

THE GOSPEL BOOK OF ABBESS SVANHILD OF ESSEN IN THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY¹

By RAINER KAHSNITZ

KUNSTHISTORISCHES INSTITUT, UNIVERSITY OF BONN

ESSEN on the Ruhr was prominent long before, in the nineteenth century, it became a city of coal and steel and one of the most important centres of heavy industry on the continent. From the early Middle Ages to the beginning of that century it was the seat of one of the most notable communities of aristocratic gentlewomen in the Holy Roman Empire, the Abbesses of which frequently came from the imperial and royal house. Today an imposing Minster and priceless ecclesiastical treasures, not easily matched among the extensive church treasures of the Middle Ages which have survived, are reminders of the splendours of this foundation. In addition, there are to be found in the Treasury of the Minster church a number of early medieval manuscripts, among them the famous *Gospel Book* of Abbess Theophanou (1039-58), adorned with miniatures and having a cover of gold and ivory on which Theophanou herself is depicted

¹ This article was submitted in German. I am greatly indebted to Dr. F. Taylor, Keeper of Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library, for making the translation.

The following abbreviations have been used: Bloch—Schnitzler: Peter Bloch and Hermann Schnitzler, *Die ottonische Kölner Malerschule*, vol. i (Düsseldorf, 1967); Chroust: Anton Chroust, *Monumenta Palaeographica—Denkmäler der Schreibkunst des Mittelalters*, Series II, vol. iii (Munich, 1914-17); Dausend: Hugo Dausend, *Das älteste Sakramentar der Münsterkirche zu Essen, literarhistorisch untersucht (Liturgische Texte und Studien, I)*, philosophische Dissertation, Munich (Düsseldorf, 1920); EB: *Beiträge zur Geschichte von Stadt und Stift Essen* (Essen, 1880 etc.); Humann: Georg Humann, *Die Kunstwerke der Münsterkirche zu Essen, Text- und Tafelband* (Düsseldorf, 1904); Jammers: Ewald Jammers, *Die Essener Neumenhandschriften der Landes- und Stadt-Bibliothek Düsseldorf*, (= *Veröffentlichungen der Landes- und Stadt-Bibliothek Düsseldorf*, 1) (Ratingen, 1952); MGH: *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*; Lacomblet: Theodor Jos. Lacomblet, *Urkundenbuch für die Geschichte des Niederrheins oder des Erzstiftes Coeln, der Fürstentümer Jülich und Berg, Geldern, Meurs, Cleve und Mark und der Reichsstifte Elten, Essen und Werden*, vol. i (Düsseldorf, 1840); Schnitzler, *Schatzkammer*: Hermann Schnitzler, *Rheinische Schatzkammer* (vol. I) (Düsseldorf, 1957); Zimmermann: Walter Zimmermann, *Das Münster zu Essen* (= *Die Kunstdenkmäler des Rheinlandes*, Beiheft 3) (Essen, 1956).

at the feet of the enthroned Mother of God. Much must have been lost in the course of centuries, but it was probably not until the nineteenth century that another Essen *Gospel Book*, that of Abbess Svanhild, left the Abbey Treasury. Today it forms part of the collections of the Rylands Library, a library rich in medieval German illuminated manuscripts.

I. THE ABBEY OF ESSEN IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

Essen was founded about 852 by Bishop Altfrid of Hildesheim (c. 800-74).¹ At the Synod of Cologne in 870 Altfrid announced to the assembled Bishops that he had built on his own domain at Essen a church in honour of the Holy Trinity, the Blessed Virgin Mary and the holy Martyrs Cosmas and Damian and had established there a community of maidens dedicated to God ("sanctimonialium congregationem") under the rule of an Abbess. The document recording this—ostensibly of 27 September 877—has survived only in a forgery made about 1100, but there can be no doubt that behind it lies a genuine document of about 870.² The founder, Altfrid,³ was a distant relative of the ducal house of Saxony, from which, later, Henry I was raised to the dignity of German king (916-36) and Otto the Great to that of Roman emperor (962-73). From the researches of Zimmermann and van de Loo⁴ we know that from the time of

¹ For the history of Essen see: F. Ph. Funcke, *Geschichte des Fürstentums und der Stadt Essen* (Mühlheim a.d. Ruhr, 1848); Konrad Ribbeck, *Geschichte der Stadt Essen* (Essen, 1915); Robert Jahn, *Essener Geschichte*, 2nd. edn. (Essen, 1957); Zimmermann, pp. 34 ff. (the best summary account of the early history of the church and Abbey); Walter Bader, "Eine Art Einleitung zur Geschichte des Essener Kanonissenstiftes", in *Bonner Jahrbücher des Rheinischen Landesmuseums in Bonn und des Vereins von Altertumsfreunden im Rheinlande*, clxvii (Kevelaer, Cologne, Graz, 1967), 300-22.

² Lacomblet, i, no. 97; Otto Oppermann, *Rheinische Urkundenstudien*, pt. i (= *Publikationen der Gesellschaft für Rheinische Geschichtskunde*, xxxix (Bonn, 1922) 61 ff.; Erich Wisplinghoff, "Beiträge zur Geschichte des Damenstiftes Essen", in *Archiv für Diplomatik, Schriftgeschichte, Siegel- und Wappenkunde*, xiii (Cologne, Graz, 1967), 110-32.

³ On Altfrid see, mainly, Zimmermann, pp. 35 ff.; Richard Drögereit "Von Altfrid bis Theophanu", in *Das Münster am Hellweg*, v (Essen, 1952), 162 ff., vi (1953), 72 ff.

⁴ Zimmermann, loc. cit.; L. van de Loo, "Wie wurde die Abtei Asnide (Essen) widukindisches und danach liudolfingisch-ottonisches Familienkloster? Ein

Altfrid—who appointed his sister Gerswit (d. 30 December, pre-870) as the first Abbess—to that of Theophanou, (d. 5 March 1058), all the Abbesses belonged to this Liudolfian-Ottonian House, and in the tenth and eleventh centuries to the ruling German house also. This, no doubt, is one of the main reasons for the unprecedented splendour of the Abbey at this time.

The Abbey had, by a charter of Otto the Great dated 15 January 947,¹ already received full “immunity”. It was placed under the direct protection of the German king and became thereby a “Reichsstift”. It was expressly granted complete jurisdiction throughout its territories; any authority of the Counts in legal matters was set aside. The right of free election of the Abbess and the advocate were confirmed.² In the tenth century the Abbey must have been granted the right to mint its own coins and levy tolls; the earliest known coin from Essen was minted by Abbess Sophia (1011-39).³ Other privileges under public law followed; thus, Henry III granted Abbess Theophanou on 13 June 1041 the right to hold a six-day market.⁴ In the eleventh century Essen possessed some twenty large manors with about 1,000 smaller ones dependent on them and was one of the wealthiest Abbeys in the Empire.⁵ As a

Beitrag zur Reihenfolge und Geschichte der ältesten Essener Äbtissinnen”, in *EB*, lxxi (1956), 133-41 (with genealogical table).

¹ *MGH. Diplomatum Regum et Imperatorum Germaniae tom. I, Conradi I, Heinrici I, Ottonis I Diplomata* (Hanover, 1879-84), no. O.I.85; Rudolf Giese, “Über die Essener Urkunde König Ottos I vom 15. Jan. 947”, in *EB*, xxx (1909), 93-108; Hans Theodor Hoederath, “Die Landeshoheit der Fürstäbtissinnen von Essen, ihre Entstehung und Entwicklung bis zum Ende des 14. Jahrhunderts”, in *EB*, xliii (1926), 145-94, particularly pp. 159 ff.

² On the free election of the advocate see Erich Wisplinghoff, “Der Kampf um die Vogtei des Reichstiftes Essen im Rahmen der allgemeinen Vogteientwicklung des 10. bis 12. Jahrhunderts”, in *Aus Geschichte und Landeskunde, Forschungen und Darstellungen, Franz Steinbach zum 65. Geburtstag gewidmet* (Bonn, 1960), pp. 308-32, particularly pp. 326 ff.

³ Anton Lehnhäuser, “Die Münzen des Hochstiftes Essen”, in *EB*, xlix (1931), 1-48, Fig. 1.

⁴ *MGH. Diplomata Regum et Imperatorum Germaniae tom. V, Heinrici III Diplomata*, ed. H. Bresslau and Paul Kehr (Berlin, 1931), no. 82.

⁵ Helmut Weigel, “Studien zur Verfassung und Verwaltung des Grundbesitzes des Frauenstiftes Essen (852-1803). Eine vergleichende sozial- und wirtschaftsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Problem der Grundherrschaft”, in *EB*, lxxvi (1960), particularly pp. 312 ff.; and id. “Aufbau und Wandlung der

result of holding these large estates, the Abbess of Essen rose to be a sovereign power and thereby a princess of the Empire. This was a continuing process, beginning in the Ottonian period and ending at the latest in the thirteenth century.¹

To secular authority was early added ecclesiastical. At the request of Otto the Great, Pope Agapetus II issued the privilege of exemption by which the Abbey acquired the grant of the ecclesiastical tithe, the free choice of Abbesses, and exemption from all other ecclesiastical authority save that of the Pope.² It was freed from all diocesan ties and placed directly under the jurisdiction of the See of Rome. The Abbess herself exercised the function of a Bishop. She was the spiritual overlord of the members of the Abbey chapter and of all those living on the Abbey's domains. With her lay the care of souls and the exercise of ecclesiastical legislation and criminal jurisdiction. Naturally her "episcopal" authority was limited to the so-called "potestas jurisdictionis". The "potestas ordinis", the power of consecration and ordination, particularly the right to ordain priests and consecrate churches, was denied to her as a woman. In the eleventh century, ordinations and consecrations appear to have been regularly undertaken by the Archbishop of Cologne.³

Apparently from the beginning, and certainly by the eleventh century, as appears from the spurious "foundation charter" of that date, the ladies of Essen were not nuns but canonesses, and Essen was not a nunnery but a chapter of canonesses. Foundations of canonesses⁴ were frequently found in the early Middle

Grundherrschaft des Frauenstiftes Essen (852-1803)", in *Das Erste Jahrtausend*, ed. Victor H. Elbern, i (text) (Düsseldorf, 1962), pp. 256-95.

¹ Hoederath, op. cit.; Karl Höger, "Die reichsrechtliche Stellung der Fürstäbtissinnen", in *Archiv für Urkundenforschung*, ix (Berlin, Leipzig, 1926), 195-270, particularly p. 258.

² Lacomblet, i. no. 99; Theodor Hoederath, "Die geistlichen Hoheitsrechte der Fürstäbtissinnen von Essen im Mittelalter", in *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte*, lxxix, *Kanonistische Abteilung*, xxxviii (Weimar, 1952), 158-250.

³ Hoederath, op. cit. pp. 203 ff.

⁴ K. Heinrich Schäfer, *Die Kanonissenstifter im Deutschen Mittelalter* (= *Kirchenrechtliche Abhandlungen*, vol. 43/44) (Stuttgart, 1907), pp. 118 ff.; Wilhelm Levison, review of Schäfer, "Kanonissenstifter" [etc.], in his *Aus rheinischer und fränkischer Frühzeit . . . Ausgewählte Aufsätze* (Düsseldorf, 1948), pp. 489-511.

Ages independently of Benedictine houses, but in most countries they disappeared during the course of the eleventh century, surviving only in Germany. They differed from nunneries mainly in that the "sanctimoniales" were not subject to Benedictine rule; that they had their own possessions and their own revenues in the form of benefices; that they were not bound to the "vita communis" but lived mostly in their own houses; and that they did not make any solemn vows, and, in particular, were not bound to perpetual celibacy but could return to the world. In Essen, only the Abbess was bound to perpetual celibacy. The main obligation of the canonesses consisted in the singing of the Divine Office together in the choir, and for this they wore special ecclesiastical habit; the Divine Office apart, they wore secular clothing. The constitution of foundations of canonesses was, according to the decree of the Synod of Aachen in 816, based on the rules which Bishop Chrodegang of Metz issued in 760 for members of the Cathedral chapter in Metz.¹ The "sanctimoniales" of Essen, then, did not form a community of nuns but rather a "capitulum", like the male chapters in Cathedrals and independent collegiate churches, and because of the aristocratic origin of the members of the Essen chapter of noblewomen it was called a "capitulum illustre".² At the end of the tenth century there were to be found among these ladies a number of Greeks, as may be conjectured from the Greek names Antokoneia (25 September), Antephona (20 March and 3 August) and Sophia (5 June) in the obituary list of the Abbey.³ It has frequently been suggested that these were noble ladies attendant on the Empress

¹ *MGH. Concilia tom. II, Concilia Aevi Karolini I* (Hanover, Leipzig, 1906), pp. 421 sqq.

² This is dealt with at length in Otto Schmithals, "Drei freiherrliche Stifter am Niederrhein: Essen, Elten, Gerresheim", in *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein*, lxxxiv (Cologne, 1907), 103-80; Franz Arens, "Die Statuten des Gräflichen Damenkapitels des Stiftes Essen", in *EB*, xvii (1896), 137-48; Helmut Müller, "Die Statuten des Essener Damenkapitels aus dem 16. Jh.", in *Das Münster am Hellweg*, xxi (Essen, 1968), pp. 115-22.

