

## SOME ILLUSTRATED MANUSCRIPTS OF THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS<sup>1</sup>

By FRANCIS WORMALD, Litt.D., F.B.A.

PROFESSOR OF PALAEOGRAPHY IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

THE honour paid to the saints of the Church is as old as the Church and it would be quite out of place to discuss it. Yet it is not without significance that the original *Latin Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs* has some claim to be the earliest consecutive piece of Christian Latin that has been preserved to us.<sup>2</sup> These records of torture and imprisonment stirred the early Church. The opening words of the Passion of St. Perpetua bear witness to this.<sup>3</sup> "If ancient examples of faith, both bearing witness to God's grace and teaching man, have been written down, that by their reading, as if by their showing forth, God may be honoured and man comforted; why should not modern and equally relevant documents be set forth?" Small wonder then that they were written down and read for many centuries to come. The form of the books containing these records is of some interest and will be partially discussed here as it has some bearing on the problem.

In the later Middle Ages the lives of the saints provided edifying reading in three chief ways. First were the lections in the Breviary which were read on the saint's day at Matins in Church. Secondly, there was public reading at meal-times in the religious houses, and finally there must have been reading of a more private kind. One of the most popular collections of these lives is the *Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine composed in the second half of the thirteenth century, but many collections had been made previously in the form of *Passionale*, *Vitae Sanctorum* or the *Vitae Patrum*. In some religious houses there were collections of lives of saints connected with

<sup>1</sup> A lecture delivered in the John Rylands Library on Wednesday, the 12th of March, 1952.

<sup>2</sup> J. Armitage Robinson, *The Passion of St. Perpetua* (Texts and Studies, vol. I, no. 2), Cambridge (1891), p. vii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 60.

the house, as for instance Cotton MS. Vespasian B. xx which is a collection of lives of saints connected with St. Augustine's, Canterbury.<sup>1</sup> In the fourteenth century we see the growth of lives of English saints in such collections as Lansdowne MS. 436, which has been described by Fr. Grosjean in his paper on the life of St. Robert of Newminster in *Analecta Bollandiana*.<sup>2</sup> This manuscript, which appears to have been made for Romsey Abbey, was written in the first part of the fourteenth century and contains forty-three lives of English saints in an abbreviated form. This manuscript was not written for official liturgical use, for it is in an elegant charter hand. It was written for non-official reading. By far the largest collection, however, is that made at St. Albans by John of Tynemouth which became the basis of Capgrave's *Nova Legenda Angliae*.<sup>3</sup> It is important to remember that these collections of lives present the text in an abbreviated form. They therefore are related to the breviary and lectionary lives which are also a good deal shortened.

If the lives of the saints are examined we see in the earliest documents, such as the *Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*, an extraordinary brevity, in some cases amounting almost to obscurity. This state of affairs did not last for very long and during the first millennium there seems to have been a tendency for the biographies of the saints to grow longer and end up as full biographies, of which early examples are Sulpicius Severus' *Life of St. Martin of Tours* and Athanasius' *Life of St. Anthony Abbot*. From the eighth to the twelfth centuries these biographies increased and multiplied and must have been much influenced by the foundations of important monasteries situated on or near the site of the saint's resting place.

Certain manuscripts of these long biographies appear as small books, or *libelli*, which are entirely devoted to the saint, and besides the life and miracles contain also prayers, masses

<sup>1</sup> See *Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Cottonian Library* (1802), p. 442.

<sup>2</sup> P. Grosjean, *Analecta Bollandiana*, lvi (1938), pp. 334-9. Another important English collection is the Codex Gothanus; see P. Grosjean, *Analecta Bollandiana*, lviii (1940), pp. 90-103.

<sup>3</sup> Edited by C. Horstmann, *Nova Legenda Angliae*, Oxford (1901), 2 vols.

and even the musical portions of the Office. They sometimes include monastic records. Such a book is B. M. Harley MS. 3908 which contains the *Life of St. Mildred* by Goscelin, which is followed by lessons to be read at Matins on the saint's day, responds and antiphons with music, sequence for the Mass and finally the story of her translation and miracles, with an account of her miracles and of the foundation of her monastery at Minster in Thanet. It seems likely that the *libellus sancte Mildburge* which Bishop Trillek borrowed from the monks of Much Wenlock in 1346 was of such a kind.<sup>1</sup> If the manuscripts containing single lives of saints are examined, it frequently happens that they are found to be smallish quartos, rather square, and are usually written in a good hand which frequently resembles the hand of the liturgical books. Two of the manuscripts containing the first, B, life of St. Dunstan, in Arras and St. Gall,<sup>2</sup> are books of this shape, size and writing, and the late tenth century manuscript of Eddi's life of Wilfred, now Cotton MS. Vespasian, D. vi, fos. 78-125, bound up with other material, was undoubtedly a book of this kind. If the manuscripts of the lives of the saints are examined it will be found that these forms survived until quite late in the Middle Ages. The unique manuscript now in the British Museum, Egerton MS. 3143, containing the life of St. Robert of Knaresborough, which was written late in the fourteenth century, is of this type, a small quarto ; but it is no longer written in a fine liturgical hand like the manuscripts of an earlier date ; it is in a vernacular hand with charter influences.<sup>3</sup>

During the course of the eleventh and twelfth centuries a number of these *libelli* were written and were accompanied by long sets of pictures as well as elaborate initials. The history of the growth of cycles of illustrations of the lives of the saints has never been written, nor a list of manuscripts containing such cycles of pictures ever collected. It is clear that once

<sup>1</sup> See *Registrum Johannis de Trillek Episcopi Herefordensis*, ed. J. H. Parry (Canterbury and York Society, viii (1912), pp. 96, 97).

