for establishing the authenticity and quality of his texts, and his knowledge of, interest in and practice of art, might well stimulate or endorse an interest in the classical author portrait, as known, for example, in the *Vienna Dioscurides* (dated 512–18). We know that he took a lively interest in the visual arts. Of his 468 letters, eleven concern public figures' responsibilities towards art. His consistent theme is that art must be maintained and restored as a valuable and enjoyable visual amenity for the public good, and that the production and maintenance of art is both a mark of respect and a labour of love. His letters include detailed descriptions of public statues, marble *spolia*, and *opus sectile* work, and in one case he shows a respectable knowledge of the history of art too (Hodgkin 1886, 423, X. 8). We also know that he was a resourceful and enterprising person, who loved to clarify his work with diagrams and illustrations. His *Institutiones*, for example, were evidently informatively illustrated (Milkau 1928, 38–44), and he states that he invented and executed (*aptavi*) diagrams of the organization of the Bible, and an image of Solomon's



tabernacle in the desert (Mynors 1937, 22–3, 5.2). If he invented all these, it is quite possible that he could have invented the Ezra portrait too. Indeed, he may actually suggest this himself: when he gives the credentials of his tabernacle image (the person who explained its appearance to him), Cassiodorus adds that he learned about priestly garb from the same man (*ibid.*). If this is not a direct acknowledgement of the authorship and credentials of the Ezra image, it is something akin.

It would not be difficult for Cassiodorus to invent this image. It is clearly derived from the same Greek Evangelist type which was used for the *Lindisfarne* Matthew, and this may suggest that there was no established archetype for Ezra. Profiled Evangelists are known to have existed by Cassiodorus's time. The profiled Matthew in the choir of S Vitale, Ravenna, is one example, although at c 540–7 it was produced a little after Cassiodorus left that city. On the other hand, the profiled Mark of the 6th-century *Rossano Gospels* is surely comparable with what Cassiodorus could have seen during his stay in Constantinople before he founded Vivarium and produced his great Bibles. Thus Cassiodorus's invention of this portrait is well within the bounds of possibility. All he had to do was borrow the type and superimpose his knowledge of priestly garb.

He would have needed the portrait either for the Octateuch volume of his *Novem Codices* or for the Old Testament of his *Codex Grandior*. Each contained the work of several authors as well as anonymous texts, so any portrait set would necessarily have been oversupplied yet incomplete. Thus the choice of Ezra was enterprising. The story appears in 4 Ezra, which is not part of the Vulgate and is not included in the *Codex Amiatinus* or in the Old Testament as we have it today. But it was part of the Septuagint and was translated by Jerome for his Hexaplaric version, and Marsden (1995b, 117) has shown that this was the text used for the *Codex Grandior*.

4 Ezra tells that many books had been destroyed but is ambiguous about what those books were: 14.21 refers to them as the books of the Law (Moses's Pentateuch), while 4.23 refers to the books of the Torah (the whole of Scripture). At Ezra's own request, the Lord enabled him to dictate the entire series to five scribes in the wilderness, by giving him a fiery drink which inspired him (Stone 1990, 440–2, 14.37–49). This is somewhat different from the more famous version of the story, that Ezra wrote out the books from memory. However, that version seems to have originated with later commentators such as Isidore of Seville (Marsden 1995b, 120 n 57). Ezra gave twenty-four books back to the people, which implies that he replaced the whole of scripture: a Talmudic gloss of c 500 lists twenty-four canonical books of the Torah (Hawley<sup>OW</sup>, 1979, 46; cf Mynors 1937, 37, 12.2). Cassiodorus informs us that by counting the books in groups, Jerome is able to produce twenty-two canonical books of the Old Testament, which matches the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. So Ezra works quite well as an honorary author for the whole Old Testament, but he cannot be made to fit an Octateuch. It is likely, then, that the portrait originally

appeared at the beginning of the Hexaplaric *Codex Grandior* which would also have contained the story to which it referred.