³ Konrad Ribbeck, "Ein Essener Nekrologium aus dem 13. und 14. Jh.", in *EB*, xx (1900), 29-135, and particularly pp. 115, 102, 74, 90. Cf. also Zimmermann, p. 46. Another explanation of the names is given in Richard Drögerreit, "Griechisch-Byzantinisches aus Essen", in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, xlvi (Munich, 1953), 011-15, particularly p. 113.

Theophanou (the Byzantine wife of Otto II) whom she had brought with her from Constantinople and who, after the Empress's early death (991), had been provided with prebends in the Ottonian family foundation at Essen.

Alongside the chapter of aristocratic ladies there existed a chapter of priests in the same Abbey church under a Dean, who was himself subject to the Abbess.¹ Unfortunately, we do not know the date of foundation of this male chapter, which is particularly regrettable, because it could be these clerics rather than the distinguished ladies of the "capitulum illustre" who were responsible for the production of manuscripts. There is a reference to "clerici" as early as the foundation charter of Altfrid of 870/877. Their presence would also, of course, have been necessary for the more ceremonious observances of the Divine Office by the women's chapter. In the Will of Abbess Theophanou (d. 5 March 1058)² there are named as witnesses, among others, six "presbiteri" and a deacon. Significant also is the clause in the Will stating that twelve priests are to celebrate masses for thirty days after her death and that, if there were not priests enough in Essen, others were to be summoned from "my brethren in St. Liudger" (the nearby Benedictine monastery of Werden). One may conclude from this that there was at all times available in Essen itself a considerable number of priests, even if, as seems probable, they did not form their own chapter. A separate male chapter is not definitely attested until 1224 and statutes have survived only from 1260. The male chapter first took part in the election of the Abbess in 1292.³

II. CULTURAL ACTIVITIES IN THE ABBEY OF ESSEN IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

Concerning the internal affairs of the Abbey in the early Middle Ages, in about the eleventh century, we know, not

¹ Franz Arens, "Die beiden Kapitel des Stiftes Essen", in *EB*, xiv (1892), 99-164; Wilhelm Holbeck, "Zur mittelalterlichen Verfassungs- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte des Kanonischen-kapitels am hochadeligen Damenstift Essen bis 1600", in *EB*, xxxviii (1919), 117-18.

² Lacomblet, I, no. 190. For the date cf. below, p. 148.

³ Cf. n. 1 above.

surprisingly, very little. But cultural life there must have borne some relationship to the Abbey's status and to its political significance in the Ottonian period, as the lavish building activities and abundant donations to its ecclesiastical treasures show.

Under Abbess Theophanou (1039-58), a grand-daughter of the Emperor Otto II, there took place a considerable rebuilding of the Abbey church.¹ Of this, only the westwork, the atrium and the crypt (consecrated on 9 September 1051)² have survived. The crypt lies outside the choir and was originally in two storeys. Externally, the westwork consists of a structure of towers, with one central and two side towers. Internally, its ground plan is in the form of a half-hexagon, around which, following the remaining area of the square at the foot of the central tower, is an ambulatory. Above the ground floor, on three arches supported on heavy piers and extending round all three sides of the half-hexagon, is a gallery, screened at the front by two tiers of columns with exceptionally fine capitals. The complex manner in which the different elements of space are merged into one another, on the one hand, and, on the other, the precise way in which this space is used by framing it within architectural forms which repeat themselves harmoniously—this bespeaks the hand of one of the greatest of German architects. In its design this westwork deliberately reverts to the type of structure found in the Minster at Aachen, which, as the Palatine Chapel of Charlemagne, was, in its turn, based on Byzantine buildings like San Vitale in Ravenna. This derivation from the imperial style of Carolingian times, which within the Ottonian empire is found in so many fields, points clearly to the imperial connections of the lady responsible for the building at Essen, herself the grand-daughter of an Emperor and bearing the name of her Byzantine grandmother Theophanou. In this building the highest refinements of taste and the courtly achievements of the Ottonian Imperial house found their final expression at a time when elsewhere the new aesthetic ideal of unrelieved massiveness which came in with the Salic emperors was beginning to appear.³

¹ Zimmermann, pp. 227-66, fig. 237 ff.

² Ibid. p. 52.

³ A detailed account of the structure and its artistic importance is given in Zimmermann, pp. 227-65.

Together with this building, the Abbey's greatest title to fame is the large quantity of Ottonian goldsmiths' work to be found in its Treasury.¹ A large part of this is associated with the name of Abbess Matilda (973-1011), a grand-daughter of the Emperor Otto the Great. The "Golden Madonna", a wooden figure of Mary (973-82) which is covered in gold leaf, is the oldest known free-standing depiction of the Madonna and one of the oldest known figures carved in the round after the decline of antique sculpture in the centuries of the barbaric invasions.² She wears a crown studded with precious stones and gems which is possibly that with which the Emperor Otto II's three year old son (later Otto III) was crowned as German king in Aachen at Christmas 983. There is also a sword which may belong to about 1000; its golden scabbard, decorated with branch work in which are large flower-shaped leaves and numerous animals, shows strong Byzantine influence. Because of its great value and artistic quality it is generally thought to have been an imperial gift. Its place of origin is uncertain, but it has been associated with the craft of the goldsmith as found both at Fulda—in particular, with the golden altar of the Emperor Henry II from the Minster at Basle (today in the Musée de Cluny at Paris)—and at Reichenau.³

The huge seven-branch, bronze candlestick, originally gilded,

¹ The basic study of the treasure is that by Georg Humann, *Die Kunstwerke der Münsterkirche zu Essen, Text- und Tafelband* (Düsseldorf, 1904). See also Kurt Wilhelm-Kästner, *Das Münster zu Essen* (Essen, 1929), with good plates; Leonhard Küppers and Paul Mikat, *Der Essener Münsterschatz* (Essen, 1966), which has a text based essentially on printed sources but coloured plates some of which are quite misleading. For a detailed account of the major items in the Essen Treasury from the point of view of the historian of art, together with plates of first-class quality, see Schnitzler, *Schatzkammer*, i, nos. 39-47, pls. 130-57. Shorter guides are H. Köhn, *Der Essener Münsterschatz* (Essen, 1955); Victor H. Elbern, *Der Münsterschatz von Essen* (Mönchengladbach, 1959). Cf. also R. Messerer, *Ottonische Goldschmiedearbeiten im Essenen Münsterschatz*, a dissertation (typescript), Munich, 1959.

² In addition to the sources mentioned in the previous note, see Harald Keller, "Zur Entstehung der sakralen Vollskulptur in der ottonischen Zeit", in *Festschrift für Hans Jantzen* (Berlin, 1951), pp. 71-91.

³ Humann, op. cit. pp. 96 ff.; Küppers-Mikat, op. cit. pp. 52-54, pl. 17/18; Hanns Swarzenski, *Monuments of Romanesque Art* (London, 1954), Fig. 100; Percy E. Schramm and Florentine Mutherich, *Denkmale der deutschen Könige und Kaiser* (Munich, 1962), no. 86, with plate.

of the church at Essen is known from an inscription to have been a gift of Abbess Matilda; it must have come from Lower Saxony and, indeed, shows the artistic influence of Hildesheim or Corvey. Matilda also commissioned the golden reliquary shrine for the bones of St. Marsus which was completed by a successor, Abbess Theophanou. It was decorated with enamels, precious stones and gems as well as with a golden bulla of the Byzantine Emperor Michael VI.¹ In 1795 it was melted down to prevent it from falling into the hands of the French Revolutionary armies. Four gold crosses decorated with precious stones, gems, and enamels, as well as a reliquary containing the Holy Nail, of similar workmanship, are still preserved today in Essen. Of these, inscriptions show that two of the crosses were gifts of Abbess Matilda and one the gift of Abbess Theophanou.

The large quantity of goldsmiths' work originally produced for Essen naturally poses the question as to whether this work, or at least some of it, may not have originated in Essen itself. On this we have, unfortunately, no information. Certain pieces display individual stylistic features which point to Cologne, but here, as elsewhere, comparable items are lacking. Because of the small amount of goldsmiths' work of this period which has survived and because of the well-known difficulty of assigning it to any particular place, the greatest caution is necessary. Moreover, one should not forget that the Abbesses, because of their close connection with the Imperial court, would undoubtedly be in a position both to commission work wherever they might wish and to bring together goldsmiths from various places.² The cover of the *Gospel Book* of Abbess Theophanou at least seems likely to have been produced within the Abbey's own sphere of influence, as may be conjectured from the definite affinities it

¹ On the candlestick see Peter Bloch, "Der Stil des Essener Leuchters", in *Das Erste Jahrtausend*, ed. Viktor H. Elbern, i (text) (Düsseldorf, 1962), pp. 534-48 and, on the Marsus reliquary, Humann, op. cit. pp. 9 ff., and also Werner Ohnsorge, "Eine Rotulus-Bulle des Kaisers Michael VI Stratiotikos von 1056", in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, xlvii (Munich, 1953), 47 ff.

² For an example of goldsmith's work from Fulda, a late tenth-century relief showing the Annunciation, cf. Humann, op. cit. p. 170, and Hermann Schnitzler, "Nachträge zur spätkarolingischen and frühottonischen Goldschmiedekunst", in *Festschrift für Peter Metz* (Berlin, 1965), pp. 99-107.

shows with stone sculptures of the same period in Werden.¹ The ivory relief on the cover,² copied from a Mosan ivory of the first half of the eleventh century,³ is certainly recognizable as coming from Cologne, for two further ivories by the same master have survived on the bindings of Cologne manuscripts.⁴ The gold reliefs on the cover of Theopanou's *Gospel Book* which surround this ivory may, on the other hand, have had their origin within Essen's own cultural milieu.

III. MANUSCRIPTS OF THE EIGHTH TO THE ELEVENTH CENTURIES IN THE ABBEY OF ESSEN

It is, then, uncertain whether or not Essen itself was a centre for the production of goldsmiths' work. Equally uncertain is the question as to whether there was any literary activity there and, bound up with this, the question as to the role played by books and the library. Some German glosses, a guide to the examination of conscience in German,⁵ and some Greek prayer- and mass-texts have survived in Essen manuscripts. An individual and otherwise very uncommon kind of neumatic notation was also used in Essen and continued there for some time.⁶ Whether in this field there was any exchange between

¹ Rudolf Wesenberg, "Der Werdener Bronzekruzifixus und eine Essen-Werdener Schule des 11. Jh.", in *Bewahren und Gestalten. Festschrift für Günther Grundmann* (Hamburg, 1962), pp. 157-63; id. "Ein kleiner Bronzekruzifixus aus den Werkstätten der ehemaligen Benediktinerabtei Werden", in *Miscellanea Pro Arte. Hermann Schnitzler zur Vollendung des 60. Lebensjahres am 13. Januar 1965* (Düsseldorf, 1965), pp. 132-43.

² Adolf Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser, II* (Berlin, 1918), no. 58; Schnitzler, *Schatzkammer*, i, pls. 136-9.

³ Brussels, Musée du cinquantenaire; Goldschmidt, op. cit. ii, no. 55.

⁴ The Gospel Book from St. Maria Lyskirchen in the Schnütgen-Museum in Cologne (Goldschmidt, op. cit. ii, no. 60; Bloch-Schnitzler, pl. 504) and Darmstadt, Hessisches Landesmuseum MS. 681 (Goldschmidt, op. cit. ii, no. 59; *Die Sammlungen des Baron von Hüpsch, Ein Kölner Kunstkabinett um 1800—Katalog der Ausstellung Köln, 1964*, no. 52, Fig. 63).

⁵ Robert Jahn, "Die ältesten Sprach- und Literaturdenkmäler aus Werden und Essen", in *EB*, lx (1940), 9-142, particularly p. 72.

⁶ Ewald Jammers, *Die Essener Neumenhandschriften der Landes- und Stadtbibliothek Düsseldorf* (Ratingen, 1952); idem, "Die Bedeutung der Handschriften Düsseldorf D 1-3 aus Essen für die Musik- und Geistesgeschichte", in *EB.*, lxxiii

Essen and Werden (an abbey which is of considerable importance in the history of literary, palaeographical and library studies) is quite unknown, in spite of the researches of Drögereit. His main thesis, that the *Heliand*, a Gospel Harmony in German of about 830, originated in Werden is still very much disputed,¹ and his further conjecture, following from this, that it may have been written for the community of noblewomen at Essen,² can accordingly not be substantiated. Other evidence which he has advanced for a connection between Essen and Werden has been either accepted only in part or else dismissed as hypothetical. Basically, there is only one single piece of evidence which favours such a connection: the Will of Theophanou already mentioned. And from this it only transpires that in Essen the assistance of the monks of Werden was called on in exceptional cases for the more ceremonious observances of the Divine Office.

