

f. 60r (Quire 8 – outerfold bifolium ff. 60r-69v)

Gospel: Mt.11.8-15

<p>1. regum sunt sed/quid existis videre <u>profe-</u>  2. <u>tam</u> etiam/dico vobis, et/plus/quam/<u>profeta</u>  3. <b>Hic</b>/est/enim de/quo scriptum/est ecce  4. ego/mitto angelum meum ante/faciem/tuam  5. qui/praeparabit viam tuam ante/te ❖❖ ❖❖ ❖❖  6. <b>Amen</b>/dico vobis non/surrexit in-  7. ter/natos mulierum maior iohan-  8. ne baptista qui/autem minor/est in  9. regno caelorum maior illo ❖❖ ❖❖  10. <b>A</b>/diebus autem iohannis bap-  11. tae usque/nunc regnum caelorum  12. vim patitur et/<u>vi</u>olenti rapiunt/illud ❖❖  13. <b>Omnes</b> enim <u>profetae</u> et lex/<u>usq</u>:  14. ad/iohannem <u>profetaverunt</u>  15. et/si/vultis <u>recipere</u> ipse/est helias  16. qui/venturus est qui/<u>habet</u> aures au-  17. diendi, audiat ❖❖</p>	<p><u>prophetam</u>  <u>prophetam</u>    est omitted before illo    <u>violenti</u>  <u>prophetae</u> <u>usque</u> (suspension)  <u>profetaverunt</u>  <u>percipere</u>  et-ligature</p>
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<p><b>ciii</b>  <b>ii</b>  <b>ciiii</b>  <b>v</b>  <b>cv</b>  <b>v</b>  <b>cvi</b>  <b>x</b></p>	<p>1. ... of kings. But what went you out to see? a proph-  2. et? yea I tell you, and more than a prophet.  3. For this is he of whom it is written: Behold  4. I send my angel before thy face,  5. who shall prepare thy way before thee.  6. Amen I say to you, there hath not risen among them that are bo-  7. rn of women a greater than Jo-  8. hn the Baptist: yet he that is the lesser in  9. the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.  10. And from the days of John the Bap-  11. tist until now, the kingdom of heaven  12. is assailed and the violent bear it away.  13. For all the prophets and the law  14. prophesied until John:  15. And if you will receive it, he is Elias  16. that is to come. He that hath ears to he-  17. ar, let him hear.</p>
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Jesus continues speaking about John the Baptist.

At the end of the first line we see *profe* - this is part of *profetam*, which is finished at the beginning of the next line (it's easy to understand this word meaning 'prophet').

At the end of this second line, we again find *profeta* (it should be *profetam*), but here the final letters are calligraphically combined: a tall-*e* is linked to a smaller *t* and *a* (fitting in the end of *profeta* allows the placement of the initial at the beginning of the next line). The uncial-a letterform is different from the half-uncial version used throughout the manuscript. Uncial-a is often used as a feature at (or near) line-ends. These are subject to the Scribe-Artist's typical variation (evident in another instance two lines further on). This smaller version of uncial-a at the end of line 4 has an addition – an attached

vertical-*m* which is subscripted. Overleaf we find another vertical-*m* on f. 60v<sub>5</sub> and two instances of vertical-*n* on f. 61r (see vertical-*n* on f. 59v<sub>8</sub> also).

*Profetam* here refers to John the Baptist – the precursor of Jesus who lived in the wilderness. The relatively simple decoration inside the initial *h* looks like a blue interlaced plant or vine with some green fruit and might refer to the wild food on which he lived.

An *s*-shaped superscripted *m* completes *caelorum* at the end of line 11. The final two letters of *usque* are suspended and are indicated by a vertical pair of points (line 13).

The most striking features on the page are the two large zoomorphic *a*-initials – on the left halfway down the page. The first begins *Amen dico vobis* (Amen, I say to you), a phrase sometimes used by Jesus to get the attention of his disciples. In creating this initial the Scribe-Artist draws our attention to what Jesus is saying as the more prominent reclining cat gapes at the text. He seems somewhat humourous with his bright red tongue lolling over his shoulder. His expression shows surprise, perhaps responding to these lines where Jesus explains that while John the Baptist is greater than anyone on earth, he is inferior even to those of the lowest rank in heaven. His name *baptista*, just below the cat, is emphasised by its hind legs and tail (including the tip). *Iohannes* is written before it - broken between the lines.