This has further implications, however: if the picture introduced the text of the *Codex Grandior*, it must also be argued that the cupboard did not originally contain the *Novem Codices*. To be true to the story, it should have contained twenty-four books, which seems rather full. However, the cupboard may not have appeared in the original picture at all. 4 Ezra is explicit that the dictation to five scribes took place in the wilderness and we could expect the original picture to have shown at least the scribes, if not also the wilderness. The circular arrangement of the Seven Physicians' pages that introduce the *Vienna Dioscurides* suggest that such an iconography might have made a satisfactory complement to the Majesty page, which occasionally introduces the New Testament of later Bibles (including the *Codex Amiatinus*).

Such speculation aside, the Ezra image today shows him in a study with, apparently, Cassiodorus's *Novem Codices* in a cupboard behind him. The picture is set at the front of a Bible which does not contain the necessary story and this may be the reason for the explanatory caption above the picture. Not only would such a caption have been unnecessary in Cassiodorus's original text, but there are later indications which associate it with Northumbria rather than Vivarium. It is echoed by Bede in his commentary on Ezra, and it also appears in a poem attributed to Alcuin (Marsden 1995a, 3 and n 2). The caption reads: *Codibus sacris hostili clade perustis, Esdra dō fervens hoc reparavit opus* (the sacred books having been destroyed by the enemies' flames, Ezra on fire with the Lord repaired this need). This not only identifies the portrait, but defines the terms of the story by its generalized reference to 'sacred books' rather than the more limited 'books of the Law', by which the couplet has been inaccurately rendered (Bruce-Mitford 1969, 11). Thus the caption also justifies the use of the portrait as a frontispiece to the Old Testament. However, the famous idea that the couplet makes an analogy between Ezra and Cassiodorus cannot be supported (op. cit., 14). *Institutiones* reveals an educator who talked about collecting the best versions of the most important texts, and making his monks read them so that they would be able to apply the classical exegetical technique to the scriptures and thus gain a proper understanding of them (Mynors 1937, 4, 6, Pref 2, 6). As we have seen, he never suggests that he is the 'author' of any of these texts, nor that they were in any danger of being lost. There is no connection between him and Ezra.

So why has the picture been so thoroughly adapted? To address this question, we must first consider what we know of the *Novem Codices*. All our information about this Bible comes from Cassiodorus's *Institutiones*. This account is problematic because Cassiodorus's main purpose is to catalogue and comment on his library holdings at Vivarium with a view to directing his 'simple' monks' reading after his death. As he writes, thoughts apparently occur to him about his own editorial work and these are incorporated abruptly into the text without

introduction or explanation, and sometimes without an obvious end-point. The first nine chapters of *Institutiones* concern sections of the Bible and recommended commentaries. Since Cassiodorus refers to these as ‘*codices*’, it is not always clear whether he is speaking metaphorically about biblical sections, or descriptively about a nine-volume Bible. However, he does seem to be speaking about the physical Bible when he says ‘with the Lord’s help we have assembled sacred letters in nine *codices* . . .’ (Mynors 1937, 36, 11.3). He seems to refer to the same nine codices when he says:

... insofar as my age has allowed, I have gone over all nine *codices* of divine authority, reading [emending] them carefully, after a comparison of ancient *codices* and previous reading on the part of friends (op. cit. 7–8, Pref 8).

Immediately afterwards, he comments that:

We too, impressed by the authority of this very great man [Jerome], have decided that this system [layout *per cola et commata*] ought to be followed (op. cit. 8, Pref 9).

His final comment is rather ambiguous:

In the second book of his work *On Christian Learning* the blessed Augustine, in accordance with the afore-mentioned nine *codices*, which the Holy Church approves, describes the Scriptures as being contained in seventy-one books (op. cit. 39, 13.2).