But, quite apart from this, there is definite evidence of cultural activities among the community of noblewomen themselves. As early as 1054 there occurs for the first time a reference to a "scholastica" ("Adelheid scholarum magistra"),³ that is, a canoness who gives instruction to the younger canonesses, probably in plain-song and Latin. This shows that by the middle of the eleventh century teaching was undoubtedly taking place amongst the canonesses (not only amongst the priests), no doubt in accordance with the ruling of the Synod of Aachen of 816 for (1952), 7-21; Bernhard Bischoff, "Die liturgische Musik und das Bildungswesen im frühmittelalterlichen Stift Essen", in *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein*, clvii (Düsseldorf, 1955), 191-4.

¹ Richard Drögereit, *Werden und der Heliand. Studien zur Kulturgeschichte der Abtei Werden und zur Herkunft des Heliand* = EB, lxvi (1950). Cf. the detailed reviews, dissenting from his point of view, by Bernhard Bischoff in *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur* (Wiesbaden 1953), pp. 7-12, and R. Kottje in *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein*, cli/clii (Düsseldorf, 1952), pp. 405-409, where his assumptions, particularly regarding the *Heliand* and other related manuscripts, are disputed and rebutted.

² Richard Drögereit, "Zur Einheit des Werden-Essener Kulturraumes", in *Karolingische und Ottonische Kunst (= Forschungen zur Kunstgeschichte und christlichen Archäologie*, vol. iii) (Wiesbaden, 1957), pp. 60-83, particularly p. 83. In this connection cf. also the reviews cited in the previous note, especially that of Kottje.

³ Schäfer, op. cit. p. 176; Konrad Ribbeck, "Geschichte des Essener Gymnasiums" in EB, xvi (1896), 1-111, particularly pp. 6 ff.

foundations of canonesses. There is, moreover, a moving testimony to the instruction given by the Essen canonesses in the form of a tenth-century letter written by a pupil, in an awkward hand, which has been preserved in the Alcuin manuscript which came from Essen and is now Düsseldorf Landesbibliothek MS. B.3 (fol. 308^v)¹: “ Domina magistra Felhin, date mihi licenciam in hoc nocte vigilare cum magistra Adalu, et ego vobis ambabus manibus confirmo atque iuro, ut per totam noctem declinare volo aut legere aut pro Seniore nostro cantare. Valet et, ut peto, facite ”. The name Felhin occurs amongst the Essen canonesses in the oldest obituary list, and also amongst the names of Essen canonesses in the “ Liber confraternitatum ” of St. Gall.² There are no grounds for assuming that this letter does not relate to a real occurrence. The researches of Jammers³ have also shown that the special Essen form of neumatic notation was retained there at a time when elsewhere there had been a change to other forms. This, too, presupposes the existence of a school.

Manuscripts would, of course, have been necessary both for the school and for the celebration of the Divine Office. Hugo Dausend has identified thirty manuscripts which were owned by the Abbey of Essen.⁴ Subsequently there has come to light only one further item and that is archival (B.M., Add. MS. 30,996).⁵ Of his total of thirty, thirteen date from the period before 1100, five being still in Essen, one in Munich and one in Manchester; the remainder came into the possession of the Landesbibliothek

¹ Chroust, vol. iii, pt. 24, pl. 3; Bernhard Bischoff, “ Die liturgische Musik und das Bildungswesen im frühmittelalterlichen Stift Essen ”, in *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein*, clvii (Düsseldorf, 1955), 191-4.

² *MGH. Libri Confraternitatum Sancti Galli . . .*, ed. Paulus Piper (Berlin, 1884), pt. i, col. 325, l. 18.

³ Cited above p. 131, note 6.

⁴ Hugo Dausend, “ Das älteste Sakramentar der Münster-kirche zu Essen literar-historisch untersucht ”, Munich dissertation, Düsseldorf, 1920. For the late medieval manuscripts, cf. also Heinz Kettering, “ Quellen und Studien zur Essener Musikgeschichte des Hohen Mittelalters ”, dissertation (Cologne, 1960), pp. 13-35.

⁵ Robert Priebisch, *Deutsche Handschriften in England*, II: *Das Britische Museum* (Erlangen, 1901), no. 297; Wilhelm Levison, “ Eine Essener Handschrift in London ” in *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein*, cxii (Düsseldorf, 1928), 149-52.

in Düsseldorf after the dissolution of the Abbey in 1803.¹ An examination of the manuscript collection at Düsseldorf, however, reveals that further Essen manuscripts are to be found there,² including, apart from later codices, seven dating from before 1100. Five of these contain—as do most of the manuscripts of Essen origin so far known—a seventeenth-century mark of ownership by the Essen male chapter.³ As regards the rest, provenance can be established because almost all Essen manuscripts to be found in Düsseldorf were re-bound in a uniform style, probably in the eighteenth century but at any rate at some period before they reached Düsseldorf. This rebinding is in boards, with spines of plain brown leather; front- and back-covers are covered with parchment taken from the same fifteenth-century *Lectionary*. Had not a whole series of Düsseldorf manuscripts been newly bound in 1912, it would no doubt have been possible to identify even more Essen manuscripts.⁴ There is another pointer to the medieval library of Essen. On an opening page of most of these manuscripts, a twelfth- or early thirteenth-century hand, easily recognizable and quite distinctive, has written the title of their contents.⁵ As this hand is to be found in almost all manuscripts known with certainty to have come from Essen, there can

¹ Pfannenschmid, "Die Koenigliche Landesbibliothek zu Düsseldorf seit der Zeit ihrer Stiftung bis zur Gegenwart", in *Archiv für die Geschichte des Niederrhein*, vii (New Series, ii) (Cologne, 1869), 372 ff.

² For considerable assistance in this matter and for allowing me to consult material brought together for a new catalogue of the Düsseldorf manuscripts, I have to thank Dr. Rudolph of the Landesbibliothek there. The origin of MSS. A.6, A.14 and B.80 had already been noted in the exhibition catalogue *Katalog der illustrierten Handschriften und ausgewählter Frühdrucke aus des Landes- und Stadtbibliothek Düsseldorf*, 1951, but without any reasons being given.

³ It occurs generally in the abbreviated forms "Bibl. Can. Essend." or "Biblioth. DD. Canon. Essendiensium", which Chroust (vol. iii, pt. 24, pls. 5-7) incorrectly expands to "Bibliothecae Dominarum Canoniarum Essendiensium". That the male chapter is indicated is proved by the expanded form which occurs in MS. B.113: "Ad Bibliothecam DD. Canonorum Essendiensium".

⁴ Remains of other Essen manuscripts are very probably also to be found amongst the extensive and uncatalogued collection of manuscript fragments (mostly from bindings) in the Düsseldorf library, as also amongst the fragments (mostly parchment leaves later used as covers for documents) which the Düsseldorf Staatsarchiv has deposited in the Landesbibliothek. The identification of these, however, must be left to the palaeographer.

⁵ An example, from MS. B.113, may be seen in Victor H. Elbern, "Das

be no doubt that we have here the writing of some Essen "librarian" of the twelfth or thirteenth century.

Of the total of twenty Essen manuscripts which are pre-1100, the majority belong to the early period of the Abbey and only a few to the eleventh century. With some, a provenance from scriptoria of other houses can be clearly established; for others the provenance is unknown. Some appear to have originated in Essen itself.

The following brief description of these twenty may be of interest:

1. Essen Minster Treasury. *Gospel Book* of c. 800, with numerous German glosses. 188 folios, parchment. 34.7 × 23.5 cm. Modern binding.

This manuscript Bischoff now assigns to North-East France or North-West Austrasia. It cannot, at any rate, have originated in Germany. It contains Tables of Canons and numerous ornamented pages and initials of "barbaric splendour" including the depiction of a "crux gemmata" with the four evangelical symbols (fol. 29^v). Merovingian-Continental and Anglo-Saxon elements are introduced throughout in a highly imaginative manner. Red, yellow and green are the predominating colours. The ornamentation comprises interlacing work, fish and bird motifs, and animal forms.

Lit.: Georg Humann, "Ein Evangeliar der Münsterkirche zu Essen", in *Zeitschrift des Bergischen Geschichtsvereins*, xvii (1881), Bonn, 1882, pp. 121-56 (with five good, coloured plates); J. H. Gallée, *Altsächsische Sprachdenkmäler* (Leiden, 1894), pp. 17-86, (Leiden, 1895), pl. II a-e; Robert Jahn, "Die ältesten Sprach- und Literaturdenkmäler" in *EB*, lx (1940), 75-6; Humann, pp. 37-81, pls. 1-9; Chroust, vol. iii, pt. 24, pl. 4; Dausend, no. 3; Geneviève L. Micheli, *L'Enluminure du Haut Moyen Âge et les Influences Irlandaises* (Brussels, 1939), pp. 85-86, Figs. 113, 114, 116; Kurt Wilhelm-Kästner, *Das Münster zu Essen* (Essen, 1929), pls. 28-30; Schnitzler, *Schatzkammer*, I, no. 47, pl. 157; E. A. Lowe, *Codices Latini Antiquiores*, viii (Oxford, 1959),

Essener Evangelistarfragment" in *Das Erste Jahrtausend*, ed. Victor H. Elbern, ii (text) (Düsseldorf, 1964), pp. 992 ff., Fig. 1.

no. 1192; Bernhard Bischoff, "Panorama der Handschriftenüberlieferung", in *Karl der Große*, ed. Wolfgang Braunfels, ii (Düsseldorf, 1965), 239; Küppers-Mikat, op. cit. (p. 129, n. 1) pp. 23-6 pl. 2.

2. Essen Minster Treasury. The so-called "Small Gospel Book". 240 folios, parchment. 21 × 15.6 cm. Binding of red velvet.

Executed in the Abbey of Corvey (Lower Saxony) about the middle of the tenth century. It contains the Tables of Canons and eight ornamented pages in the usual style of early Corvey illumination.

Lit.: Humann, pp. 279-85, pls. 34-38; Dausend, no. 4; *Kunst und Kultur im Weserraum, 800-1600 = Katalog der Ausstellung Corvey*, 1966, no. 160; Küppers-Mikat, op. cit. pp. 56-57, pl. 20.

3. Essen, former archives of the Minster Church. Remains of a *Gospel Book* of the ninth/tenth century (eleventh century according to Humann). Forty-eight loose parchment leaves. 31.5 × 25.5 cm.

Written in Carolingian minuscule, with initials in red, and containing miniatures of the evangelists Mark and Luke. Mentioned only by Humann and Dausend, this *Evangelia* must now be considered lost. It was still in the archives of the Minster church in 1921, but evidently badly damaged.¹ There are no photographs or descriptions of the miniatures and apart from the references by Humann and Dausend the manuscript has not been noticed.

Lit.: Humann, "Ein Evangeliar der Münsterkirche zu Essen", in *Zeitschrift des Bergischen Geschichtsvereins*, xvii (1881), Bonn, 1882, 121-56, mentioned on p. 156; Dausend, no. 6.

4. Essen Minster Treasury. *Psalterium Quadruplex*. Eleventh century. 140 folios, parchment. 41 × 33 cm. Modern binding.

Contains, in four columns, the three Latin translations of the

¹ Through the kindness of Fräulein Anni Eger of Essen, who has been in charge of them for many years, I have been enabled to make a thorough search of the whole of these archives. The forty-eight parchment leaves are definitely no longer in the archives of the Minster church. They were probably lost when water burst in as a result of war-time action.

Psalter ascribed to St. Jerome, the *Psalterium Romanum*, *Galicum* and *Hebraicum*, the Greek text of the Psalter in roman characters, the *Cantica* and some prayers usually met with in Psalter manuscripts. The litany of the Saints is written in Latin and Greek. The manuscript, which is not illuminated, comes from an unknown scriptorium in which the *Psalterium Quadruplex* which is now Cologne Cathedral Library MS. 8 was also written, for the most part by the same scribes. The text of both manuscripts, including the litany of the Saints, is directly based on the *Psalterium Quadruplex* of Bishop Solomon III of Constance of 909, today in the Staatliche Bibliothek at Bamberg (MS. Bibl. 44). According to a note of 1331 on fol. 140^v the Essen manuscript was then in the possession of the Abbey church at Essen.

Lit. : Jostes, miscellaneous notes in *Centralblatt für Bibliothekswesen*, xii (Leipzig, 1892), 189-90; Paul Cagin, *Te Deum ou Illatio* (Solesmes, 1906), pp. 522-4, 532-63; Albert Ostheide, "Medizinisches aus einer Handschrift in Essen an der Ruhr", in *EB.*, xxix (1907), 129-35; Dausend, no. 1; *Vetus latina. Die Reste der altlateinischen Bibel*, ed. Erzabtei Beuron, i (Freiburg, i. Br., 1949), no. 315.