The prominent curved creature in the second of these *a*-initials looks like some kind of serpent, and he too appears to be looking up at the same account of John. Its snout pushes the text in from the left margin, while it is also indented from the right edge. This arrangement makes the line shorter, and is a way of giving it extra emphasis on the page.

Moving down a couple of lines we find the next prominent feature - a diamond or lozenge-shaped *o*. This distinctive letter has some spiral decoration at the top, some interlacing inside, and at the bottom, a pair of heads; these seem to be looking up in the direction of the other initials and, like the cat, also seem to have humourous expressions. Perhaps they're amazed by the gymnastics being performed by the creatures in the initials above?

Moving to the second last line and about half way we read *qui habet aures* (whoever has ears). The next word *audiendi* is broken and is finished in the last line, where we also have the final word *audiat*. *Audiendi* and *audiat* relate to hearing (like 'audio' in English). The complete phrase *qui habet aures audiendi audiat* means 'whoever has ears let him hear' (yet another instance where the Scribe-Artist highlights speech, here indirectly through hearing).

The end of *habet* is written as an *et*-ligature – these letterforms have a stroke stretching out in front and the one here looks like a little fish. *Et*-ligatures are quite common throughout Kells, including those with such fish-like horizontal strokes.

The last line is quite short, with greater indents than those mentioned earlier. These, and the red flourishes at either side, contribute to highlighting the phrase about listening or paying attention – perhaps like the cat and the serpent who are focused on the text in the initials above.

**Initials:** The four large initials mark the four Eusebian Sections which begin on the page and each one is followed by a single enlarged letter. Animals form two large *as* in the middle and these are the most striking features on the page. In the first (line 6) we see a creature confined by two felines (one with a mane). A similar arrangement occurs in the next one (line 10) where the cat/lion with a mane is now joined by an unusual serpent to corral a bird. The serpent and the cat in the initial above appear to be focused on the same text. The cat seems to express surprise, perhaps at Jesus' revelation that while

John is greater than any mortal, he is inferior even to the lowest ranking celestial being. This pair of initials is unique in the book, but the pose of the ‘surprised’ cat resembles two others marking superscripted letters on ff. 55r<sub>17</sub> and 81r<sub>17</sub>.

A diamond or lozenge-shaped initial-*o* occurs from time to time in Kells (see e.g., ff. 31r<sub>7</sub>, 34v<sub>5</sub>, 92v<sub>8</sub>, 240r<sub>15</sub>, and 290r<sub>7</sub>). Some, like the instance here are elaborated with horizontal feet above and below; this is clustered with another overleaf (f. 61r<sub>15</sub>), but also closely parallels one on f. 109r<sub>9</sub>. Uniquely here the lower ‘foot’ has zoomorphic heads added.

The interlaced plant motif added to the inside of the initial-*h* in line 3 seems poorly executed and may be attributed to the second campaign. It is typical of the Scribe-Artist that he links the plant with the word directly below: it sits on top of *ego* (‘I’) which is here referring to God.

**Mise-en-page:** Line 9 is indented on both sides which emphasises both the end of one Eusebian section and the beginning of another. A more exaggerated indentation occurs in the last line completing the phrase (and this Eusebian section) ‘he that hath ears let him hear.’

This is the first page of Quire 9 (ff. 60r-69v). Like many of Kells’ quires this is made of 5 bifolia (sometimes referred to as a *quinion* - 10 leaves/20 pages). The outer pages of quires are often damaged from abrasion. This may occur when the binding of the book breaks down, as will happen over time, and especially if the book remains unbound for a period. The damage here and on the facing page (f. 59v) is minimal.

**Second Campaign Additions:** The indentation in the final line, noted above, is given further emphasis by the red flourishes added at either side. Much of the red dotting around the four large initials has been lost. Sets of triple red dots have been added to the sides of the diamond-shaped *o*. The triple point punctuation mark at the end of line 5 has been doubled with three later sets in red. The triple point punctuation at the end of line 9 is more unusually doubled with three small circles (see f. 54r<sub>13</sub> for the only other instance of this). As mentioned earlier, the graphic quality of the plant inside the *h*-initial is relatively poor and seems compatible with the work of the second campaign. Much of the painting, especially the thin green ‘wash,’ also seems consistent with the diminished quality of this phase of work.