This last has been taken to indicate that Cassiodorus arranged the *Novem Codices* according to the Augustinian order (Marsden 1995b, 133), but seems more likely to refer to the number of canonical books he actually included in the *Novem Codices*. Thus Cassiodorus seems to be saying that he produced a Bible in nine volumes, checked and emended it in the approved manner, laid it out according to Jerome’s system of breaking the lines to indicate natural pauses in the readings, and included the seventy-one books authorized by Augustine.

From this evidence, most scholars have inferred that the layout conclusively indicates that Cassiodorus used the Vulgate for the *Novem Codices* (Marsden 1995b, 136, n 125). Marsden argues persuasively, however, that Cassiodorus seems rather to be explaining why he used Jerome’s layout for a text with which it is not normally associated – that the text of the *Novem Codices* was not the Vulgate. Thus, we do not know what text was used in the *Novem Codices*, because Cassiodorus’s information is extraordinarily ambiguous. Cassiodorus arranged his whole reading programme and the text of *Institutiones* around the *Novem Codices*, and yet his references to them are consistently obscure. Every other text he mentions is clearly defined by reference to its authorship,

translation, strengths and weaknesses. Thus, the mystery surrounding the *Novem Codices* seems to have been created deliberately. Understanding of why Cassiodorus found it necessary to do this throws light on his clues about the identity of the text.

Cassiodorus states his position with regard to textual authority and scholarship very clearly. It has already been shown that he directly claimed authorship of a commentary on the Psalms, and the diagrams, commentary material and tabernacle image in the *Codex Grandior*, but only claimed to have transcribed the rest of the *Codex Grandior* and the *Codex minutiore manu conscribendum*, which contained Jerome's Hexaplaric and Hebraic versions respectively (Marsden 1995b, 116–17, 132). Thus, Cassiodorus discriminated carefully between authorship and scribal transmission. With regard to authority, he is equally clear. In *Institutiones* he repeatedly recommends his monks to consult the most well-established and orthodox sources first, and only to turn to more recent sources if the older ones were insufficient (Mynors 1937, 5–6, 34–5, *Pref* 4, *Inst* 10.1–5). He particularly deplores the kind of scholarship which delights in disproving established canons: 'There are, indeed, some who think it a fine thing to know some fact which is at variance with the ancients and to find something new that they may thereby seem clever'. (op. cit. 11.1).

This commitment to orthodoxy over evidence leads Cassiodorus to necessary compromises. For example, where his three authorities on the organization of the Bible conflict, he decides that they are not contradictory but complementary (op. cit. 40, 14.2), and he reproduces them all in the *Institutiones* and in the *Codex Grandior* (Fig 28.2). This takes a more interesting twist with respect to the text of *Institutiones* itself. It is well known that the first nine chapters concern divisions of the Bible text. The titles fall more or less into the order Cassiodorus describes for Jerome, but the text follows another order because in Chapters 3–5 the text and titles do not coincide. Thus, Chapter 3 is titled '*Prophetarum*', but the text concerns the Psalter; Chapter 4 is '*Psalteri*', but the text concerns the books of Solomon; and Chapter 5 is '*Salomonis*', where the text is about the Prophets. The text therefore follows Hilary's order in contrast to the titles and Cassiodorus has successfully represented two possible orders without having to choose between them. With regard to the titles of the *Novem Codices* themselves, it can be seen that unless they had volume numbers clearly displayed on their covers, they could be permuted to reflect either Augustine's order or Hilary's order and, again, no choice has to be made.