5. Essen Minster Treasury. *Gospel Book* of Abbess Theophanou (1039-58). 157 folios, parchment. 35.5 × 25.5 cm.

The decoration consists of twelve Canon Tables, four miniatures of the evangelists with Incipit-pages, and the initials on fols. 10^v-11^v, 50^v-51^v, 76^v-77^v, 116^v-117^v; there is a small initial with arabesques on fol. 12^r. In style the depictions of the evangelists are similar to the reliefs in gold on the cover. For the rest, Schnitzler remarks "genauer Übereinstimmendes ist nicht bekannt; doch lassen sich Fäden einerseits nach dem benachbarten Werden und nach Köln (Gruppe um das Evangeliar aus dem Kölner Priesterseminar [cf. Bloch-Schnitzler, no. X]), andererseits nach Belgien und Nordfrankreich spinnen (Brüssel, lat. 18,383 und II. 175), ein Eklektizismus, wie er sehr wohl im Umkreis des Essener Stiftes geübt worden sein kann". The front cover, separated from the manuscript in the eighteenth century, has an ivory plaque in the centre showing the Crucifixion with (below) the Nativity and (above) the Ascension, together

with (at the corners) the four evangelists, writing. The surrounding relief-work, in gold, depicts (above) the *Majestas Domini* between Angels and (below) the Mother of God enthroned, with Theophanou (for whom the volume was executed) at Her feet and the Essen saints Pinossa and Walburga; at the sides of the ivory are the Apostles Peter and Paul and the patron saints of the Abbey of Essen, Cosmas and Damian. The manuscript still has its old back-cover, which originally was covered with Byzantine or oriental silk, with engraved medallions of the *Agnus Dei* and the evangelical symbols.

Lit.: Humann, pp. 218-50, pls. 24-29; Chroust, vol. iii, pt. 24, pls. 9 and 10; Dausend, no. 5; Schnitzler, *Schatzkammer*, I, no. 42, pls. 136-41; *Das Erste Jahrtausend*, ed. Victor H. Elbern, volume of plates (Düsseldorf, 1962), pls. 382-5; Frauke Steenbock, *Der Kirchliche Prachteinband im frühen Mittelalter* (Berlin, 1965), no. 62, pls. 86 and 88 (on the cover); Küppers-Mikat, op. cit. pp. 61-67, pls. 23-29 (poor colour illustrations). Cf. also p. 131, notes 1 and 2.

6. Düsseldorf, Landesbibliothek MS. A.6. The Prophetic Books of the Old Testament: Ezechiel, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, 12 Minor Prophets. Early ninth century. 216 folios, parchment. 21×31 cm. Typical Essen binding of the eighteenth century using parchment from a fifteenth-century *Lectionary*. Title in the hand of the twelfth/thirteenth-century Essen "librarian".

This manuscript, which has only plain initials, may be dated, according to Bernhard Bischoff, in the early ninth century and can therefore not have been written in Essen. It must, however, have come into the possession of the Abbey there at a very early date.

7. Düsseldorf, Landesbibliothek MS. A.14. *Epistulae Pauli*. 145 folios, parchment. 27×20 cm. Binding of 1912. Title in the hand of the twelfth/thirteenth century Essen "librarian".

Written in France in the eighth/ninth century, probably in the Laon area. Apart from the writing of the Essen "librarian", the presence of certain ladies' names on fols. 2^r and 144^v may also indicate an Essen origin. It contains two original drawings of

St. Paul and Titus (fols. 119^v, 120^r) copied from a late classical model.

Lit. : Lowe, op. cit. viii, no. 1182; Adolf Goldschmidt, *Deutsche Buchmalerei*, i (Leipzig, 1928), Fig. 88; *Das Erste Jahrtausend*, ed. Victor H. Elbern, volume of plates, pl. 276-7; Bischoff, "Panorama", etc., p. 235, n. 8.

8. Düsseldorf, Landesbibliothek MS. B.3. A codex of c. 800 containing miscellaneous pieces. 306 folios, parchment. 23.5 × 17.5 cm. Typical Essen binding of the eighteenth century, using parchment from a fifteenth-century *Lectionary*. Seventeenth-century mark of ownership: "Biblioth. Canon. Essendiensium". Title in the hand of the twelfth/thirteenth century Essen "librarian".

Contains Alcuin, *Quaestiones in Genesim*, and several later items. Not illuminated. Written in a pre-Carolingian minuscule of the ab-type from Corbie whence, according to Bischoff, it originated. He considers it to have been written for some person of importance closely associated with the Carolingian court, probably a woman.

Lit. : Chroust, vol. iii, pt. 24, pl. 3; Dausend, no. 30; Lowe, op. cit. viii, no. 1183; *Karl der Große = Katalog der Ausstellung* (Aachen, 1965), no. 366 (B. Bischoff); Bonifatius Fischer, "Bibeltext und Bibelreform", in *Karl der Große*, ed. Wolfgang Braunfels, ii (Düsseldorf, 1965), p. 187.

9. Düsseldorf, Landesbibliothek MS. B.4. Alcuin, *Expositio super Johannem*. Tenth century. 221 folios, parchment. 32.5 × 22 cm. Typical Essen binding of the eighteenth century using parchment from a fifteenth-century *Lectionary*. Seventeenth-century mark of ownership: "Biblioth. Can. Essend". Title in the hand of the twelfth/thirteenth century Essen "librarian".

In a very fine script, but without any decoration. On the first page a tenth-century hand has written a catalogue of books comprising seventeen works, including a *Vita Sancti Liudgeri*, a *Vita Sanctae Walburgae* and a text of the *Regula*. Whether this and the fact that on the same page have been written the names of several men (Wilhelm, Wunefrid, etc.) is against the manuscript having belonged to the ladies' chapter in Essen in the tenth

century can not be determined. None of the known Essen manuscripts, save B.4 itself, can be identified among the seventeen works.

10. Düsseldorf, Landesbibliothek MS. 8. *Miscellanea*. Tenth century. 144 folios, parchment. 27.5 × 20 cm. Typical Essen binding of the eighteenth century using parchment from a fifteenth-century *Lectionary*.

This manuscript, which contains extracts from various sermons and homilies of Augustine, Gregory, Bede and Alcuin, can only be identified as coming from Essen by reasons of its eighteenth-century binding. Whether or not it only came into the possession of Essen at a later date can not now be determined, but the general character of the hand and the decoration correspond in all respects with those of other known Essen manuscripts.

11. Düsseldorf, Landesbibliothek MS. B.79. *Registrum Gregorii*. Ninth century. 138 folios, parchment. 26 × 17 cm. Typical Essen binding of the eighteenth century using parchment from a fifteenth-century *Lectionary*.

Identifiable only by reason of its binding as coming from Essen, this manuscript differs very considerably from all other Essen manuscripts in its small and pointed writing and in the fact that its parchment has been prepared with unusual care. It could have been executed in Werden, but certainly not in Essen itself. On fol. 138^r is a sketch of St. Gregory.

12. Düsseldorf, Landesbibliothek MS. B.80. Homilies of Gregory the Great and Augustine on the Gospels. Tenth century. 153 folios, parchment. 28.5 × 19.5 cm. Typical Essen binding of the eighteenth century using parchment from a fifteenth-century *Lectionary*.

Incomplete at the beginning and possibly for that reason lacking the seventeenth-century mark of ownership and the title in the hand of the twelfth/thirteenth century Essen "librarian". That it comes from Essen, however, is shown by the fact that it contains a list of the Abbey taxes of the tenth century. The rest of the manuscript, which contains Old High German glosses, had its origin in Essen according to Drögereit but in Hildesheim in Jostes's opinion.

Lit. : J. H. Gallée, op. cit. (cf. no. 1), pp. 107-19 and pl. III a-c ; Fr. Jostes, "Saxonica II : Die altsächsischen Denkmäler in den Essener Handschriften", in *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum und deutsche Literatur*, xl (Leipzig, 1896), 140 ff.

13. Düsseldorf, Landesbibliothek MS. B.113. Rabanus Maurus, *De institutione clericorum*. Tenth century. 114 folios, parchment. 28×19 cm. Typical Essen binding of the eighteenth century using parchment from a fifteenth-century *Lectionary*. Seventeenth-century mark of ownership : "Ad Bibliothecam DD. Canonicorum Essendiens.'" Title in the hand of the twelfth/thirteenth-century "librarian".

Contains, apart from the Rabanus Maurus text, two hymns to St. Florinus, a fragment of a Gospel *Lectionary* and two pen drawings (fols. 5^r and 5^v), in the style of the Utrecht *Psalter* : the Healing of the Leper by Christ and the twelve-year old Jesus in the Temple (?). This leaf must have been executed in Rheims or Hautvillers about 830, together with the fragment of the *Lectionary* (fols. 1^r-4^v) which belongs to the same quire. It was probably brought to Essen by the latter's founder, Bishop Altfrid of Hildesheim, as his predecessor, Ebbo, was Archbishop of Rheims from 816 to 841 and, after being driven from there, Bishop of Hildesheim from 845 to 851. The Florinus hymns must have been written in Coblenz, of which he was the patron saint, between 930 and 949, and the main part of the manuscript in Remüs in Rhaetia, according to Jammers, or in Coblenz, according to Bischoff. The whole manuscript was, at any rate, in Essen at an early date.

Lit. : Dausend, no. 29 (pp. 27-35) ; Jammers, pp. 4-10, pls. 1-3, with references to earlier literature ; Bernhard Bischoff, "Die liturgische Musik", op. cit. (see p. 133, n. 1), p. 193 ; Victor H. Elbern, "Das Essener Evangelistarfragment aus dem Umkreis des Utrecht Psalters", in *Das Erste Jahrtausend*, ed. Victor H. Elbern, ii (text) (1964), pp. 992-1006 ; Eberhard Galley, "Das karolingische Evangelistarfragment aus der Landes-und Stadtbibliothek Düsseldorf", in *Düsseldorfer Jahrbuch*, lii (Düsseldorf 1966), 120-7.

14. Düsseldorf, Landesbibliothek MS. D.1. *Sacramentary*.

868-72. 238 folios, parchment. 28 × 19.3 cm. Mark of ownership on fol. 1^r: "Bibl. Can. Essendi." Binding of 1912.

Written, according to Dausend, in Essen; according to Bischoff, probably in Essen; according to Drögereit, in Werden for Essen or in Essen following a Werden prototype; and according to Chroust and Jammers, in Hildesheim or, possibly, Corvey for Essen. It was, at any rate, adapted and completed in Essen for Essen use by various additions, particularly a Calendar which extends well into the tenth century. The decoration consists of four initials of high quality showing Irish-Anglo-Saxon influence, two enriched by animal heads and extensive strapwork.

Lit.: Chroust, vol. iii, pt. 24, pls. 5 and 6; Dausend no. 17 and *passim*; Micheli, op. cit. p. 155, Fig. 139; Jammers, pp. 11-16, pls. 4-7; Bischoff, op. cit. p. 192; Drögereit, *Einheit*, op. cit. p. 63, n. 14, pp. 73 ff.; Georg Zilliken, "Der Kölner Festkalender", in *Bonner Jahrbücher*, cxix (Bonn, 1910), 13-157 (where is the complete text of the Calendar).

15. Düsseldorf, Landesbibliothek MS. D.2. *Sacramentary*. Tenth century. 236 folios, parchment. 27.5 × 19.5 cm. Seventeenth-century mark of ownership on fol. 1^r: "Bibl. DD: Can: Essend." (wrongly expanded by Chroust). Binding of 1912.

Contains, amongst other things, a guide to the examination of conscience in German and, which is unusual, a Greek Mass written in Greek. In this Mass the cherubic hymn, rare in the West, is particularly noteworthy; Jammers has shown that it is in part a new composition. The manuscript contains illumination in a style which can only be explained by influence from Fulda: on fol. 26^v Gelasius and Gregorius, and on fol. 27^v a colour-wash of the Crucifixion with Mary and John and a V-initial. Numerous indications of a connection with Essen occur throughout. Chroust has convincingly proved an Essen provenance; Jammers, however, considers Hildesheim or Corvey to be the place of origin.

Lit.: Chroust, vol. iii, pt. 24, pls. 7 and 8; Gallée, op. cit. pp. 120-22 and pl. III d; Jahn, op. cit. pp. 80-94 with fig. of fol. 205^r; Dausend, no. 18; Jammers, pp. 17-22, pls. 8-9; Bischoff, op. cit. p. 192; Drögereit, *Einheit*, op. cit. pp. 65 ff.; Zilliken, op. cit.: Calendar.

16. Düsseldorf, Landesbibliothek MS. D.3. *Sacramentary* with *Lectionary* and *Gradual*. Tenth century. 309 folios, parchment. No marks of ownership. 32×25 cm. Binding of 1912.

On fols. 17^v-18^r, within a reserved space in the text, are two pen drawings showing the dedication of the book by an ecclesiastic to two crowned martyrs, probably the patron saints of the Abbey of Essen, Cosmas and Damian; on fol. 20^r is a small Crucifixion. The pen-drawings belong to the tenth century; there are no apparent close stylistic connections with D.2. On historical grounds the manuscript must have been written before 965. Jammers accepts a Cologne origin, but Bischoff doubts this, favouring Essen. It was at any rate expanded by a second hand for Essen, and the original portion seems also to have been executed there. The style of the drawings, too, clearly suggests Essen. Cologne may be ruled out.

Lit.: Dausend, no. 19; Joachim Prochno, *Das Schreiber- und Dedikationsbild in der deutschen Buchmalerei*, pt. 1, 800-1100 (Leipzig and Berlin, 1929), no. 68; Jammers, pp. 23-29, pls. 10-15; Bischoff, op. cit. p. 192; Drögereit, *Einheit*, op. cit. p. 79; Victor H. Elbern, "Das Essener Evangelistarfragment" (see no. 13 above), p. 1004; Zilliken, op. cit. Calendar.