<sup>2</sup> B.H.L. 2342.

<sup>3</sup> See P. Grosjean, *Analecta Bollandiana*, lvii (1939), p. 364 ; also R. Flower, *British Museum Quarterly*, xii (1938), pp. 81, 82.

churches began to be decorated with series of pictures, it was only natural that the lives of the saints should be included as well; at any rate in the West. They must also have been inspired by the great cycles which were provided for the Old and New Testament which have certainly adorned churches since the fourth century. Such a series of Old Testament scenes, dating probably from the fifth century, decorate the nave of the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome. With the growth of large churches on the sites of the burial places of the saints, it is most likely that the walls were decorated with scenes from the life of the patron. An early description of a series of scenes from the life of St. Euphemia exists by St. Asterius of Amasia. These scenes were painted on cloths which were placed near the martyrdom of the saint at Chalcedon in Asia Minor, and they have been compared by Professor Grabar with certain scenes from the Passion of Our Lord.<sup>1</sup> This comparison between the martyrdom of a saint and the Passion of Christ persists and can be seen in some of the lives of the saints not only in pictorial form, but also in literature. In the English verse life of St. Thomas of Canterbury in the *South English Legendary*, there is a description of the saint's return to Canterbury shortly before his death.<sup>2</sup> In this description there is a direct comparison between Becket's return to Canterbury and the entry into Jerusalem. The pictorial influence of a series of Passion scenes on the life of a saint can be seen in the twelfth century manuscript of the Life of St. Edmund the Martyr, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York.<sup>3</sup> This manuscript, which was made for Bury St. Edmunds, contains a long series of pictures illustrating the life of the saint. As might be expected a number of the scenes

<sup>1</sup> A. Grabar, *Martyrium*, Paris (1946), ii, pp. 72, 73.

<sup>2</sup> Ase ore louerd a-palme-sonenday : honovred was i-nouȝ  
þo he rod into Jerusalem : and toward is deþe drovȝ  
Al-so was þis holi man : ase men miȝten i-seo þere ;  
For ore louerd wolde þat is deth : semblable to his were.

See 'The Early South English Legendary', ed. Horstmann, *Early English Text Society* (1887), pp. 159, 160, vv. 1855-8.

<sup>3</sup> New York, Pierpont Morgan Library MS. M. 736; see 'New Palaeographical Society', 1st series, Plates 113-15.

relate to the actual martyrdom of the saint by the Danes. There is one scene where he is scourged, having been tied to a tree, in which the iconography seems to be inspired by scenes of the Passion of Christ. A comparison has only to be made between this scene and the miniature of the Flagellation of Christ in the contemporary St. Alban's Psalter now at Hildesheim for this connection to become quite plain. (Plate.)

It is unfortunate that extremely little is known about any early series of scenes from the lives of saints in the West. As will be seen none actually exists before the ninth century either on the walls of churches or in objects or manuscripts. The best information to be obtained is from the *tituli* or verses which were often composed for placing with pictorial representations. Some have survived normally in collections of poetry. The earliest of these are concerned with the Old and New Testaments, as for instance the Dittochaeon of Prudentius, which dates from the second half of the fourth century. A fifth century set of *tituli* of the middle of the century were also composed for the church of St. Martin at Tours. Even more specific are the verses composed by Venantius Fortunatus. There we find the story of the cloak, healing of the leper and a number of other scenes.<sup>1</sup> An eleventh century life of St. Martin, still in the library at Tours, shows a number of scenes from his life.<sup>2</sup> These drawings may well be copied from earlier ones, but they do not entirely agree with the poem of Venantius Fortunatus.