But organization is not the only problem with Biblical texts. The various authoritative translations also conflict periodically. Cassiodorus's response to this is an unusually long chapter (15) with detailed instructions for dealing with the problem. His main thrust is to avoid interference wherever possible and, where not, to consult and compare Jerome's Hexaplaric and Vulgate texts, and especially the Greek text which was the most authoritative of all (op. cit. 47–8, 15.11). In fact, Cassiodorus made these texts easily accessible,



COMPARISON OF TITLES AND ORGANIZATION							
Institutiones Chapter Titles	St Jerome	Institutiones Text Order	Codex Amiatinus	Septuagint, Hilary	St Augustine	Books in Cupboard	Institutiones Abbreviations
Octateuchus	Octateuch	Octateuch	Octateuch	Octateuch	(‘Historia’) Octateuch	OCT LIB LEG	OCT
Regum	Kings	Kings Chronicles (Paralipomenon)	Kings Chronicles	Kings Chronicles	Kings Chronicles	REG PAR L VI	REG
Prophetarum	Prophets Job (from Wri)	Psalms	Psalms	Psalms	Writings	HIST LIB VIII	PSL
Psalterii	Psalms	Solomon	Solomon	Solomon	(‘Prophetarum’) Psalms	PSAL LIB I	SAL
Salomonis	Solomon	Prophets	Prophets	Prophets	Solomon	SAL LIB V	PROP
Agiographorum	Chronicles Writings	Writings	Writings	Writings	Prophets	PROPH L XVI	AGI
Evangelia	Gospels	Gospels	Gospels	Gospels	Gospels	EVANG L IIII	EV
Epistuli Apostolorum	Epistles	Epistles	Acts Epistles	Acts Epistles	Epistles	EPIST AP XXI	AP
Acta Apostolorum et Apocalypsi	Acts and Apocalypse	Acts and Apocalypse	Apocalypse	Apocalypse	Acts and Apocalypse	ACT AP APOC IS	AAA

Fig 28.2. Textual organizations as presented by Cassiodorus and the *Codex Amiatinus*.

each in a distinctive pandect: the Greek pandect in the eighth bookcase, the Hexaplaric *Codex Grandior*, and the Vulgate *Codex minutiore manu conscribendum* (op. cit. 22–3, 37, 40–1, 47–8, 5.2, 12.3, 14.2, 14.4, 15.11). As Marsden (1995b, 137) has indicated, Cassiodorus showed a high regard for all these translations, but, as is well known, their texts do not match. It may be suggested, therefore, that the fourth great Bible at Vivarium was a new Latin edition in which Cassiodorus sought to reconcile all these versions, using the methods outlined in his Chapter 15. He may be referring to this project when he says:

And so it appears that the Divine Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament from the very beginning to the end have been expounded in the Greek language . . . But with the Lord’s aid we follow rather after Latin writers, that, since we are writing for Italians, we may most fitly seem to have pointed out Roman interpreters as well. For more gladly is that narration undertaken by every man which is told in the language of his fathers (Mynors 1937, 5–6, *Pref* 4)

and again:

I have spent the greatest and most zealous toil upon the Psalter and the Prophets and the Epistles of the Apostles . . . I have worked hard not to lack melodious eloquence and not to mutilate the holy books with rash presumption (op. cit., 7–8, *Pref* 8).

Thus, it may be that *Institutiones* was conceived in concert with the *Novem Codices*, as a means of propagating an all-embracing grasp of the Scriptures in the clearest possible manner consonant with orthodoxy. Cassiodorus's admiration for long-established orthodoxy, and his horror of religious or scholarly heresy, could have made it difficult or undesirable for him to outline this project explicitly. Instead, by demonstrating all the ways his new edition harmonized with existing translations and commentaries, he could present it as an 'authorized version' backed by the highest authorities.

The result is that, despite the apparent clarity of Cassiodorus's account in *Institutiones*, there is no specific description of the *Novem Codices* from which the artist of the *Codex Amiatinus* could have reconstructed them. Indeed, if he was 'reconstructing' them, he made some surprising decisions. For example, rather than duplicating the chapter titles in *Institutiones*, the artist substituted Augustine's umbrella title '*Historia*' for the otherwise universal group title '*Agiographorum*' (Fig 28.2). Likewise, the abbreviations for these titles do not match those recommended by Cassiodorus (Corsano 1987, 15–16; Henderson, G 1993, 82; cf Mynors 1937, 67, 26.1–2). So this image of the *Novem Codices* does not seem to be based on Cassiodorus's clues. The conclusion is hard to avoid: that the books in the cupboard are likely to have been done 'from life', and the *Novem Codices* would therefore appear to have been at Wearmouth-Jarrow (cf Marsden 1995a, 12).