17. Düsseldorf, Landesbibliothek MS. E.1. Dionysius Exiguus, *Canones Apostolorum*. 144 folios, parchment. 35×27 cm. Typical Essen binding of the eighteenth century using parchment from a fifteenth-century *Lectionary*. Seventeenth-century mark of ownership: "Ex libris Bibliothecae DD. Canon. Essendiensium." Title in the hand of the twelfth/thirteenth-century Essen "librarian".

The manuscript was written in the ninth century. Fol. 2^v is a decorated page, framed and with a purple background, and the pages following contain some smaller initials of strapwork and animal forms. On the inner back cover are various drawings and entries in an early medieval hand. According to a note on fol. 144^v, the manuscript was for a time in the High Middle Ages a pledge for other books which had been loaned in Werden.

Lit.: Dausend, no. 2.

18. Düsseldorf, Landesbibliothek MS. F.1. Prudentius. Tenth

century. 69 folios, parchment. 30×24 cm. Plain library binding of the nineteenth century. Title in the hand of the twelfth/thirteenth-century Essen "librarian".

In a very poor state of preservation. Written in two columns, this manuscript has numerous Old High German glosses to the text of Prudentius.

Lit.: Gallée, *Altsächsische Sprachdenkmäler*, pp. 127-49 and pl. IIIe; Robert Jahn, "Die ältesten Sprach- und Literaturdenkmäler aus Werden und Essen", in *EB*, lx (1940), pp. 9 ff., particularly p. 74.

19. Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS. Clm. 10,077. *Sacramentary*. Second half of the tenth century. 227 folios, parchment. 25.5×17.5 cm. Binding on which are ivory plaques contemporary with the manuscript and silver reliefs of the fourteenth century.

The manuscript has three miniatures containing figures, namely, a crucified Christ, a *Majestas Domini*, and a scene with the Dove of the Holy Ghost over the water and two angels; in addition there are several decorated pages and various decorated backgrounds to initials. The Calendar is adorned with the zodiacal signs. The manuscript was executed either in Fulda for Corvey or in Corvey itself; at least, the illuminator was from Fulda or strongly influenced by the Fulda school of illumination. The ivories also come from that artistic milieu. According to Lehmann the manuscript must have been in Essen for some time at the end of the tenth century, as is indicated by a series of additions and entries of this date. It must have left there as early as the eleventh century or, possibly, even at the turn of the preceding century, and gone to the diocese of Verdun, where the Calendar was amended accordingly. In 1790 it is found as part of the Treasure of the Cathedral of Verdun and from there it passed to Munich by way of Mannheim.

Lit.: Dausend, no. 20 and pp. 67-68; Paul Lehmann, *Corveyer Studien* (= *Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, phil.-hist. Klasse*, vol. xxv, no. 5) (Munich, 1919), particularly pp. 40-44; also in his *Erforschung des Mittelalters: Ausgewählte Abhandlungen und Aufsätze*, v (Stuttgart, 1962),

94-178, particularly pp. 137-42; E. H. Zimmermann, *Die Fuldaer Buchmalerei in karolingischer und ottonischer Zeit* (Halle, 1910), pp. 35 ff.; Adolf Goldschmidt, *Die Elfenbeinskulpturen aus der Zeit der karolingischen und sächsischen Kaiser*, i (Berlin, 1914), no. 67, pl. 27; id. *Deutsche Buchmalerei*, ii (Florence and Munich, 1928), pl. 111; Jammers, p. 31, n. 3; *Ars Sacra = Katalog der Ausstellung München*, 1950, no. 81 (Albert Boeckler).

20. Manchester, Rylands Library. Latin MS. 110. The *Gospel Book* of Abbess Svanhild.

In addition to these twenty manuscripts, in which may be seen the remains of the Essen Library in the eleventh century, we know of two other illuminated leaves of the tenth century, which have survived in drawings of 1597.¹ The two miniatures² (which come either from the same manuscript or from two contemporary manuscripts) show unmistakably, even in these copies, their origins in the Fulda school of illumination. One depicts the Mother of God, enthroned, with two angels, described in Greek letters as ΘΕΩΤΕΚΟΣ, ΚΕΡΟΥΒΥΝ (=Cherubim) and ΓΕΡΑΦΥΝ (=Seraphim). At the feet of Mary kneels the Abbess of Essen, "Hadawih", (= Hadwigis (947—before 971)), accompanied by another lady from the Abbey, (?) Thiotera. She is commended to the care of the Mother of God by a saint of the Abbey, Pinossa, whose bones came to Essen from Cologne at the time of Abbess Hadwig. The second miniature depicts the enthroned Christ crowning the Abbey's patron saints Cosmas and Damian with the crown of eternal life; this also has Greek inscriptions. The miniatures must have been dedication-pages of *Lives* of saints particularly venerated in Essen and date probably from about 970, as the patron, Abbess Hadwig, is depicted

¹ Amongst the residuary papers of the scholaster Jodokus Hermann Nünning of Vreden (1675-1753), now in the Archive von und zur Mühlen auf Haus Ruhr (Westphalia).

² Theodor Rensing, "Zwei ottonische Kunstwerke des Essener Münsterschatzes" in *Westfalen*, vol. 40 (Münster, 1962), pp. 44-58, incorrectly states them to be drawings of book-covers. See also Hermann Schnitzler, "Ein frühottonisches Kunstwerk des Essener Münsterschatzes", in *Studien zur Buchmalerei und Goldschmiedekunst des Mittelalters. Festschrift für Karl Hermann Usener* (Marburg an der Lahn, 1967), pp. 115-18.

wearing a halo and so was probably dead when the manuscript was completed for her in Fulda.

There were, then, more than a dozen manuscripts in the Abbey of Essen when Abbess Svanhild had the *Gospel Book* which is now in Manchester written and illuminated ; at least, we know of so many, although the total was probably much larger. Some of those which have survived may be assigned with certainty to scriptoria elsewhere ; with others one can not be so sure. The ones illuminated include some important works of art, particularly amongst the manuscripts from Fulda. It is certain that, at all events, Düsseldorf MS. D.2 was written in Essen itself, and perhaps also MSS. D.1 and D.3 ; or, at least, extensive additions were made to them there. At the end of the tenth century the Essen scribes were able to write lengthy texts in Greek and not merely the single Greek letters or words in miniatures such as are found occasionally in the Ottonian period.¹ These texts—the Greek Mass and the Greek Litany of the Saints—may, as mentioned above, have some connection with the Greek ladies of the Abbey. A Byzantine manuscript owned by Essen, however, such as one might perhaps have expected, has, admittedly, not so far been found.² There is much to be said for the view that the eleventh-century *Gospel Book* of Theophanou was produced within the milieu of the Abbey.

We do not know who the Essen scribes were. As far as the Greek texts are concerned, one should probably only take into consideration those ladies of the Abbey with Greek names. If executed in Essen, Düsseldorf MS. D.3 was presumably the work of a man—the priest depicted in the dedication miniature. As we do not, however, know whether or not a male chapter was in existence in the tenth and eleventh centuries, this would seem to be an isolated case. Bischoff has been able to show that in nunneries at least there were well-arranged scriptoria at this time,

¹ Richard Drögereit, " Griechisch-Byzantisches aus Essen ", in *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, xlv (Munich, 1953), 110-15. Cf. also Bernhard Bischoff, " Das griechische Element in der abendländischen Bildung des Mittelalters ", in *ibid.* xlv (1951), 27-55, reprinted in his *Mittelalterliche Studien*, ii (Stuttgart, 1967), 246-75.

² The Cludoff Psalter in Moscow referred to by Drögereit (n. 1 above) has no connection with Essen ; it comes from Athos.

just as efficient as those in monasteries.¹ Jammers² has asserted—although this has not been proved—that in this respect there was a difference between nuns and canonesses, and denied, although only on general grounds, any possibility of the ladies at Essen having been concerned with scribal activities. On the other hand, Bischoff has considered this to have been quite possible. The poor quality of the marginal annotations known with certainty to have been written in Essen has been used as an argument against the existence of a scriptorium there. Bischoff has countered this by pointing out that such notes are by their very nature written with less care, and that a scriptorium producing works of importance at any particular time need not necessarily be a source of fine calligraphy at all times.³ That the ladies of the Abbey learned Latin and, indeed, learned not only to read it (which was not uncommon in the Middle Ages) but also to write it, we have seen from the written request, referred to above, from a pupil to the *magistra* Felhin. Admittedly it is a large step from such short notes to the production of a manuscript. But in view of the brief and negligible information we have concerning spiritual life in an early medieval house of secular canonesses and the complete lack of direct sources, in the form of chronicles and the like, as is the case with Essen, one should not altogether despise such evidence; frequently we know very little even about the general course of history at that time.

IV. DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE CONCERNING THE ABBESS SVANHILD

Concerning Svanhild, the Abbess of Essen whose *Gospel Book* is today in Manchester, only five things are actually known: she is mentioned in three deeds (of which at least one is highly suspect as being a forgery); she was responsible for a *Gospel*

¹ Manuscripts of the former Cathedral library of Carolingian times in Cologne contain the names of nuns from Chelles as their scribes. See Bernhard Bischoff, "Die Kölner Nonnenhandschriften und das Scriptorium von Chelles", in his *Mittelalterliche Studien*, i (Stuttgart, 1966), 16-34.

² Jammers, p. 31.

³ Bischoff, "Die liturgische Musik und das Bildungswesen im frühmittelalterlichen Stift Essen" (as above, p. 133, n. 1), pp. 192-3.

Book (the one in Manchester); and she bequeathed a fixed amount from her estate for an annual service to commemorate her death, as is known from the "liber ordinarius" of the Abbey church of Essen which dates from the High Middle Ages. The history of the beginning and end of her period of rule remains obscure.

Svanhild is first mentioned in the Will of Abbess Theophanou,¹ where her name occurs as the third in the list of witnesses. She does not appear to have held any definite office at that time, for others are mentioned as "praeposita" and "decana". The Will is unfortunately not dated. Theophanou is mentioned for the last time in 1054.² The date of her death was 5 March (this being from an inscription which Zimmermann³ found in her grave) and 1058 seems a probable date for the year. For, as the anniversary of her death, according to the "liber ordinarius", was celebrated on the first Thursday in March,⁴ she must have died on a Thursday, and, as it was only in 1058 and 1069 that 5 March fell on that day, it seems probable that 1058 was the year of her death.⁵ Whether Svanhild followed Theophanou directly as Abbess, we do not know. In the lists of Essen Abbesses an Alheidis, who is supposed to have died on 20 June, is occasionally mentioned between them.

Unfortunately the lists of Essen Abbesses have survived only in manuscripts and printed works of the seventeenth century. These go back essentially to two lists which both date from the end of the sixteenth century⁶; one, in German, is preserved in several almost identical seventeenth-century manuscripts,⁷ and the other, in Latin, was compiled by Wirich Hiltrop, Canon and

¹ Lacomblet, i, no. 190.

² On 17 November 1054 she received from the Emperor Henry III the Hof Holthausen for the Abbey of Essen (*MGH. DD Heinrich III* (above p. 124, n. 4), no. 329.

³ Zimmermann, p. 148.

⁴ *Der liber ordinarius der Essener Stiftskirche*, ed. Franz Arens (Paderborn, 1908), p. 129.

⁵ Zimmermann, p. 52.

⁶ For details see Konrad Ribbeck, "Ein Essener Nekrologium aus dem 13. und 14. Jh." in *EB*, xx (1900), 29-135, particularly pp. 42 ff.

⁷ "Die Äbtissinnen von Essen. Nach dem Katalog von Brüssel mit Varianten und Anmerkungen herausgegeben von Otto Seemann", in *EB*, v (1883), 1 ff.

Dean of Essen, from several other sources.¹ (Two fragments of an *Historia Essendiensis* which Hiltrop planned have recently been found and published.²) According to Ribbeck³ there is evidence that a contemporary list was kept in Essen itself from the early Middle Ages down to the second half of the twelfth century. That Hiltrop and the German list made use of such a medieval list is suggested by the fact that for certain Abbesses, about whom we otherwise know nothing, they give their dates of office by reference to the ruling dates of contemporary popes and emperors; for this is the form of dating one finds in eleventh- and twelfth-century lists of this kind. On the other hand we must also reckon with the possibility that their main source was the necrology of the thirteenth and fourteenth century in which are included a considerable number of names of Abbesses who were heads of other friendly houses. All names which appear in the seventeenth-century lists without any further information about them or without any dating could, in fact, belong to this category, and "Alheidis abbatissa" is one of these, for concerning her they give nothing save her name and title. Clearly she was not an Abbess of Essen. This being so, Svanhild must have been Abbess from as early as 1058.

The most fully authenticated piece of information about Svanhild comes from the year 1073. On 29 January of that year Archbishop Anno II of Cologne attested⁴ that he had consecrated a chapel built by the chaplain Henry of Essen on the

¹ Printed in Johann Suitbert Seibertz, *Quellen des Westfälischen Geschichte*, ii (Arnsberg, 1860), 455-60. On Hiltrop, cf. Helmut Müller, "Essener Geschichtsschreibung und Forscher früherer Jahrhunderte", in *EB*, lxxxii (1966), 58 ff.

