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Editor

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Gaelic MSS. XIV AND XXVII.

These two medical manuscripts belonged to members of the well-known McBeath family of physicians of Islay, Mull, Skye and Uist. The covers of both of these manuscripts have been made, probably in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, out of leaves taken from one and the same medieval service book. The covers would be added to the medical manuscripts somewhere in the Hebrides, possibly in Mull. The medieval service book, from which the leaves were extracted, presumably came from some church in the neighbourhood.

The service book, whose leaves provided these two covers for Ms. XIV and Ms. XXVII, was a large well-written altar missal 12ins. by 8ins. in size. Judging from the portions of the text that can be read, all of the leaves used to make the two covers come from one section of the missal, the section which gives the masses and ceremonies of Holy Week:

Ms. XIV: inside front cover, you have the Passion according to St. John, which is read in the mass of Good Friday.

inside back cover, shows the 'Crux fidelis' of the Adoration of the Cross on Good Friday and the 'Exultet' of Holy Saturday morning.

Ms. XXVII: inside front cover, is the Passion according to St. Mark, which is read in the mass of Tuesday in Holy Week.

inside back cover, you have the Epistle and other parts of the mass of Palm Sunday.

One would expect a large book like this to come, not from some local chapel or small parish church, but from some religious house. This is all the more likely since other manuscripts in this collection have covers made from graduates and similar service books, which are monastic in character. Possible places of provenance in this particular area would be Oronsay Priory, the Nunnery at Iona or the Benedictine Abbey of Iona.

The script of these missal-fragments is very curious and difficult to date. It has some early features and quite clearly it was written in the Celtic area: more than one capital letter is Celtic in style. I have consulted Professor Francis Wormald on this script and his verdict is as follows:

"I have had the opportunity of discussing it with my colleague Professor Julian Brown and we are both of the same opinion that the probable explanation of the curious hand is that it was written by someone who was used to writing an insular hand of 'Celtic' complexion. Both Professor Brown and myself think that late twelfth century would be about right. The scribe was trying to adapt himself to a conventional bookhand of the twelfth century, but his exotic training seems occasionally to get the upper hand."

Now, if we accept that this missal was written in the late twelfth century, this rules out all possible provenances except one, the Benedictine monastery of Iona, founded sometime around the year 1200. This missal would fall into context then as a book written in the scriptorium of the newly founded Benedictine abbey, written by one of the monks, who was trying to produce the current twelfth-century bookhand but his earlier training in the pre-Benedictine monastery of Iona betrayed

itself in occasional letters and details.

If this is the case, as it seems to be, then the missal-fragment, contained in the covers of Gaelic MSS. XIV and XXVII, would be the only manuscript known to survive from the medieval abbey of Iona and it would be an extremely interesting document illustrating the transition from the Celtic monastery to the medieval Benedictine foundation.

In all, there seem to be about a dozen leaves of this late twelfth-century missal, buried in the covers of these two Gaelic medical manuscripts. In view of the unique character of this missal-fragment as an early medieval example of a Hebridean bookhand, I would earnestly suggest that these two covers be taken to pieces and the missal pages extracted so that they may be properly examined and preserved independently.

David McRoberts

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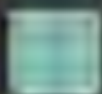
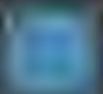
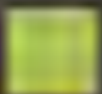
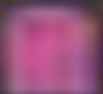
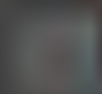
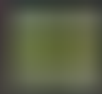
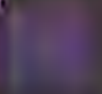
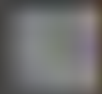
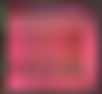
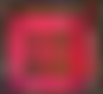
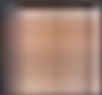
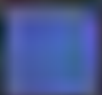
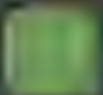
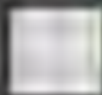
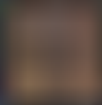
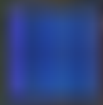
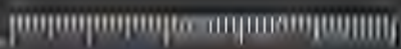
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illa autem...
illis. Tanquam ad leonem gessit cum
gladius ignis, comprehendere me. Coti-
die eram apud uos in templo docens.
et non me tenuistis. Sed ut impleantur scrip-
turae. Tunc discipuli eius relinquentes eum.
et fugerunt. Adolescens autem quidam sequebatur
illum. amictum syndone. super nudo. et te-
nuerat eum. At ille relicta syndone.
nudus profugit ab eis. Et ad dixerunt illum
ad summum sacerdotem. et conueniunt omnes
sacerdotes. et scribae. et seniores. Petrus
autem a longe secutus est eum. usque intro in
atrium summi sacerdotis. et sedebat cum mi-
nistris calefaciens se ad ignem. Summi
uero sacerdos et omnes consilium querebat
aduersus illum testimonium. ut eum morti
traderent. nec inueniebant. Quia
enim testimonium falsum dicebant ad-
uersus eum. et convenientia testimonia
non erant. Et quidam surgentes falsum
testimonium ferebant aduersus eum
dicentes. Quia nos auduimus eum di-
centem. Ego dissoluam templum hoc ma-
nu factum. et per triennium aliud non ma-
nu factum edificabo. Et non erat conue-
niens testimonium illorum. Et surgens
quidam sacerdos in mediis. interrogauit
eum. et respondit. Non scio. et respon-
dit ad ea quae tibi obiciuntur. Et
non respondit. Et respondit. Non scio.

sum sacerdos. interrogauit
Tu es christe fili david benedi-
ctus dicit illi. Ego sum. Et uidebat
hominibus. ad dextris sedente iudice
mentem in nubibus caeli. Summi
scindens uelamina sua ait.
desideramus testes. Audistis
Quid uobis uideretur. Qui
uobis eum esse uel martirem. Et eum
conspuerunt. et uelare facies
lappis eum cedebant. Proprietaria
nistrum alapis eum cedebant. Est
trus in ato de ossum. uenit
cillus summi sacerdotis. Et eum
calefacientem se. aspiciens illum
illi nazareno erat. At ille negauit.
Neque scio. neque noui quod dicitur. Et
ras ante atrium. et gallus cantauit
sus autem cum uidisset illum aliter
pic discere. circumstantibus. quia
de ille iterum negauit. Et post
rursus qui stabant dicebant.
ex illis est. nam et galileus est. et
anathematizare. et iurare. et
bonum est illi. quia dicitur. Et
gallus cantauit. Et recordata
petrus ubi quod dixerat in illis
quod galileus est et
bi. Et respondit. Non scio.
mahe contra. Et
sacerdotis. et illi
et



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