It is worth noting in this respect that the *Amiatinus* text could be seen as an 'authorised version' rather than a Vulgate. Marsden (1995b, 183) has discussed its content and sources in detail and concludes that since it is the earliest surviving exemplar of the 'Vulgate', it has become the best one by default. Presumably it follows that, if its text is not a pure Vulgate after all, it would be difficult to establish this. But there are indications that this may actually be the case. Scholars have noted the conflict between the prologue of the *Codex Amiatinus*, which states that it contains seventy canonical books (as did the *Codex Grandior*), and the list of contents which states accurately that it contains seventy-one: the same number as the *Novem Codices*. Moreover, Marsden (op. cit. 140–83) notes that the *Amiatinus* text tends to be 'contaminated' with Roman and Hexaplaric sources, and where older Vulgate texts survive, they are generally considered more accurate than the *Codex Amiatinus*. Given Cassiodorus's approach to emendation, ideas of accuracy and contamination are probably misleading. The evidence seems rather to indicate that the text of the

*Codex Amiatinus* is not a 'contaminated Vulgate' but the carefully emended, 'authorized version' of Cassiodorus as preserved in the *Novem Codices*. This provides a possible motive for their incorporation into the Ezra miniature. If they were available for copying and were the source of the text in the *Codex Amiatinus*, there would be good reason to document this in some way, and it has been shown that it was one of the functions of art to preserve this kind of information. Thus, the *Amiatinus* Ezra portrait seems to be a historical document as explicit as any written source. Its location at the front of a pandect containing Cassiodoran diagrams, illustrations and prefatory material acknowledges the source of the concept and opening material, and the incorporation of the *Novem Codices* acknowledges the source of the text.

These findings have implications for the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, whose text and canon tables so closely match the *Codex Amiatinus* that it has long been accepted that it derives from the same exemplar. This exemplar is generally identified as having been either the *Novem Codices* (assumed to have been Vulgate) or the *Codex minutiore manu conscribendum*, which Cassiodorus clearly identified as a Vulgate, although it is not known whether this pandect ever reached Northumbria. Brown (in Kendrick et al., 1960, 56) has further argued that the gospel text was replaced in Northumbria by a superior Neapolitan exemplar, and this must now be examined.

The Neapolitan exemplar was suggested by the liturgical apparatus of the *Lindisfarne Gospels*. Brown (op. cit., 24–7, 34–6, 50) suggested that the *Novem Codices* would have no need for liturgical apparatus because they were a study Bible, so this Neapolitan text could not have belonged to them. Against this, it might be suggested that liturgical apparatus would not interfere with the use of a study Bible. Furthermore, there are indications that this liturgy could have referred directly to Vivarium. The identification of the liturgy rests on two references to one Neapolitan saint, Januarius, and the dedication of a basilica of St Stephen. Is this enough? St Stephen cannot be a unique name for a church, and one Neapolitan saint may not indicate a Neapolitan liturgy. In fact, Januarius is not limited to Naples: it seems that there was a church of St Januarius at Vivarium. The earliest surviving copy of *Institutiones* is in an 8th-century manuscript associated with Montecassino now in Bamberg (*Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Patr. 61*, fols 1–67v). It includes a colophon at the end of the text (on folio 67v) which seems to have been copied from the exemplar. This states: *codex archetypus ad cuius exemplaria sunt reliqui corrigendi* (the original book, in accordance with whose examples others are to be corrected). Like many later versions, this text is lavishly illustrated, and since the illustrations are consistent in all the versions, they are believed to derive from Cassiodorus's original. O'Donnell (1979, 22ii–xxiii) has drawn attention to the view of Vivarium on folio 29v (Fig 28.3). With its four-square approach, its colonnade placed sideways, and its generally informative nature, it is reminiscent of Cassiodorus's tabernacle image, so it could indeed be a copy of one of his illustrations. This