² Müller, op. cit. pp. 82 ff.

³ Ribbeck, op. cit. pp. 51 ff.

⁴ Lacomblet, i, no. 217; *Die Regesten der Erzbischöfe von Köln im Mittelalter*, i. (313-1099) (Bonn, 1954-61) ed. Friedrich Wilhelm Oediger (= *Publikationen der Gesellschaft für Rheinische Geschichtskunde*, xxi), no. 1017.

The document in the Düsseldorf Staatsarchiv, "Stoppenberg no. 1", is, it is true, in a twelfth-century hand. According to Oppermann (see above p. 123, n. 2) pp. 80 ff., it is a forgery of 1124, but according to Oediger more probably a copy bearing a seal. In any case there are no doubts about the contents. The document in Düsseldorf is probably a copy made for the Abbey of Stoppenberg (which was founded in the twelfth century), the original remaining in the Essen archives. The document was at all events always available to Essen historians of the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

instructions and at the expense of Svanhild, Abbess of Essen, on the hill in Stoppenberg and had granted the right of dealing with matters such as baptism, burial, etc. to the chaplain there in cases of emergency :

... Heinricus praecepto sumptu domine sue Suenehildis venerabilis abbatisse Astnetensis ecclesie oratorium in monte . . . perfecit bona quidem provisione ac magna misericordia domine Suenehildis abbatisse scilicet a supradicto matrice ecclesie. . . . Interveniente itaque domina Suenehilde abbatissa dedicavimus oratorium illud . . . cum dote quem ipsa donaverat abbatissa. . . .

Here we have an authenticated reference to Svanhild in 1073 as the Abbess who had built a chapel for the care of the souls of those belonging to the Abbey who lived at a distance. Incidentally, at a somewhat later date—in the twelfth century—there came into being in this chapel a community of gentlewomen dependent on Essen, of which the early history is still entirely unknown.¹

In a third document, allegedly of 1085, the Emperor Henry IV confirms to the Abbey of Essen a grant made by Abbess Svanhild of her property² :

... qualiter Svanihildis Dei gratia nostraque concessione Asnidensis monasterii abbatissa . . . qualiter ipsa suae consulens animae pro se et parentum suorum eterna memoria sancte Dei Genetricis Mariae ad reliquias sanctorum Cosmae et Damiani hac suae paterne hereditatis contulerit praedia, consentiente quidem et annuente fratre suo Burghardo et coniuge sua domina Vuilliberga ceterisque coheredibus suis. . . .

The charter, in the state archives at Düsseldorf, is spurious. It was, moreover, neither sealed nor dated. Admittedly the Emperor's signature is genuine. But the text above it was written at a later date. Judging from the witnesses named in it, the confirmation took place at the imperial Synod of Mainz at the end of April or beginning of May 1085.³ (Although Archbishop Liemar of Bremen, one of those named, was not present—

¹ Lacomblet, ii, 225 ; Carl Meyer, *Geschichte des ehemaligen freiweltlichen adligen Damenstiftes und der Bürgermeisterei Stoppenberg*, 4th edn. (Essen, 1925).

² Lacomblet, i, no. 235 ; *MGH. Diplomatum tomus IV, Heinrici IV Diplomata*, pars, II, ed. D. Gladis (Weimar, 1959), no. 372. Cf. also Oppermann op. cit. (sup. p. 123, n. 2), p. 55.

³ On the Synod of 1085 see *Jahrbücher des deutschen Reiches unter Heinrich IV. und Heinrich V.*, ed. Gerold Meyer von Knonau, vol. 4 (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 14 ff. and pp. 547 ff.

which may in itself seem suspicious—he had arranged to be represented by legates with full authority, which may explain why his name occurs as a witness with those of the other Archbishops and with the Cardinals of Pope Eugenius III.) Gladis¹ considers the document to have been written by the same scribe who wrote the charter of Henry IV of 10 May 1098 for Werden and it would, in his opinion, have been out of the question for a blank charter to have been signed by the Emperor in 1085 and not have its contents filled in until so much later by the beneficiary (in this case the Abbey of Essen)²; the time-interval between 1085 and the end of the century is too great. Gladis therefore regards the document as a crude forgery, although some of the villages named in it are known to have been later in the Abbey's possession. However this may be, even if legally spurious, the document is not completely without value for our purpose. If it was forged at the end of the century at the instigation of the Abbey, one can at least infer that Abbess Svanhild was then no longer alive; otherwise it would hardly have been forged. From the document itself one may conclude that at the time of the supposed confirmation—that is, 1085—she *was* still alive; otherwise one would have expected to find the appropriate formula “Svanhildis bonae memoriae abbatissa”, or something of the kind. Scarcely fifteen years later it must surely have been known with fair accuracy in Essen when she did in fact die. It seems most probable that the document was forged at the end of the century when disputes arose with her heirs who, according to its text, were expressly excluded from all claims to her possessions. It would also seem probable that the document was given a date not too long before her death. It may be argued, then, that Svanhild died probably at the end of the eighties or beginning of the nineties.

Unfortunately we know nothing of her successors. The first documentary evidence we have for them is that for Abbess Irmintrude on 13 June 1142.³ The Essen catalogue of Abbesses

¹ Gladis, *op. cit.* (p. 150, n. 2).

² It should perhaps be mentioned that it was not unknown for the Emperor to sign blank charters the contents of which (previously agreed upon with him or the imperial chancery) were *immediately afterwards* filled in by the beneficiary.

³ Lacomblet, i, no. 346.

mentions several names in between, adding that apart from their names nothing is known of them. Relatively certain is Lutgardis, who is said to have been Abbess under Popes Urban II (1088-99), Paschal II (1100-18) and Gelasius II (1118-19) and the Emperor Henry V (1106-25).¹ Between Svanhild and Lutgardis the seventeenth-century catalogue gives four other names. So one can only state that Svanhild certainly ruled between 1058 and about 1100, and probably from 1058 to soon after 1085. According to the Essen obituary² and the "liber ordinarius" she died on 30 July and was buried in the crypt in front of the altar of St. John.³

That she came from the family of the Counts of Hückeswagen, as the catalogue of Abbesses states, can not be proved. Most of the genealogical information in this catalogue is purely fictitious. Elsewhere the Counts of Hückeswagen are first mentioned in 1138.⁴ At least, Svanhild (unlike Theophanou and the other Abbesses of Essen down to this time) apparently did not belong to the Imperial Ottonian house, which died out in the male line with Otto III.

The "liber ordinarius" (the book containing the liturgical customs of the Abbey, which has survived in a manuscript of the second half of the fourteenth century, based on an older copy) records the commemoration of the anniversary of Svanhild's death on 30 July.⁵ She must have bequeathed large possessions for this purpose. Out of these one of the canons was appointed to hold the "Officium Svanehildis" and received payment in

¹ Seemann, op. cit. p. 6. According to Ribbeck (op. cit. pp. 51-52) information of this kind is based on an old catalogue of the twelfth century.

² Ribbeck, op. cit. p. 101, n. 4.

³ Zimmermann, p. 146; Grave no. 152.

⁴ Lacomblet, I. no. 328; W. Harless, "Aus Hückeswagens Vorzeit", in *Zeitschrift des Bergischen Geschichtsvereins*, xxv (Bonn, 1889), 1-262, particularly p. 5. The relatives of Svanhild mentioned in the document of 1085 are not otherwise known.

⁵ *Der liber ordinarius der Essener Stiftskirche*, ed. Franz Arens (Paderborn, 1908), pp. 119-22. Cf. also Arens, *Der liber ordinarius der Essener Stiftskirche und seine Bedeutung für die Liturgie, Geschichte und Topographie des ehemaligen Stiftes Essen* = *EB*, xxi (1901), 105-6. Cf. also the extracts there from the *liber catenatus*, which gives the revenues of the Abbey and its "consuetudines" and "jura" and belongs to about 1400.

perpetuity ; he had to bear the expenses of the anniversary, which fell into the first class (of four classes) of anniversary in the Abbey of Essen and was commemorated on a most lavish scale. On the morning of the 30 July four masses were celebrated and a commemoration with twelve candles held. Throughout the entire night the Abbess's grave in the crypt had to be illuminated with candles at each of the four corners. In addition, in the morning a large quantity of bread had to be distributed to certain designated persons, individually specified. The members of both chapters received considerable gifts of money : 4 denarii for each of the 50 prebends of the ladies' chapter ; for each canon, 1 denarius and a candle ; for those celebrating and ministering, a denarius ; and so on. The anniversary was commemorated in this manner until the dissolution of the Abbey (1803), although most anniversaries were done away with in 1636 owing to lack of means.

V. THE SVANHILD " GOSPEL BOOK " IN ESSEN HISTORICAL LITERATURE OF THE BAROQUE PERIOD AND IN THE ABBEY'S " LIBER ORDINARIUS "

What is otherwise recorded respecting Svanhild in sources for the history of Essen comes from the *Gospel Book* for which she was responsible. Wirich Hiltrop, Dean of the chapter of Canons there from 1578 to 1617, writes in his projected *Historia Essendiensis*¹:

Diva Suenhildis abbatissa . . . De hac abbatissa nihil in fastis seu annalibus ecclesiae reperitur, nisi quod reperitur in libro quatuor evangelistarum manuscripto absolutoque auro foliaceo extrinsecus circumvoluto seu obducto, quo in praecipuis festivitibus utuntur ac pleonarium in ordinario vocatur. In principio libro effigiatur imago deiperae virginis Mariae gestantis ulnis filium salvatorem, ad cuius pedes depictae duae virgines procumbentes iacent, haec ad dextram, altera ad sinistram, his nominibus Suenhildis abbatissa, Brigida, dum hac rithmica inscriptione : Ad proprium natum ter nostrum virgo pregratum. Credibile est, quod vel Suenhildis vel Brigide hunc scripserit librum, cum vulgo ferunt. . . .

Hiltrop's testimony is of particular value because, of all historians in the baroque period who have reported on the manuscript, he

¹ On Hiltrop see Müller, op. cit. pp. 58 ff. The surviving fragments of his work have been edited by Müller, op. cit. pp. 65 ff., particularly pp. 76-77. Hiltrop erroneously assumes that Svanhild was Abbess in the time of King Henry I (919-36).

is the only one who undoubtedly saw it for himself. Admittedly he frequently makes mistakes in his account. According to his own testimony he was able to read the early scripts in the Essen archives only with great difficulty.¹ That he has Mary holding the Child in her arms, and that he has incorrectly read the inscription, may be due to carelessness, but that he is dealing with the codex which is today in Manchester there can, from his description, be no doubt whatsoever. His somewhat strange way of expressing himself in Latin "... in libro ... manuscripto absolutoque auro foliaceo extrinsecus circumvoluto ..." may be rendered as: "in the book which was written by hand and completely covered outside with a sheet of gold".²

In 1622 appeared the first printed description of the manuscript, by Gabriel Bucelinus³ in his work *Germania topo-chronostemmatographica sacra et profana* (Augsburg and Ulm), vol. ii, p. 144, although unfortunately he does not mention the source of his information concerning Essen.⁴ We cannot assume that he examined the Essen archives personally. He writes, in the "Syllabus Abbatissarum Assindiensis":

Svvanehildis Abbatissa . . . Extat hodie Assindiae liber quatuor Evangeliorum auro et gemmis ornatus, in cujus frontispicio depicta est imago Deiperae Virginis gestantis Christum infantem, ad cujus pedes a dextra et sinistra duae Vestales Virgines procumbentes conspiciuntur, cum hac inscriptione Suanehildis Abbatissa, Brigida; Addito hoc versu rithmico, Graecis fere Charakteribus exornato.

AD ΠΡΟΠΡΙΩΜ ΝΑΤΩΜ ΘΕΡ ΝΩΣΡΩΜ ΒΙΡΓΩ ΠΡΕΓΡΑΤΩΜ:

Ad proprium natum, ter nostrum Virgo praegratum.

As he produces the same mistakes as Hiltrop, his account may,

¹ Müller, op. cit. p. 69.

² I do not consider Müller's translation correct (op. cit. p. 93): "in einer Handschrift . . . deren Blattgold, mit dem der Deckel (ursprünglich) überzogen war, verlorengegangen ist". For the use of "absolutus" as an adjective with the meaning "completely", "entirely", "wholly", cf. Heinrich Georges, *Ausführliches Lateinisch-Deutsches Handwörterbuch*, 11th edn. (Hanover, 1962). My rendering is also supported by the fact that later sources refer to the gold cover as being still there.

³ Bucelinus (1599-1681/91) was a monk of Weingarten and for thirty years Provost of St. John's in Feldkirchen, Vorarlberg (now in Austria). In these years he compiled several extensive historical works. Cf. Kirchner in *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, iii (Leipzig, 1876), 462.

⁴ pp. 143-8.

directly or indirectly, be based on the latter's information. But the same mistakes appear yet a third time.