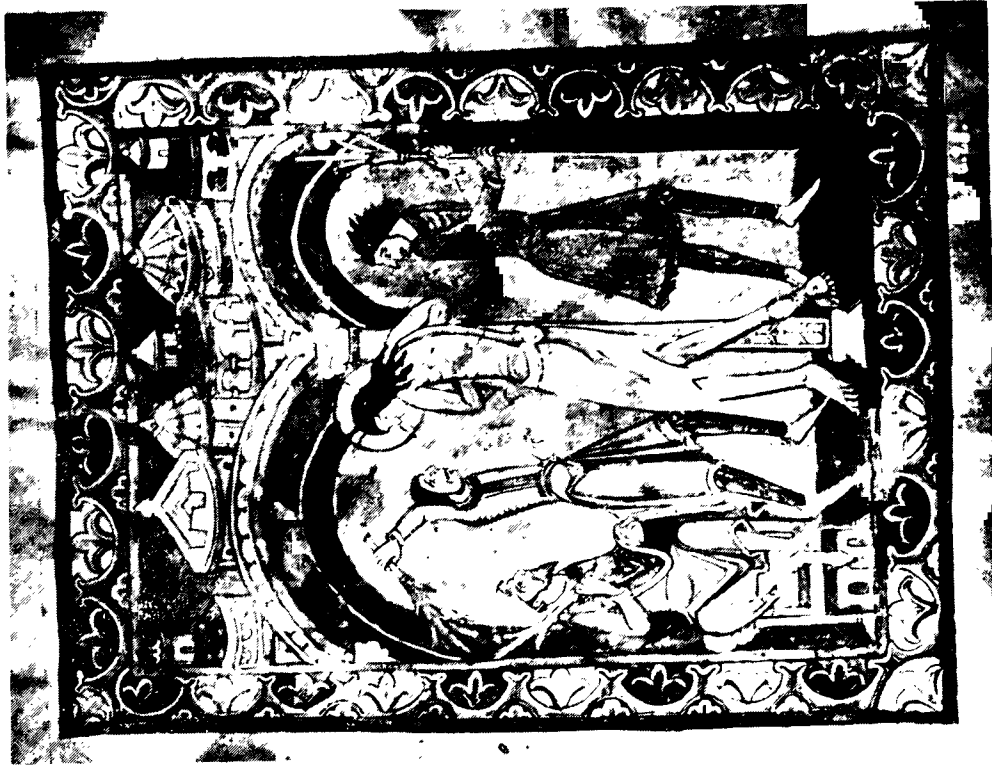
These *tituli* in honour of a saint continued to be written during the Middle Ages, and may well be the origin of the verses which are so frequently found in conjunction with representations of the lives of the saints. In connection with this there may be mentioned the verses which are attached to the miniatures of the life of St. Quentin which we shall have occasion to notice later on. A series of *tituli* relating to St.

<sup>1</sup> See Julius von Schlosser, *Quellenbuch zur Kunstgeschichte des Abendländischen Mittelalters*, Vienna (1896), pp. 37-42.

<sup>2</sup> Tours, Bibliothèque Municipale MS. 1018; see E. K. Rand, *A Survey of the Manuscripts of Tours*, Medieval Academy of America, Cambridge, Mass. (1929), i, pp. 200, 201 (no. 225), Pl. cxciv, where two drawings are reproduced.



The Flagellation of St. Edmund.  
New York, Pierpont Morgan Ms. 736, f. 26.



The Flagellation of Christ.  
Hildesheim, Albani Psalter.



Wulfstan of Worcester have survived in a thirteenth century manuscript from Worcester, now in the National Library of Wales.<sup>1</sup> The late Robin Flower, who published the verses, showed that they were intimately related to a series of verses in some windows in the cloister at Worcester Cathedral Priory still existing in the sixteenth century. A series of verses may still be seen on the shrine of St. Hadelinus preserved at Visé in Belgium, made in the eleventh century, as well as on the more sumptuous shrine of St. Heribert of Cologne, both of which are decorated with scenes from the life of the saint.<sup>2</sup> The Worcester verses might well have been composed in connection with the translation of the saint in 1218.

From what has been said it will be seen that from the fourth century onwards there existed series of scenes from the lives of saints which were used to decorate the walls of the churches and objects connected with the saint. This state of affairs continued in the ninth century. The longest series which can definitely be assigned to the ninth century is the golden altar in the church of San Ambrogio at Milan which was made in Lombardy towards the middle of the century.<sup>3</sup> This object contains a number of scenes from the life of St. Ambrose and may well be based upon an older and longer series of pictures. Some ivories of the Carolingian period also exist, particularly a fine plaque, now at Amiens, with representations of the life of St. Remigius of Rheims.<sup>4</sup> What is surprising, however, about all these representations is that until the tenth century

<sup>1</sup> Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Peniarth MS. 386 (Hengwrt 362); see Robin Flower, 'A Metrical Life of St. Wulfstan of Worcester' in *The National Library of Wales Journal*, i (1940), pp. 119-30, particularly pp. 124-5.

<sup>2</sup> For the shrine of St. Hadelinus, see Comte J. de Borchgrave d'Altena, 'Notes au sujet de la Châsse de Saint Hadelin conservée à Visé, in *La Revue Belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art*, xx (1951), fasc. I, pp. 15-27.

<sup>3</sup> See Géza de Francovich, 'Arte Carolingia ed Ottoniana in Lombardia' in *Römisches Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, vi (1942-44), pp. 182-221, with good illustrations. I wish to thank Dr. Otto Pächt for this reference.