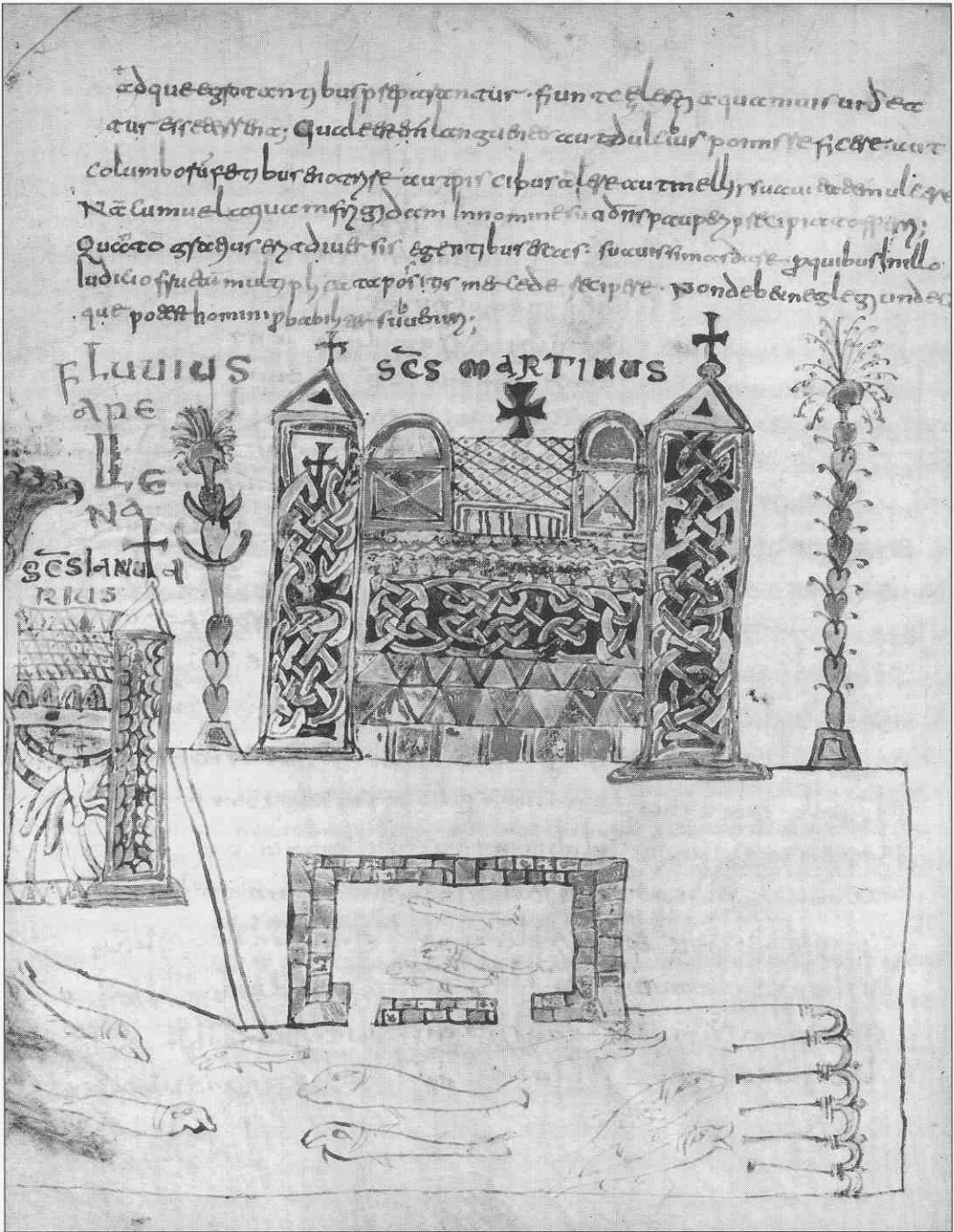


Fig 28.3. View of Vivarium (Bamberg Staatsbibliothek, Cod. Patr. 61, fol. 29v). (By permission of Staatsbibliothek, Bamberg)



makes the name of the church on the left particularly valuable since it is not recorded in the text. It is labelled 'St Januarius'. If Cassiodorus had such a church at Vivarium, it seems quite possible that that saint could be commemorated in one of his own gospel books. So the 'Neapolitan' exemplar may have had a Vivarian origin after all.

But was it the gospel volume of the *Novem Codices*? The evidence suggests that it was. Numerous indications have been cited to show that text of the *Codex Amiatinus* was taken from the *Novem Codices*, and it has been shown that the Ezra picture was considerably modified in order to document the same source. It is not tenable to suggest that only some volumes were used (*pace* Brown in Kendrick et al., 1960, 56). The gospel text in the *Codex Amiatinus* is claimed to be that of the *Novem Codices*, and since this text matches that of the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, we must say the same for that book too. The reference to Januarius is quite compatible with this, and may even have been included to record the same claim. The 'Neapolitan' liturgical material could indeed have been in the *Novem Codices* gospel, as Chapman originally suggested (*op. cit.* 52–3).

Giving an ambiguous 'clue' to the origin of a work in this way is a demonstrably Insular approach to authentication. While the Italian Cassiodorus gave the credentials of every work in writing, Insular artists and scribes tended to treat this kind of information as esoteric knowledge, scattering clues throughout the work rather than providing explicit information. The *Book of Durrow* contains a colophon copied on to the end of the text which clearly implies that the exemplar was by Columcille. But a reader would only find it if he knew what he was looking for; and only someone who knew the story of the illicitly copied