The scholaster Jodokus Hermann Nünning of Vreden (1675-1753) also repeats them in his projected *Historia Essendiensis*, which was to have been published in 1746 but, in fact, never appeared.¹ In general, however, he took greater care with his information, as far as factual accuracy was concerned, than did Hiltrop. He used material that the Vicar Jacobus Ortman extracted for him from the ecclesiastical archives of Essen, including some sources which today are missing; in addition he made use of the printed literature of his day.² Under "Swane-hildis von Hückeswagen" he relates:

Superest in hodiernum diem penes basilicam Essendiensem aestimandus egregiae notae codex, deauratus, ac gemmis excultus, continens evangelistarum sacra scripta, quorum quaeque initia valde variis exquisitisque aureis litteris exornata, pleonarii pretiosi nomine celeberrimus, cujus olim usus praecipuus erat in majoribus festis. Magnum sane antiquitatis donum, in cuius frontispicio imago deiperæ virginis ulnis salvatorem filium gestantis depicta conspicitur, ad cuius pedes duae procumbent vestales virgines, una earum ad dextram, ad sinistram alteram, hac inscriptione:

SVENEHILDIS ABBATISSA . BRIGIDA.

Adiecto hoc leonino versu graecis litteris conscripto:

ΑΔ ΠΡΟΠΡΙΩΜ ΝΑΤΩΜ ΘΕΡ ΝΩΣΤΡΩΜ ΒΙΡΓΩ ΠΙΕΓΡΑΤΩΜ.

The philosopher Leibniz³ had already noted that the inscription in Greek was incorrect in this form and had tried to improve on the sense. In his historical compilation *Scriptores rerum Brunsvicensium*, vol. 1 (Hanover, 1707), he mentions our *Gospel Book* in the "Introductio in Collectionem Scriptorum Historiae Brunsvicensi Inservientium", cap. XXVII.⁴ He deals there with the genealogy of the Abbess Theophanou, records the Greek inscription on the Marsus reliquary which we owe to her and Abbess Matilda, and then continues, with reference to Bucelinus:

¹ The surviving fragments have been edited by H. Müller, op. cit. pp. 10-43, particularly pp. 14-15.

² Müller, op. cit. pp. 9 ff.

³ Werner Conze, *Leibniz als Historiker* (= *Leibniz zu seinem 300. Geburtstag, 1646-1946*, ed. E. Hochstetter, pt. 6 (Berlin, 1951), pp. 25-27.

⁴ The reference usually cited, "p. 76", is incorrect. The Introduction has no original pagination; nor does one get "76" if one numbers it oneself.

Hoc loco obiter emendare libet versum Latinum, Graecis characteribus libro quatuor Evangeliorum, auro gemmisque ornato, Assindiae extanti inscriptum : *AD ΠΡΟΠΡΙΩΜ ΝΑΤΩΜ ΘΕΡ ΝΩΣΤΡΩΜ ΒΙΡΓΩ ΠΡΕΓΡΑΤΩΜ*. Quod Bucelinus ita legit : ad proprium natum ter nostrum Virgo praegratum.— Sed manifestum est, legi debere : Ad proprium Natum fer nostrum Virgo praecatam, nempe pro *ΘΕΡ* erit *ΦΕΡ*.

Thus Leibniz reconstructs the meaning of the Greek inscription as it stands in the manuscript ; Hiltrop, Bucelinus and Nünning had given it incorrectly. He is also the last of our sources to mention the manuscript as being still in Essen.

Apart from the fact that these four accounts testify to the presence of the manuscript in Essen itself, two other important points emerge from their descriptions. The manuscript had a cover of gold adorned with precious stones and, possibly also, with classical gems. The term “ gems ” in the descriptions is not clear ; it often means, in the Middle Ages as later, only “ precious stones ”. In addition, both Hiltrop and Nünning state that the *Gospel Book* was called a “ pleonarius ” and used on important feast days. A “ pleonarius ” is a manuscript which contains the complete text of the Gospels, as opposed to a Gospel lectionary or book of pericopes, which contains only the extracts from the Gospels read at mass.

The “ liber ordinarius ”,¹ already cited several times, which describes the liturgical customs of the later Middle Ages in the Abbey at Essen, mentions a series of ceremonial processions held on certain fixed feast-days. On these occasions the most important of the Abbey’s relics, the golden crosses of the Ottonian period and the “ pleonarius ”, were ceremonially borne round. Thus, on Good Friday all the canons, with an image of the Blessed Virgin, proceeded to the choir of the Abbey, the deacon bearing the cross and the subdeacon the “ pleonarius ”. Accompanied by the ladies of the Abbey the procession then moved to the altar of St. Michael in the gallery of the westwork, where, the Eucharist, the “ pleonarius ” and the relics were placed in a shrine covered with hangings which represented the Holy Sepulchre. According to early Christian and medieval conceptions the *Gospel Book* represented the body of Christ and, on Good Friday, it

¹ Cf. p. 152, n. 5.

was laid in the Sepulchre. On Easter Eve all these were returned ceremonially to the High Altar.¹ There were also ceremonial processions with the "pleonarius" and relics on Easter Sunday and at Whitsuntide.² On Ascension Day and at Corpus Christi, at dedications, and at the Assumption, the "pleonarius" together with the "vexillae", i.e. the golden crosses and the reliquary containing the Holy Nail, were borne outside and shown to the people³: "et vexillis ac pleonarium hinc et hinc posito versa facie ad populum".⁴ The subdeacon is generally stated to have carried the "pleonarius". On the feast of the Assumption the large golden image of the Madonna was borne with it. Only once—in the procession into the refectory on Maundy Thursday⁵—is there a reference to the deacon reading the Gospel of the day from the "pleonarius" while the subdeacon, who had carried it until then, burned incense. The Gospels may also have been read from the "pleonarius" in the other processions, as far as this was customary. The "liber ordinarius" clearly shows us that the "pleonarius" was, together with the relics, the golden crosses, the Nail reliquary and the "Golden" Madonna, regarded as one of the most important of the "sacred relics" in the church at Essen.

May we, then, see in this "pleonarius" the Svanhild manuscript? The *Gospel Book* of Theophanou must also be considered in this connection. With its cover of gold and ivory it was possibly esteemed more highly than the Svanhild *Gospel Book*, which was only decorated with gold and precious stones. The "liber ordinarius" unfortunately gives us no help in trying to identify the "pleonarius". Arens⁶ favoured Theophanou's *Gospel Book*, and in support of this is the fact that Abbess Franziska Christine, Countess Palatine of Pfalz-Sulzbach (d. 1776), had the front-cover of this *Gospel Book* removed and a new

¹ *Lib. ord.*, op. cit. pp. 56-58, 71, 78.

² *Ibid.* pp. 77-78, 91.

³ *Ibid.* pp. 88, 93, 101, 104. That by "vexillae" the Ottonian gold crosses are invariably meant is shown by the German catalogue of Abbesses (see above, p. 148, n. 7), where it is stated of one Ottonian Abbess that she left to the Abbey the "güldenene Kretzer, welche umb Ostern uf den Fahnen getragen werden et partem de clavo domini".

⁴ *Lib. ord.*, op. cit. p. 93.

⁵ *Ibid.* pp. 49-50.

⁶ *Ibid.* p. 210.

back-cover attached to it, and placed within this new pair of covers the opening passages of the Four Gospels and a list of the Abbesses of Essen. This suggests that in her time, at least, the cover was used liturgically; the opening passages of the Gospels were, in the Catholic liturgy, customarily read aloud at the four cardinal points during processions. On the other hand, we have the clear testimony of Hiltrop and Nünning that the *Svanhild Gospel Book* was the "pleonarius". Nünning describes the *Gospel Book* of Theophanou in some detail as "ebore decenter ornamento puroque auro obducto"¹; in Hiltrop the section relating to Theophanou, and consequently to her *Gospel Book*, is unfortunately missing from the fragments which have survived of his work. Both, however, call the *Svanhild Gospel Book* "pleonarius". Hiltrop, as Dean of the Chapter of Canons in Essen for some forty years, must have taken part in these processions on innumerable occasions and consequently must have seen the manuscript. We are, therefore, inclined to believe, at least as far as the Middle Ages and the seventeenth century are concerned, that the "pleonarius" was in fact the *Svanhild Gospel Book*. It may well have been that in the eighteenth century, because it was more convenient or because the covers of the *Svanhild Gospel Book* were no longer in good condition, the covers of Theophanou's *Gospel Book* came into liturgical use. In this connection the remark of Nünning, writing in the eighteenth century, may be noted: "cujus olim usus praecipuus erat in majoribus festis."

VI. MIGRATION OF THE SVANHILD MANUSCRIPT FROM ESSEN

When the *Svanhild Gospel Book* left Essen we do not know. It may be conjectured that it was either during the troubles of the French Revolution or as a result of the secularization and dissolution of the Abbey in 1803. But it could also have been later in the nineteenth century, for the secularization in Essen followed a course different from that elsewhere. It did not result in the

¹ Müller, *op. cit.* p. 14. Full text in Rensing, *op. cit.* (cf. *sup.* p. 145, n. 2). Nünning appears, however, to wish to connect the Theophanou manuscript in some way with the *Lives of the Saints* of Abbess Hadwig.

established order of things being overthrown in all its essentials or in the Abbey's property as a whole being broken up, as generally happened at the dissolution of religious houses, and particularly in the case of those houses under French rule in the Rhineland.¹ The last Prince-Abbess, Maria Kunigunde, Princess of Saxony and Polen, lost her sovereign position to the Prussian king, receiving financial compensation from him in return. Otherwise nothing was altered. In 1803, it is true, the two chapters were dissolved, as a result of which the celebration together of the Divine Office in the choir came to an end. The members of the aristocratic chapter as well as the canons retained their livings and were allowed to continue to live in their houses. It was only on their deaths that their places could not be disposed of and that their revenues fell to the Prussian State Treasury. All save two of the ladies, however, accepted compensation from the Prussian state and left Essen. But the Minster church remained open so that the canons could celebrate the services at the altar which were obligatory for them. The priests of the parish churches of St. John's and St. Gertrude's had the cure of souls. Even the "Official", the representative of the Abbess and the highest ecclesiastical functionary in the Principality, continued in office until 1821, in which year the Abbey's domains were taken over by the newly created Archbishopric of Cologne as a result of the papal bull "de salute animarum". Thus, its priceless medieval church treasures have been preserved in Essen almost complete, a unique instance of its kind.

Gradually certain of the canons took livings in other churches in the neighbourhood. The last of them, Johann Heinrich Herbrüggen, did not die until 1849; he was then the priest of St. Gertrude's in Essen. It is interesting to note that at the end of last century the *Gospel Book* of Theophanou and the so-called "Small Gospel Book" of Corvey, which were certainly both in the Minster church until 1803, were in the possession of the

¹ Franz Körholz, *Die Säkularisation und Organisation in den Preussischen Entschädigungsländern Essen, Werden und Elten, 1802-1806* (= *Münstersche Beiträge zur Geschichtsforschung*, New Series, xiv) (Münster, 1907); Hermann Schröter, "Die Essener Kapitel nach ihrer Auflösung im Jahre 1803", in *Die Heimatstadt Essen: Jahrbuch, 1958/59* (Essen, 1958), pp. 95-99.

church of St. Gertrude.¹ The *Psalterium Quadruplex* also—which was the property of the Abbey and is today back in the Minster church (cf. sup. no. 4, pp. 136–7)—has on fol. 1^r the following interesting note of ownership: “A. Gottung, Pastor ad S. Joannem Essendiae 1810” showing that it, too, was at the beginning of the nineteenth century in the possession of one of the priests of Essen. It was perhaps also one of the canons who took the *Svanhild Gospel Book* with him when he left Essen; after his death it may have passed into the hands of art dealers.

It can not be assumed that the Abbey still had a common “Klosterbibliothek” at this time. The Abbesses, moreover, while they were in Essen, resided in Schloss Borbeck, which was near by. When Theodor Lacomblet, on the instructions of the Prussian government, was engaged in collecting the surviving contents of the former Rhenish monastic libraries for the Düsseldorf Landesbibliothek, he found in Essen only the remains of a library, and this was most probably that of the male chapter.² As early as 1819 this had been merged with the more important library of the former Jesuit College in Essen. Already much damage had been done. Nevertheless, in 1820 458 works, including twenty-four manuscripts, were brought from Essen to Düsseldorf.³ Later, some of the liturgical manuscripts which had been brought together in Düsseldorf were sold as waste paper or destroyed, being considered completely worthless historically and philologically.⁴ Whether they included manuscripts from Essen, we do not know. But in 1850, of the 385 manuscripts then in Düsseldorf only six were stated to have come from Essen.⁵ To-day this

¹ Georg Humann, “Illuminierte Handschriften zu Essen und Werden”, in *Westdeutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst*, iii (Trier, 1884), pp. 417-18.

² There occurs in Düsseldorf MS. B.113 the typical seventeenth-century mark of ownership: “Ad Bibliothecam DD. Canonorum Essendiens[ium]”; this is abbreviated in the other manuscripts mentioned above. It refers, however, to the male chapter. Without any evidence at all Chroust (vol. iii, pt. 24, pls. 5–7) expands the entries in D.1 and D.2 as “Dominarum Canoniarum”; in the manuscripts only “DD. Can.” occurs.

³ Pfannenschmid, op. cit. (cf. above, p. 134, n. 1) pp. 372 ff., particularly p. 396.

⁴ Ibid. pp. 419 ff.

