

119a. Durham Cathedral Library, A. IV. 36

Symeon of Durham, "Libellus de exordio," etc.

[Ker—, Gneuss—]

HISTORY: A copy of Symeon of Durham's "Libellus de exordio istius hoc est Dunelmensis ecclesie," formerly known as the *Historia Dunelmensis ecclesie*. The work is an account of the foundation of the church of Lindisfarne, the removal of that church to Chester-le-Street in the late 9c, its final relocation at Durham in 995, and the history of the church of Durham down to the death of Bishop William of St Calais in 1096. The work is now definitely attributed to Symeon of Durham and was written after 1104 and probably by 1107 or 1109, certainly by 1115.

The text in this manuscript (Rollason's text "D") is a careless copy of that in Durham, University Library, Cosin V. II. 6 [124], corrected by a contemporary hand in brown pencil. Its script and decoration resemble those of other Durham books, suggesting that it was produced at Durham. That it was also kept there in the Middle Ages is shown by: an erased Durham *ex libris* (beginning of 15c, legible under ultra-violet light) at the top of f. 1 and the letter 'M' corresponding to an entry in the 1395 catalogue of books in the Durham claustral library (B[otfield] 1838: 56); the first words of f. 2r which correspond more or less to the same entry (the words cited in the catalogue are 'perlatum est' rather than 'prolatum est' but this is obviously a slip); and the fact that in the later Middle Ages the book received annotations by identifiable Durham monks. The manuscript was in 1568 given to Matthew Parker by Robert Horne (note on f. 121v/8–11), who had been a dean of Durham (1551/3–1559/61). There are chapter marks, etc. in red crayon similar to that found in many of Parker's manuscripts. It was transcribed about Parker's time as CCCC 100(1) (Doyle 1998: 158). It was possibly at York later on, where it is assigned in Bernard's *Catalogi Manuscriptorum Angliae* (1697), II, pt. 1,4, and was seen there by Thomas Rud. It was removed from York somehow and later belonged to the Dutch collector Henrik van Wijn (18c/19c), inscription f. iv recto (bottom) and flyleaf notes by him (ii verso), and was bought at Leiden and brought back to England,

probably in the 1830s. It was subsequently acquired for Sir Thomas Phillipps's Library as MS 9374, and was purchased for the Durham Cathedral Library in 1950 (cf. Davies 1951, Doyle 1998: 160). Because of its acquisition history, it was not known to Dobbie or mentioned in Ker, *Catalogue*, and hence omitted by Robinson and Stanley 1991.

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: Bound in a modern binding, the leaves now measure 205 mm. × 145 mm. Arranged HFHF. The written space is 140 mm. × 95 mm., except ff. iv–v where it is 160 mm. × 123 mm. Ruling is with pencil with double frame rule, and the leaves are pricked on the outer margins. The endleaves and leaves i–ii are modern paper additions. The pencil foliation is definitive and to be preferred to the ink foliation. Apart from item 1, script, layout, and decoration are consistent throughout the manuscript; and the writing in Gothic bookhands of the early 13c, with a change of hand between ff. 14 and 15, and possibly on f. 107v. “Bede’s Death Song” (f. 25v) is written by the scribe of the main text, and shows an expert use of insular letter-forms and ligatures. Item 1 is written in a script of the late 13c or early 14c on a separate quire of quite different parchment and written space from that of the rest of the volume. Moreover, it does not correspond to the text since it gives 122 chapters whereas there are in fact only 113 (the last nine chapters of Coldingham being missing). It may therefore have originally been intended for a copy of the text in another manuscript. All the other items overlap the quires and items 4 and 5 run on from item 3 without rubrics or other dividing marks.

[Note: Since the last name in the bishop-list (item 3b) is that of Philip of Poitou (1195–1208), and no years of pontificate are given, the manuscript, apart from item 1, was presumably written either in his pontificate or in the vacancy which followed his death (1208–17), which is consistent with the date of the script. The last event in item 5 (f. 112rv) is the death of Richard I in 1199, but other versions of this text extend to 1213, and it is not clear whether the text in this manuscript is an earlier recension or simply an unfinished copy.]

Red, green, and blue colored initials with red pen flourishing divide the chapters, and major initials are used to indicate the start of sections on ff. 1r, 4v (on which alternating blue, red, and green capitals are also used for the initials of the names of the bishops on f. 4/22–3), and 78v. See also the description of this manuscript in Rollason 2000: xxviii–xxix.

COLLATION: Foll. i–ii (paper) + iii–v (parchment) + 1–123 + ii (paper). Two paper leaves (ff. i–ii), I⁴ wants one before f. iii (ff. iii–v.), II⁸ (ff. 1–8), III⁶ (ff. 9–14), IV–XIV⁸ (ff. 15–102), XV⁸ one cancelled after f. 103 (ff. 103–

9), XVI* (ff. 110–17), XVII six disordered leaves, ff. 118 and 122 being conjoint, the others stuck or sewn in (ff. 118–23), two paper leaves. The quires, apart from I, II, XV, and XVI, have catchwords at the bottom edge of the last folio.