<sup>4</sup> A. Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen . . . viii-xi Jahrhundert*, i, Berlin (1914), no. 57, Pl. xxiii. A scene from the life of St. Gall is to be found on a tenth century ivory still at St. Gall; see Goldschmidt, *op. cit.*, no. 163b, Pl. lxxvi.



there are no illustrated *libelli* and as far as I am aware no record of any. It is easy to argue that the scenes which have been discussed were based upon book illustration, but there is not a scrap of evidence that they were. A few *libelli* of saints' lives survive from before the Carolingian period, some, like the manuscript of the life of St. Wandrille, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale, must have been written in fine large uncials in the manner of a Gospel book, but there is little decoration in it and it certainly never contained any pictures.<sup>1</sup> The ninth century manuscript in Leningrad of the *Visio Baronti* cannot be included in the category of illustrated *libelli*.<sup>2</sup>

An early example of an illustrated life of a saint is a manuscript now in the Niedersächsische Bibliothek at Hanover, no. 189, which was made at Fulda late in the tenth century.<sup>3</sup> This manuscript is divided into two parts, the first containing the life of St. Kilian of Würzburg, the second the life of St. Margaret of Antioch. St. Kilian's life has eleven pictures and St. Margaret has ten. Compared with the enormously long series of pictures which are found in the manuscripts of a later date the series for both saints is not very long, but they do provide a set and they are connected with the full text of the life of the saint. Moreover, the lives of the two saints are followed by prayers which show them to be of the pattern of the *libelli*. In his examination of the manuscript Zimmerman remarks that there are certain late-antique elements in the style of the miniatures for the life of St. Kilian. In a scriptorium such as Fulda this is to be expected, since, it will be recalled, it was a centre of learning during the ninth century. It is probable that a set of pictures of the life of St. Boniface was known at Fulda in the tenth century, since a number of sacramentaries

<sup>1</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, lat. 18315; see E. A. Lowe, *C.L.A.*, v, Oxford (1950), no. 675.

<sup>2</sup> Leningrad, Cod. Petropolitanus Lat. Oct. 1. 5; see B. Krusch and W. Levison, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Scriptorum Rerum Merovingicarum*, v, p. 372, Pl. 1.

<sup>3</sup> See E. Heinrich Zimmermann, 'Die Fuldaer Buchmalerei in Karolingischer und Ottonischer Zeit' in *Kunstgeschichtliches Jahrbuch d. k. k. Zentral Kommission*, Vienna (1910), Bd. iv (1910), pp. 39-41. I owe this reference to the kindness of Dr. Pächt.

ascribed to the Fulda scriptorium contain scenes of St. Boniface preaching and also of his martyrdom. It is, of course, impossible to affirm the date of the archetype of the life of St. Kilian, but it would appear to be probably Carolingian and may well be a Fulda invention.

Of a similar date to the Hanover MS. is a book now in the library of St. Omer, no. 764. This manuscript is a life of St. Wandregisilus or Wandrille which was once in the possession of the abbey of St. Bertin.<sup>1</sup> Before the life of the saint are two leaves which have been inserted and which contain scenes from the life of St. Wandrille. They are from the art-historical point of view of little interest since they are rough outline drawings, provincial in the extreme. They seem, however, to be copied from an earlier archetype which, like the life of St. Kilian at Hanover, may go back to the ninth century or even earlier. There is some slight suggestion that the style might be even earlier for it recalls the style of the Cambrai Apocalypse. The Abbey of St. Bertin would naturally take an interest in St. Wandrille, since he was ordained priest by St. Omer. In connection with the date of the Carolingian archetype it may be suggested that a set of pictures was produced about the time of the translation of the saint in 884 at Fontenelle, while this actual copy may have been made after 944 when there was a second translation. Such a date would be acceptable from the palaeographical point of view, and a translation of relics provide the necessary impetus for the production of a *libellus* with a set of pictures. The last picture before the text does not belong to the life of the saint, but represents the author presenting his life to the saint who blesses him.

The Fulda life of St. Kilian and the St. Bertin life of St. Wandrille show the two ways in which a *libellus* was illustrated. The St. Kilian life has the illustrations associated with the text while the life of St. Wandrille has the scenes collected in a series at the beginning of the work. The latter has also a miniature of the saint enthroned or in glory, which later becomes

<sup>1</sup> St. Omer MS. 764. The drawings are found on fos. 8-9b; see Krusch and Levison, *op. cit.*, p. 11 and particularly note 7.

a feature of this kind of manuscript. Something of the same kind is also found in the Hanover life of St. Margaret, though such a miniature is not found in the life of St. Kilian.

During the eleventh century the production of illustrated lives increased, and it is very probable that they can be associated with the reformation and expansion of the Benedictine abbeys during this period. It will be recalled that during the tenth century a number of reforms had been carried out, notably those associated with the names of William de Saint Benigne at Dijon and Gerard de Brogne farther north. The reformation and restoration of a house must have increased the pride in the local patron with the result that fine copies of the lives of the saints must have been produced in many places, even if the accompaniment of a long series of pictures remained comparatively rare. Amongst such manuscripts one may mention the life of St. Winnoc, now preserved at Bourg Saint Winnoc near Dunkirk, where there are fine pictures of the saint, but no general series of pictures illustrating his life. More usually found are very well written books with fine large initials at the beginning of the text. The hand used by the scribes for books of this kind was of the type used for liturgical books and the decorations are on a scale parallel to it. In the splendid late eleventh century life of St. Quentin, still preserved there, the initial page of the opening of the text is of a splendour which should be compared with the Sacramentaries.<sup>1</sup> Similar splendid initials decorate the opening words of a life of St. Amandus from the abbey of St. Amand and now in the public library at Valenciennes, and other examples can certainly be found. From the beginning these books were marked out as holy books which would be more probably in the custody of the sacristan in the treasury than in the general library of the abbey to which they belonged.