text would understand it (cf Lawlor 1916). The *Echternach Gospels* seem to be based on the same exemplar as the *Lindisfarne Gospels* and the *Codex Amiatinus* and, like *Durrow*, they contain a colophon copied on to the end of the text. Known as the *promendavi* note, its geographical, linguistic and textual implications would all suit Cassiodorus emending his *Novem Codices*. But, again, a reader would find it only if he knew what he was looking for, and he would only understand it if he knew who would be in a position to emend what and where (cf Brown in Kendrick et al., 1960, 50; cf Mynors 1937, 23.1). So there is no need to discredit the gospel text of the *Novem Codices*. All his material could have been included in it, and with it a complete set of Evangelist portraits and canon tables. Like the text itself, these decorative elements occur in remarkably similar form in the *Lindisfarne Gospels* and in the *Codex Amiatinus* where an Evangelist portrait is transformed into Ezra, and short canon tables are transformed into tall ones.

Thus, true to the Insular ideal, the books declare their own credentials. Both are derived from the *Novem Codices*, which evidently contained Cassiodorus's new 'authorised version', and were fully illustrated. And the *Lindisfarne Gospels* has been underestimated: it is a complete 6th-century Italian Gospel book in disguise.

## NOTE

1. In the original version of this paper, I glossed over the issue of which translation was contained in the *Novem Codices* because I could find no evidence for the Vulgate and thus found myself in conflict with all published accounts. I am therefore grateful to Richard Marsden for tactfully embarrassing me after the presentation of this paper at the conference on the Golden Age of Northumbria, by pointing out that he had already established that the *Novem Codices* were not a Vulgate but an Old Latin (Marsden 1995b, 137). As a result of this, I reconsidered the matter and have entered into dialogue with him in this version of the paper.