CONTENTS:

1. ff. iv recto–v verso An added (13c–14c) list of chapter-headings: ‘1. Quod omnes ep(iscop)i Lindisfarnens(es) siue Dunelm(enses) a sancto | Aidano usq(ue) Walcheru(m) monachi fueru(n)t p(re)ter Vnu(m) | Symoniacu(m) Aldredu(m) nomine’; ends: ‘122. De electione morgani’ (ed. Rollason 2000: Appendix C, pp. 324–28).
 2. ff. 1r/1–4r/7 A summary of Symeon of Durham’s “Libellus de exordio”: ‘REGNANTE apud northa|nhymbros chri(sti)anissimo | rege & postea martire Os|waldo’; ends: ‘s(ed) antiquu(m) d(e)o renouante restituit’ (ed. Arnold 1882–1885: 1.7–11; ed. and trans. Rollason 2000: Appendix A).
 3. ff. 4r/8–90r/3 Symeon of Durham, “Libellus de exordio atque procurso istius hoc est Dunhelmensis ecclesie” (ed. Arnold 1882–1885: 1.1–135; ed. and trans. Rollason 2000: 2–257):
 - a. f. 4r/8–21 Preface: ‘Exordium huius hoc est Dunelmensis eccl(esi) desc(r)i|b(er)e . . . apponere non negligat’;
 - b. f. 4r/22–4v/7 List of bishops of Lindisfarne, Chester-le-Street, and Durham down to Philip of Poitou (1195×6–1208): ‘Aidanus. Finanus. Colmanus . . . Hugo. Philippus’ (cf. Rollason 2000: 4, n. 6);
 - c. ff. 4v/11–27v/8 Main text [Book 1]: ‘GLORIOSI QUONDAM | Regis Northanhymbro(rum) & p(re)ciosi | m(a)r(tyr)is Oswaldi feruentissima i(n) chr(ist)o | fide’;
 - ff. ff. 27v/9–49v/1 [Book 2]: ‘Post dormitione(m) | ei(us) in chr(ist)o anno t(er)cio rex ceolw(u)lfus’;
 - ff. ff. 49v/2–78r/15 [Book 3]: ‘ANNO aute(m) ab incarnatione d(omi)ni nongen|tesimo nonagesimo q(u)into. imp(er)ii uero | regis ethelredi septimo decimo’ [f. 78r/16–23 blank];
 - ff. 78v/1–90r/3 [Book 4: indicated by ‘L. IIII’ added in top margin] ‘TRANS-ACTIS post occisione(m) Wal|cheri ep(iscop)i’; ends: ‘in dumhelmu(m) congregati fuerant | monaci om(n)ia agebatur’ (cf. Meehan 1998: 130).
- [Note: There are no original chapter numbers or headings in the text, but rubrics corresponding to item 1 have been added sporadically later. Symeon included “Epistola Cuthberti de obitu Bedae” as Bk. 1, ch. 15, which carries the W-S version of “Bede’s Death Song” (f. 25v/10–14, beg. ‘For þam neodfere | nenig wyrþeð’ [= ed. Dobbie 1942: 108]); this copy corresponds exactly with the copy in Durham,

University Library Cosin V. II. 6, except for the error ‘pancer’ for *pances* in the last line. It uses insular forms of letters d, r, s, þ, wynn, g, ð, æ, and f, and dotted y (cf. Doyle 1998). The text belongs to Dobbie’s “Symeon” group (cf. Dobbie 1937: 83–87), though Dobbie did not know of this particular manuscript; hence its omission by Robinson and Stanley 1991.]

4. ff. 90r/4–107r/10 A continuation of the “Libellus de exordio”: ‘TRI-BUS Dehinc annis eccl(es)ia uacante | pastore’; ends: ‘op(er)ante deo consolatione(m) suor(um) in sede sua | ep(is)c(opus) sollempnit(er) susceptus est’ (ed. Arnold 1882–1885: 1.135–160; ed. and trans. Rol-lason 2000: Appendix B, pp. 266–310).

5. ff. 107r/10–121v/4 Geoffrey of Coldingham, “Liber de statu ecclesie Dunhelmensis” (incomplete, only chs. 1–14): ‘Erat moribus | insignis. statura 7 canicie uenerabilis. hospita|litis obsequio deditus’; ends ‘v(e)l Arthu|rus fr(atr)is sui filius assumeret(ur) ad regnum’ (ed. Raines 1839: 3–20).

f. 122r blank.

f. 122v Pentrials (13c, 16c?), cf. Rom. 15.4, Matt. 16.19.

PHOTO NOTES: Darkened parchment and over-exposure have led to partial illegibility of the photographs of the following folios: 3r–5r, 54v, 62v–63v, 67r–71r, 77v–79r, 82v–85r, 89r–v, 90v, 98v, 102v, 104v, 107v, 117v–120r, 121r–v.

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