To this period belongs the set of pictures of the life of St. Benedict made at Monte Casino and now in the Vatican Library.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a knowledge of the appearance of this manuscript I am much indebted to the kindness of Dr. Hanns Swarzenski and Dr. Reginald Eodwell. The manuscript belongs to the cathedral authorities of St. Quentin.

<sup>2</sup> Rome, Bibl. Vaticana, MS. lat. 1202; see E. A. Lowe, *Scriptura Beneventana*, ii, Oxford (1929), Pl. lxx, where there is a good bibliography.

The manuscript which contains this series is not, strictly speaking, a *libellus* but rather a lectionary. It was made between 1072 and 1086 for Desiderius, who became abbot of Monte Cassino in 1086, and the script in which it is written is considered to be one of the finest examples of the Beneventan script. The series of miniatures illustrate scenes from the life of St. Benedict and his companion St. Maurus. They are, of course, of great importance since they show what the Monte Cassino series was like and they were doubtless made for a *libellus* of the kind which we have been discussing.

Three very important French manuscripts also belong to the eleventh century. These are the life of St. Quentin, still at St. Quentin ; a life of St. Amandus now at Valenciennes,<sup>1</sup> and seven leaves from a life of St. Albinus or Aubin, of Angers, now in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.<sup>2</sup> The first two both contain illustrations incorporated into the text whereas the life of St. Albinus seems to have been a manuscript which favoured the alternative arrangement of placing the illustrations before the text. It would appear that this St. Albinus set, of which only a few remain, was very extensive. The life of St. Quentin is a copy of what is known as the *Vita Secunda* or *Vita Authentica*, and it contains a series of twenty scenes from the life of the saint, mainly concerned with his torture. Each scene is accompanied by a descriptive verse in hexameters.<sup>3</sup> The miniatures are executed in an extremely interesting style which does not resemble the normal run of eleventh-century French illumination. Like some of the other lives which have already been mentioned, such as the St. Omer life of St. Wandrille or the life of St. Kilian, it appears to be copied from an earlier archetype. This seems to be indicated by the curious stage-like architecture which is found in some of the scenes, with rather thin spindly towers which recall in some cases even pre-Carolingian work. The rather energetic figures combined

<sup>1</sup> Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS. 502 ; see *Catalogue Général des Manuscrits des Bibliothèques Publiques de France*, xxv (1894), pp. 403-5.

<sup>2</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Nouvelles Acquisitions, lat. 1390 ; see Ph. Lauer, *Les Enluminures Romanes des Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris (1927), i, pp. 146-8, Pl. lxi, 2.

<sup>3</sup> See *Acta Sanctorum*, Oct. xiii, pp. 727, 728.

with this stage-like architecture recall most nearly the remarkable drawings of the Book of the Maccabees, now at Leiden, and made probably at St. Gall in the first half of the tenth century.<sup>1</sup> It is by no means improbable that this set of St. Quentin pictures should go back to the ninth century at least, since St. Quentin was translated in 835 and 890. The former occasion may well have provided the impetus for the production of these series to be combined with what might be regarded as the official life. On the other hand, there are certain features which suggest that there may have been something earlier at the back of these miniatures. In some cases the ground on which the figures stand is represented by a series of billowing undulations each one of which is decorated with a leaf pattern. Rather similar treatment is to be found in a number of German manuscripts of the Ottonian period, but by far the closest parallel is to be found in the ninth century Apocalypse at Cambrai which itself appears to be an accurate copy of a manuscript of the second half of the sixth century.<sup>2</sup> It is possible, therefore, that the St. Quentin miniatures represent a very much earlier series.

By far the longest set of illustrations belongs to the life of St. Amand preserved in the library at Valenciennes. Actually this series is found in three sets of pictures in two manuscripts. The earliest is in Valenciennes, MS. 502, which is a *libellus* with the illustrations incorporated into the text, and the series amounts to thirty-two miniatures. These appear to have been made at the end of the eleventh century and are contemporary with the manuscript.<sup>3</sup> The illustrations are placed in conjunction with the appropriate chapters but are provided with no contemporary titles as in the case of the life of St. Quentin. They are certainly amongst the most interesting and extensive

<sup>1</sup> See Adolf Merton, *Die Buchmalerei in St. Gallen vom neunten bis zum elften Jahrhundert*, Leipzig (1923), Pl. lv-lviii.

<sup>2</sup> Cambrai, Bibliothèque de la Ville, MS. 386; see A. Boinet, *La Miniature Carolingienne*, Paris (1913), Pl. cliii b.