⁵ Ibid. pp. 409 ff.

number can be increased to 21.¹ From the Düsseldorf "rescue operation", however, must have been excluded those manuscripts which (together with the Treasure) were in the church in Essen, as is shown by the fact that there are still manuscripts in Essen today. The records of the male chapter also, being entirely ecclesiastical, have remained until the present day in the Pfarrarchiv in Essen, while those of the "capitulum illustre", being public records, went to Düsseldorf. Because it was used liturgically and had a cover of gold, the Svanhild manuscript would undoubtedly have been kept either with the Church Treasure or in the Sacristy, and for that reason would not have been carried off by Lacomblet, assuming, of course, that it was in Essen at that time.

VII. THE MANUSCRIPT IN ENGLAND

We do not hear of Abbess Svanhild's *Gospel Book* again until the turn of the present century. In 1901 it was purchased from Lord Crawford by Mrs. Rylands, together with the other manuscripts of the Bibliotheca Lindesiana, for the Library she had founded in Manchester. In the Bibliotheca Lindesiana it had been MS. 127; in the Rylands Library it is Latin MS. 110. Lord Crawford himself had acquired it in 1895.² On 27 August of that year he had been informed by the antiquarian booksellers J. and M. Tregaskis of High Holborn, London, that it was in their possession and that it had suffered from the effects of damp, although the miniatures had not been affected. Three days later he purchased it for £300. The (for that time) unusually high price was probably due less to the value placed on the miniatures

¹ Namely, the thirteen dating from before 1100 described above; the 12th-century *Sacramentary*, MS. D. 4; MSS. A. 15, B. 36, B. 140, C. 6 and E. 6, of the 14th and 15th centuries; and the two post-medieval manuscripts B. 21 and C. 47. As far as late and post-medieval manuscripts are concerned, attention can only be drawn here to chance discoveries. A more detailed search through the manuscript collections in the library at Düsseldorf might reveal further manuscripts dating from a later period.

² The following information concerning the acquisition of the manuscript by the Bibliotheca Lindesiana is from the Crawford *Library Letters*. I am indebted to Lord Crawford for permission to cite it here and to Dr. Taylor of the Rylands Library for kindly drawing my attention to it.

or the text itself than to the fact that it had a metal binding, for the Bibliotheca Lindesiana contained a fine collection of medieval jewelled bindings, all of which passed to the Rylands Library. On 2 September, following an enquiry, Tregaskis wrote to say that he knew nothing of the manuscript's origin or history, the person from whom he had acquired it being either unable or unwilling to give any information on the matter.

The manuscript itself does not contain any indications of its nineteenth-century owners. An oval label on the inner front cover has either fallen off or been removed.¹ At the top of fol. 1^r a modern hand has written the number " 15 " ²; the remains of an entry in pencil, in which the number " 33 " appears, are faintly legible lower down. At the bottom of the same folio is a small green stamp, impressed twice, of which only the outlines have survived. This stamp³ is rounded at the edges and measures 21 mm. long and 6 mm. high. The inscription it contained could have consisted of two lines but it has been carefully erased and can not now be read even by ultra-violet light ; nor has the stamp been identified from its shape. Its size and ornamental appearance and its bright green colour suggest the private collector rather than a library. Unfortunately a stamp of this shape is not recorded either by de Ricci or in Lugt's manual.⁴ Certainly it does not date from the time when the manuscript was in Essen. Nor does it appear elsewhere amongst the Rylands manuscripts.⁵ Its identification would probably enlighten us as to the where-

¹ In size it corresponds exactly with the label of Firmin Didot (cf., for example, Ryl. Latin MS. 10). But this may, of course, be pure chance.

² M. R. James in his *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Latin Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library* (Manchester, 1921), p. 196, reads " 14 ".

³ Depicted in James, *op. cit.* p. 196, but his drawing is rather misleading, for we are dealing not with a stamp consisting of two oblong pieces, but with one comprising a single oblong which has been impressed twice ; this is shown by the fact that the upper oblong is a lighter green than the lower and that the two impressions are slightly at an angle to one another.

⁴ Seymour de Ricci, *English Collectors of Books and Manuscripts, 1530-1930, and their Marks of Ownership* (Cambridge, 1930) ; Frits Lugt, *Les Marques des Collections de Dessins et d'Etampes* (Amsterdam, 1921), and Supplement (Le Haye, 1956). Unfortunately there is no similar work equally comprehensive for collectors of books and manuscripts.

⁵ As Dr. Taylor kindly informs me.

abouts of the manuscript in the nineteenth century. In keeping with the careful removal of all traces of ownership is the "loss" of those portions of the *Comes* an examination of the special feast days in which might have enabled us to form conclusions about the manuscript's provenance. This and Tregaskis's statement that the person from whom he had bought it either could not or would not say anything as to where he had obtained it, clearly indicate that the manuscript must have had last century the kind of history which some one or other had an interest in concealing.

VIII. THE SVANHILD "GOSPEL BOOK" IN MODERN STUDIES ON THE HISTORY OF ART

In modern literature the Rylands manuscript is mentioned for the first time by Paul Clemen in 1893 in his inventory of the contents of the Minster church in Essen.¹ He includes the description of Bucelinus among his sources for the lost treasures, but concerning the actual existence of the manuscript he knew nothing. Georg Humann notes it as missing in his monumental work on the Essen Minster treasures.² Nevertheless, it was in the same year, 1904, that it was brought to the attention of the modern scholarly world for the first time when Arthur Haseloff exhibited eight photographs of it in the Düsseldorf Art Exhibition, an exhibition (arranged by the same Paul Clemen) which was critical for the study of Rhenish art history of the Middle Ages. These photographs Haseloff had taken himself some years previously in Lord Crawford's library. The Catalogue mentions only the number of photographs. The plates, which have survived until the present day,³ show that they were of the six leaves containing miniatures, the decorated "Liber Generationis" page, and the page of text containing the large initial "B" of Jerome's Preface (fols. 1^v, 17^r, 17^v, 18^r, 18^v, 63^r, 91^r, 141^v). In the section "The

¹ *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Rheinprovinz*, ed. Paul Clemen, vol. ii, pt. iii: *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Stadt und des Kreises Essen* (Düsseldorf, 1893), p. 54.

² Georg Humann, *Die Kunstwerke der Münsterkirche zu Essen* (Düsseldorf, 1904), pp. 25-26.

³ They are now in the Bildarchiv zur Buchmalerei, formerly the Photosammlung Haseloff, in the University Library at Saarbrücken, Photographs, nos. 11, 873 I—11, 876 II.

Ottonian Period : Manuscripts from Werden and Essen ", the *Catalogue* notes briefly under no. 650¹ : " *Gospel Book* of the Abbess Svanhild of Essen. Library of Mrs. Rylands in Manchester."

Nevertheless, to Hasseloff is due the credit for being the first to recognize that the manuscript came from Essen and since the Düsseldorf Exhibition it has been known to the relevant literature of the Rhineland and of Essen. All subsequent German literature on the subject has been based on these photographs ; no one else appears to have seen the manuscript itself. It was mentioned, but only briefly, by Beissel² in 1906 in connection with other Essen manuscripts and in 1920 is cited in Hugo Dausend's dissertation,³ in his reconstruction of the former manuscript holdings of Essen.

In 1916 Clemen, in his comprehensive study of Romanesque wall-painting in the Rhineland, made use of the manuscript as a source of comparison when dealing with the few remaining Ottonian frescoes at the west end of Essen Minster church ; he reproduced the dedication page.⁴ He saw in the style of the miniatures, as in the frescoes, strong Byzantine influence. Heinrich Ehl also dealt with the manuscript in his Bonn dissertation of 1922, a work which contains an excessive number of errors and inaccuracies, but, although he enters into a certain amount of detail, as far as essentials are concerned his conclusions are quite general.⁵ He stresses above all the " Romanesque " character of the manuscript and goes so far as to assign it to the Cologne school of illumination, placing it in date between the *Gospel Book* of about 1120 from the church of St. Maria Lyskirchen (today in the Schnütgen Museum),⁶ on the one side, and other Cologne

¹ *Kunsthistorische Ausstellung : Katalog*, Düsseldorf, 1904, 2nd edn.

² Stephan Beissel, *Geschichte der Evangelienbücher in der 1. Hälfte des Mittelalters* (= supplementary volume to *Stimmen aus Maria Laach*, vol. 92/93) (Freiburg, i. Br., 1906), p. 294.

³ Dausend, no. 7, pp. 14-15.

⁴ Paul Clemen, *Die Romanische Wandmalerei in den Rheinlanden* (Düsseldorf, 1916), pp. 97-131, particularly pp. 126-7, n. 56, Fig. 94.

⁵ Heinrich Ehl, *Die ottonische Kölner Buchmalerei* (Bonn and Leipzig, 1922), pp. 237-41 and Figs. 96-99. On the deficiencies in this work see the review by Albert Boeckler in *Jahrbuch für Kunstwissenschaft*, 1924/25 (Leipzig, 1925), pp. 242-4.

⁶ Bloch-Schnitzler, no. XX.

manuscripts of the mid-twelfth century, on the other, namely Cologne Stadtarchiv MS. 312a¹ and Darmstadt Hessisches Landesmuseum MS. 508 and Hessische Landesbibliothek MS. 530.² Only by reason of the date 1073, which occurs in connection with Abbess Svanhild, was he finally compelled to assign it to the eleventh century.

Clemen and Ehl had not seen the manuscript itself and based their opinions solely on the photographs. They clearly did not refer to the Rylands Library. When Dr. M. R. James published his excellent and detailed catalogue of the Rylands Latin manuscripts in 1921, he did not know that the Svanhild who was depicted and named in Latin MS. 110 was from Essen. He dated the manuscript "cent. XI, early"³ and could only conjecture that "possibly Svenhild [*sic*] and Brigida may have been the two scribes of the book". He did not venture to assign the work to any particular centre.⁴

Apart from occasional references to the existence of the manuscript in local studies in Essen, Prochno,⁵ in 1929, dealt with its dedication miniature and the two figures there in his general study of dedication miniatures in early German illumination. He, too, assigned it on stylistic grounds to the Cologne school in the Ottonian period, and, indeed, connected it with the "malerische Gruppe" and particularly with the *Gospel Book* of Abbess Hitda of Meschede.⁶ He also emphasized its connection with later Cologne manuscripts, especially those of the twelfth

¹ Hermann Schnitzler, *Rheinische Schatzkammer. Die Romanik* (= vol. ii) (Düsseldorf, 1959), pl. II, 72-74.

² *Die Sammlungen des Baron von Hüpsch. Ein Kölner Kunstkabinett um 1800. Katalog der Ausstellung im Schnütgen-Museum Köln*, 1964, nos. 50 and 58.

³ James, op. cit. i. 194-6; ii, pls. 144-8.

⁴ He lists it, of course, with the manuscripts of German provenance (ibid. i, p. xiii).

⁵ Joachim Prochno, *Das Schreiber- und Dedikationsbild in der deutschen Buchmalerei, 800-1100* (= *Die Entwicklung des menschlichen Bildnisses*, ed. Walter Goetz, vol. ii) (Leipzig and Berlin, 1929), no. 62, with plate.

⁶ Darmstadt, Hessische Landesbibliothek MS. 1640, dating from 1000-1020. Cf. Bloch-Schnitzler, no. V and *Der Darmstädter Hitda-Codex. Bilder und Zierseiten aus der Handschrift 1640 des Hessischen Landes- und Hochschulbibliothek, mit Erläuterung von Peter Bloch und einem Vorwort von Erich Zimmerman* (Berlin, 1968).

century. He deliberately left open the question as to whether it had been written in a religious house in Cologne, in the neighbourhood of Cologne, or even in Essen itself. Recently, Cames¹ has endeavoured to define more precisely the strong Byzantine influence already referred to, particularly on the dedication page (fol. 17^r), by a comparison with the *Bible* of the Patriarch Leo (Vatican, MS. Reg. graec. 1). He also considers it to be from Cologne.

The above is, to the best of my knowledge, all the information so far available concerning the *Gospel Book* of Svanhild.² The manuscript has, to date, neither been dealt with in a separate monograph nor satisfactorily given its correct place in the history of German or Rhenish art. The purpose of the present article is essentially to free it from the isolation in which it has so far found itself, and for this purpose an account of the artistic and spiritual life in the Abbey of Essen has been a necessary background.³

¹ Gérard Cames, *Byzance et la Peinture Romane de Germanie* (Paris, 1966), pp. 70-71, 83 n. 535, 120-1, 187, Fig. 98.

² Cf. also *The John Rylands Library: Catalogue of an Exhibition of Manuscripts and Early Printing originating in Germany* (Manchester, 1969), p. 8, no. 4, where is a description of the manuscript by Dr. Taylor, with a colour-plate (frontispiece).

³ The second part of this article will appear in the next number of the BULLETIN. It should be added that we cannot enter there as fully as we should have liked into basic stylistic questions or into the problem of the artistic origins of the style of the miniatures. The author's researches on these points are to be presented in a dissertation which will deal more specifically with illumination in Werden and Essen in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries and will be published, probably in 1971, under the title *Der Werdener Psalter und verwandte Handschriften aus Werden und Essen*.