<sup>3</sup> The manuscript is discussed in B. Krusch and W. Levison, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica Scriptorum Rerum Merovingicarum*, v, pp. 415-16, where it is cited as Codex Valentianensis no. 607 (Mangeart, no. 461). A number of the illustrations are reproduced in this volume, Pl. 2-18.

examples which have survived. As a set of illustrations they must have exercised considerable influence for they certainly provided the basis for the second great series of the same life, preserved in Valenciennes, MS. 500.<sup>1</sup> These miniatures are rather differently arranged as they are placed two scenes to a page instead of, sometimes, several scenes being placed in one miniature. For instance, the scene in which St. Amand is chased from the church by the guardian and subsequently visited by St. Peter is shown in two scenes, with St. Amand being chased away in the top scene and St. Peter's vision appearing in the lower one. In the earlier series we have St. Amand's expulsion in one page (fo. 9vo) and the appearance of St. Peter to the saint on the next. The second series seems to have been made in the second half of the twelfth century and the third was made at the end of the century. This series is an exact copy of the second series and it is interesting to see the way in which the style has been modified in the course of a not very long period of time. These latest scenes are executed in outline drawings on the recto of the leaf which on its verso contains the miniatures of the second series.

So far we have looked at continental examples, it is now time to turn to England. Let it be said at once there are no surviving illustrated *libelli* earlier than the beginning of the twelfth century. Actually there are three manuscripts in all, two lives of St. Cuthbert, one in University College, Oxford (MS. 165), the other in the British Museum (Add. MS. 39943), and a life of St. Edmund, king and martyr, now in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York (Morgan MS. 736). The University College life of St. Cuthbert is a copy of the life of the saint by Bede which was the most popular text throughout the Middle Ages.<sup>2</sup> It is written in a very fine book-hand which appears to date from the early twelfth century. The decoration consists of a coloured miniature at the beginning and fifty-five drawings decorated in coloured outline in a style which recalls the well-known scientific and computistical

<sup>1</sup> See *Catalogue Général des Manuscrits des Bibliothèques Publiques de France*, t. xxv, Paris (1894), pp. 400-2.

<sup>2</sup> New Palaeographical Society, Second Series, Pl. 67.

manuscript made at Durham between 1100 and 1135, now Hunter MS. 100 in the Cathedral Library at Durham.<sup>1</sup> They are also interesting examples of the survival after the conquest of a technique perfected in England in the pre-Conquest period. The coloured miniature at the beginning of the manuscript shows a rather different technique and seems to be more influenced by north French miniatures, particularly a life of St. Bertin, made at the abbey of St. Bertin at St. Omer, and now in the public library at St. Omer.<sup>2</sup> Indeed these coloured miniatures at the beginning of this manuscript seem to show the influence of the life of St. Bertin. Unfortunately nothing is known about the origin of the University College manuscript, though it is extremely probable that it was made at Durham. This is perhaps confirmed by the similarities between the drawings in this manuscript and the second copy in the British Museum, which is known to have been at Durham during the Middle Ages.

In the University College manuscript each chapter is preceded by a chapter heading and a drawing which often combines two scenes. The figures play their parts with a very small amount of extraneous scenery. Whether the drawings are copied from an earlier exemplar is not at all easy to determine. Occasionally scenes seem to be cut off in the middle, from which it might be argued that there had been some kind of reduction. It is quite clear that in some cases figures in the miniatures look out of the miniature as if at a portion of the scene which has not been included in the drawing. It appears that a similar reduction took place when the late twelfth century artist made the miniatures which are in the second manuscript, British Museum Add. MS. 39943. This manuscript, which is also a copy of the life of St. Cuthbert by Bede, was certainly in the possession of Durham Cathedral Priory in the late fourteenth century when it is recorded as being lent to Archbishop Scrope.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> New Palaeographical Society, Second Series, Pl. 125.

<sup>2</sup> St. Omer, MS. 698. For bibliography see *Catalogue de l'Exposition, l'Art du Moyen Age en Artois*, Musée d'Arras (1951), pp. 47, 48.

<sup>3</sup> For the bibliography of this manuscript see British Museum, *Catalogue of the Additions to the MSS.*, 1916-1920, pp. 262-5.

Whether the late twelfth century artist took the University College manuscript as his exemplar is not clear, but there can be no doubt that he had access to the same series of pictures. His practice was to enlarge the scene to a full-page miniature, at the same time removing a portion of the scene.

The last illustrated *libellus* to be discussed is the life of St. Edmund by Abbo of Fleury, formerly in the Holford Collection and now in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York. This manuscript, which was made in the second quarter of the twelfth century, is undoubtedly a Bury manuscript. The text of the life is preceded by a series of thirty-two full-page miniatures which illustrate the Passion of the saint and the first book of the miracles.<sup>1</sup> Stylistically the manuscript is related to a set of drawings which were probably made at Bury rather earlier than the present manuscript.<sup>2</sup> The miniatures are extremely sumptuous and should also be compared with the St. Albans Psalter now at Hildesheim. Unlike the St. Cuthbert MSS., which incorporated the illustrations with the text, the illustrations in the life of St. Edmund are here collected into a series at the beginning of the manuscript. The similarity between the series with scenes from the life of Christ at Pembroke College has already been mentioned.

It is a very curious fact, but it appears most probable that the production of illustrated *libelli* stopped at the end of the twelfth century except in unusual circumstances.<sup>3</sup> From what has already been said it will be quite clear that most of the copies which have been mentioned were produced within the 250 years from about 950 to 1200. A second characteristic about them is that many are connected with the large and important abbeys

<sup>1</sup> See the Pierpont Morgan Library, *Catalogue of an Exhibition of Illuminated Manuscripts held at the New York Public Library, New York, November, 1933-April, 1934*, no. 30, pp. 17, 18, where a good bibliography will be found.

<sup>2</sup> Pembroke College, Cambridge, MS. 120; see M. R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the MSS. in the Library of Pembroke College, Cambridge*, Cambridge (1905), pp. 117-25.

<sup>3</sup> A late example seems to be the late fourteenth century 'Life of SS. Aimo and Vermondo' in Cod. 509 in the Biblioteca Trivulziana in the Castello Sforzesco, Milan; see Caterina Santoro, *I Codici miniati del Rinascimento Italiano*, Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milano, Castello Sforzesco, 1952.



in which the particular saints were buried or venerated. It may be interesting to recapitulate the list. St. Margaret and St. Kilian from Fulda, St. Wandrille from St. Omer, St. Quentin from St. Quentin, St. Amandus from St. Amand, St. Aubin from Angers, St. Benedict from Monte Casino, St. Ludgerus from Werden,<sup>1</sup> St. Radegund from her abbey of Sainte Croix at Poitiers,<sup>2</sup> St. Cuthbert from Durham, St. Edmund from Bury, and St. Maur from St. Maur les Fossés in Paris.<sup>3</sup> It seems that they are manifestations of the pride and grandeur of the monastic houses between the beginning of the Cluniac reforms and the coming of the friars. They were, it would seem, part and parcel of the equipment of a great abbey which could boast a special cult to a saint. The *libellus* was, it seems, a special kind of book which was not under the jurisdiction of the librarian but of the sacristan, and all these manuscripts which have been discussed smack of the Treasury rather than the Library. They were part of the title-deeds as it were of the monastery—perhaps only a little less important than the shrine itself: Relics to be kept with gospel books and chalices.

During the later Middle Ages we do find a number of lives of saints with long series of pictures, but they are no longer illustrated *libelli*. In England one of the first is the series of eighteen scenes from the life of the saint in the Guthlac Roll, now amongst the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum.<sup>4</sup> The roll was made about the year 1200 and undoubtedly for the

<sup>1</sup> Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Cod. lat. Theol. fol. no. 323, twenty-two miniatures, circ. 1100; see A. Chroust, *Monumenta Palaeographica, Denkmäler der Schreibkunst des Mittelalters*, Ser. ii, Bd. iii, Lief. xxiii, taf. 5. I owe this reference to the kindness of Dr. Otto Pächt.

<sup>2</sup> Poitiers, Bibliothèque de la Ville, MS. 250; see Emile Ginot, 'Le Manuscrit de Sainte Radegonde de Poitiers' in *Bulletin de la Société Française de Reproductions de MSS. à Peintures*, 4<sup>e</sup> Année, Paris (1914-20), No. 1. All the miniatures are reproduced. It should be noticed that the miniatures, which are of the eleventh century, have the appearance of being copied from an earlier manuscript.

<sup>3</sup> Troyes, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS. 2273; see *Catalogue Général des Manuscrits des Bibliothèques Publiques des Départements* (Quarto Series), ii, Paris (1855), pp. 923-6; also L. Morel-Payen, *Les plus beaux Manuscrits et les plus belles Reliures de la Bibliothèque de Troyes*, Troyes (1935), pp. 52-8.

<sup>4</sup> B.M. Harley Roll Y, 6; see Sir George Warner, *The Guthlac Roll*, Roxburghe Club (1928).

great abbey of Croyland, St. Guthlac's own monastery. What the purpose of the roll can have been is not known. It has been thought that these roundels might be designs for windows. At the same time it must not be forgotten that this was the period when the great Mosan goldsmiths such as Nicholas of Verdun and Godefroy de Clare were at work on the great shrines. Such shrines were sometimes decorated with roundels depicting the life of the saint. Another feature which differentiates the series from the illustrated *libelli* is the introduction of scenes from sources other than what might be called the official life. In the present case a *libellus* of St. Guthlac would be almost bound to be the life by Felix and there is at least one scene which is not found in the Felix life.<sup>1</sup> The addition of a roundel showing all the benefactors of Croyland holding their charters is an interesting illustration of the connection between the life of the saint and the temporal possessions of the abbey.<sup>2</sup>

Two important English series of the thirteenth century are found in the verse lives of St. Alban and St. Edward the Confessor by Matthew Paris, now in the Library of Trinity College, Dublin,<sup>3</sup> and the University Library at Cambridge.<sup>4</sup> Both these lives are in French verse and the illustrations seem to have been made for them. The illustrations are in tinted outline and are placed at the top of each page. What is significant is that the text is in the vernacular, in this case French, and in verse. The general appearance of the books is quite different. One has only to compare a page of the life of St. Cuthbert from University College, Oxford, with the life of St. Alban. The hand of the life of St. Cuthbert is a good liturgical hand while the hand of the life of St. Alban is quite naturally a vernacular hand in which a number of borrowings from the charter hands is to be seen. What was in the twelfth

<sup>1</sup> i.e. the famous scene of St. Bartholomew presenting the scourge to St. Guthlac; see Warner, *op. cit.*, Pl. viii.

<sup>2</sup> Warner, *op. cit.*, Pl. xviii.

<sup>3</sup> Dublin, Trinity College MS. E. 1. 40; see W. R. L. Lowe, E. F. Jacob and M. R. James, *Illustrations to the Life of St. Alban*, Oxford (1924).

<sup>4</sup> Cambridge, University Library MS. Ee. 3. 59; see M. R. James, *La Estoire de Saint Aedward le Rei*, Roxburghe Club (1920).

century a holy book written as one would write the Gospels, has, in the middle of the thirteenth century, been supplanted by something which is much more related to a romance. This similarity to the romances may also be seen in the life of St. Edward where the text is written in three narrowish columns in a script which, though excellent of its kind, is certainly not a liturgical one. This differentiation between the vernacular verse life of a saint and the illustrated *libellus* is no more clearly seen than in the manuscript of the life of St. Edmund by John Lydgate, now Harley MS. 2278 in the British Museum, which is illustrated with a number of delightful miniatures. These show figures in the costume of the middle of the fifteenth century, though the figures of knights belong to a completely fantastic world of semi-oriental pageant armour such as may be seen on Italian cassone or in illustrations to Livy or other early historians. Once again it will be useful to look at the Pierpont Morgan Life of St. Edmund and compare it with the treatment of the same scene in the life of St. Edmund by Lydgate. The scene is the discovery of the saint's head by a wolf. In the New York MS. this is a very solemn affair, but the same scene in the Lydgate has been changed into a scene of courtly life. The king's head is a beautiful relic instead of a decapitated head, while the surrounding figures would look more suitable in some *chançon de geste*.

An important question remains to be discussed. How far did the illustrated *libellus* influence other works of art, for it is not only books and shrines which contain long series of scenes of this kind. By far the most important monuments are stained glass windows which contain many scenes. Such a series are the St. Thomas windows in Canterbury Cathedral or the great St. William window in York Minster. Curiously enough the St. Cuthbert window in York does not appear to follow the two *libelli*. On the other hand Add. MS. 39943 was, as Mr. Colgrave has shown, the source of the St. Cuthbert's scenes painted late in the fifteenth century on the choir stalls at Carlisle Cathedral.<sup>1</sup> Works of art depicting the lives of

<sup>1</sup> B. Colgrave, 'The St. Cuthbert paintings on the Carlisle Cathedral Stalls' in *The Burlington Magazine*, lxxiii (July, 1938), pp. 17-21.

saints were by no means always based upon a single text. This is demonstrated by what is known of a cloth made for the abbey of Saint-Antoine de Viennois in 1426 with no less than two hundred pictures of the life of St. Anthony abbot. Two picture books were made copying the scenes in this great cloth; one is in the Laurenziana in Florence, the other in the public library at Valetta. Both have been discussed and published by Dr. Rose Graham.<sup>1</sup> The pictures are described as being taken from a certain great cloth which brother John Macellard or Marcellarii compiled and extracted from the legends and life of the saint. Dr. Rose Graham has shown that the sources of the pictures were by no means confined to the 'official' life by St. Athanasius and the *Vitae Patrum*. It is, therefore, most dangerous to assume that the illustrated *libellus* is always the source of a series. New compilations must have been made and each series should be carefully tested. There are tapestries, too, which should be examined, such as the great set of the lives of SS. Eleutherius and Piatas, woven at Arras in 1402 for the Cathedral of Tournai. In this series we again see the life of the saint accompanied by a *titulus*, though this time it is in *French*.

Thus we see that throughout the Middle Ages these pictures of the Christian heroes were being produced to hang in their churches. Side by side were the illustrated *libelli* with their sets of pictures, but they are parallel movements and do not necessarily depend on each other. Indeed it would appear that the illustrated *libellus* is a later appearance. Moreover, it is significant that the latter belong to a period when the monastic scriptorium was at its height and monastic prosperity at its greatest. When the production of highly illuminated books became the business of the lay scribe and the lay artist, the production of such volumes was only too likely to decline;<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rose Graham, *A Picture Book of the Life of Saint Anthony the Abbot*, Roxburghe Club (1937).

<sup>2</sup> The famous manuscript of the *Vie de Saint Denis*, Paris Bibliothèque Nationale MS. fr. 2090-2092, presented to Philippe le Long in 1317, is really a compromise. It was originally written for Philippe le Bel and the text was in Latin, but before it was completed a French translation was interpolated. Another earlier manuscript, Paris, Nouvelles Acquisitions fr. 1098, circ. 1250,

A more important factor was the removal of artistic patronage away from the monastery to the court and to the great secular ecclesiastics, and to the rich merchant. The illustrated *libellus* was a mirror for monks, part of the relics of the monastery. When in the thirteenth century organized religion veered away from the old-fashioned monasticism of the great abbey, the illustrated *libellus* seems to have lost something of its *raison d'être* and the evidence implies that it gradually disappeared or at any rate took on quite a different form.

reproduced by the Bibliothèque Nationale, is a French life only. The illustrations in this manuscript may, however, derive from an illustrated *libellus*.