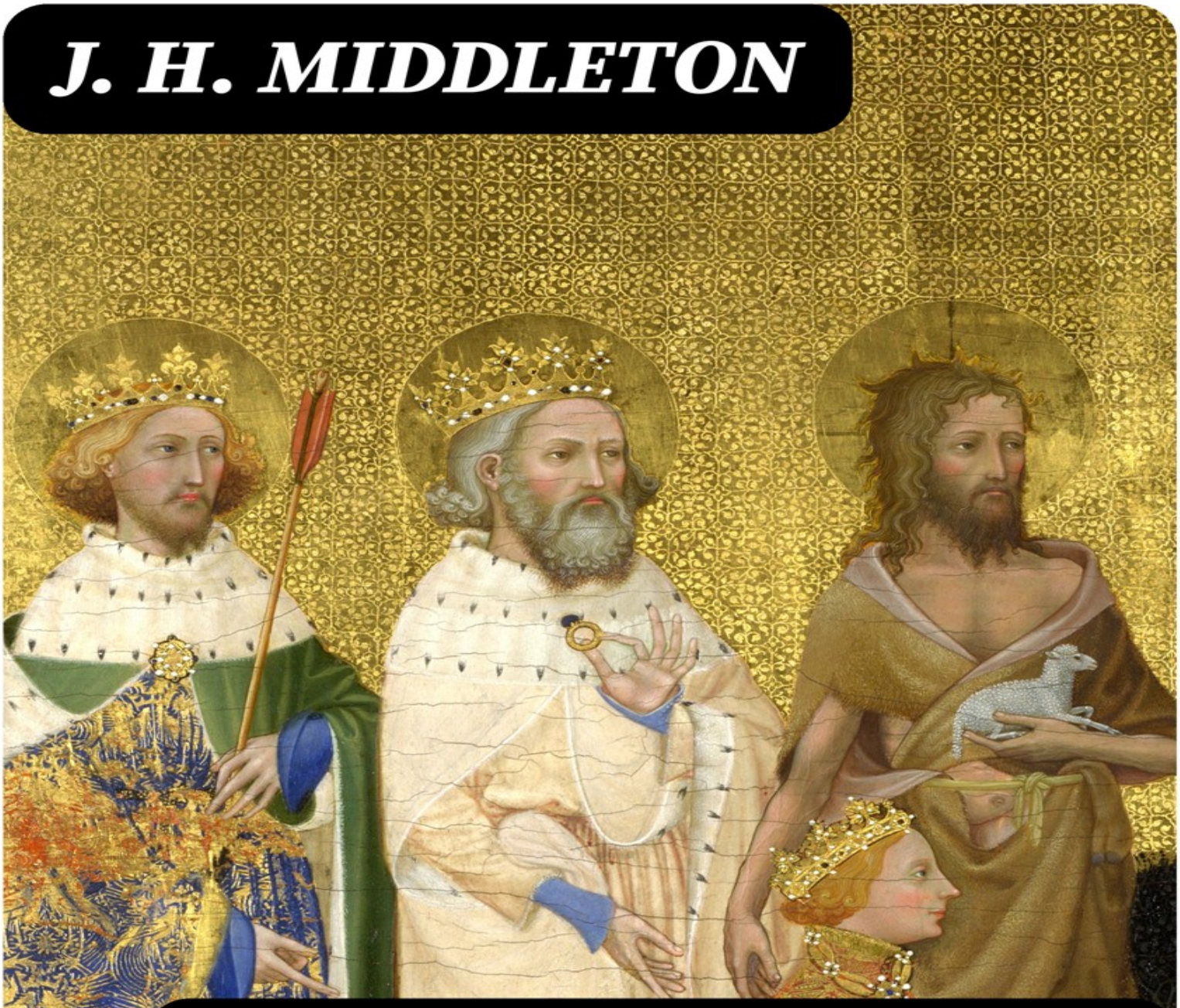
J. H. MIDDLETON



ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS IN CLASSICAL AND MEDIAEVAL TIMES

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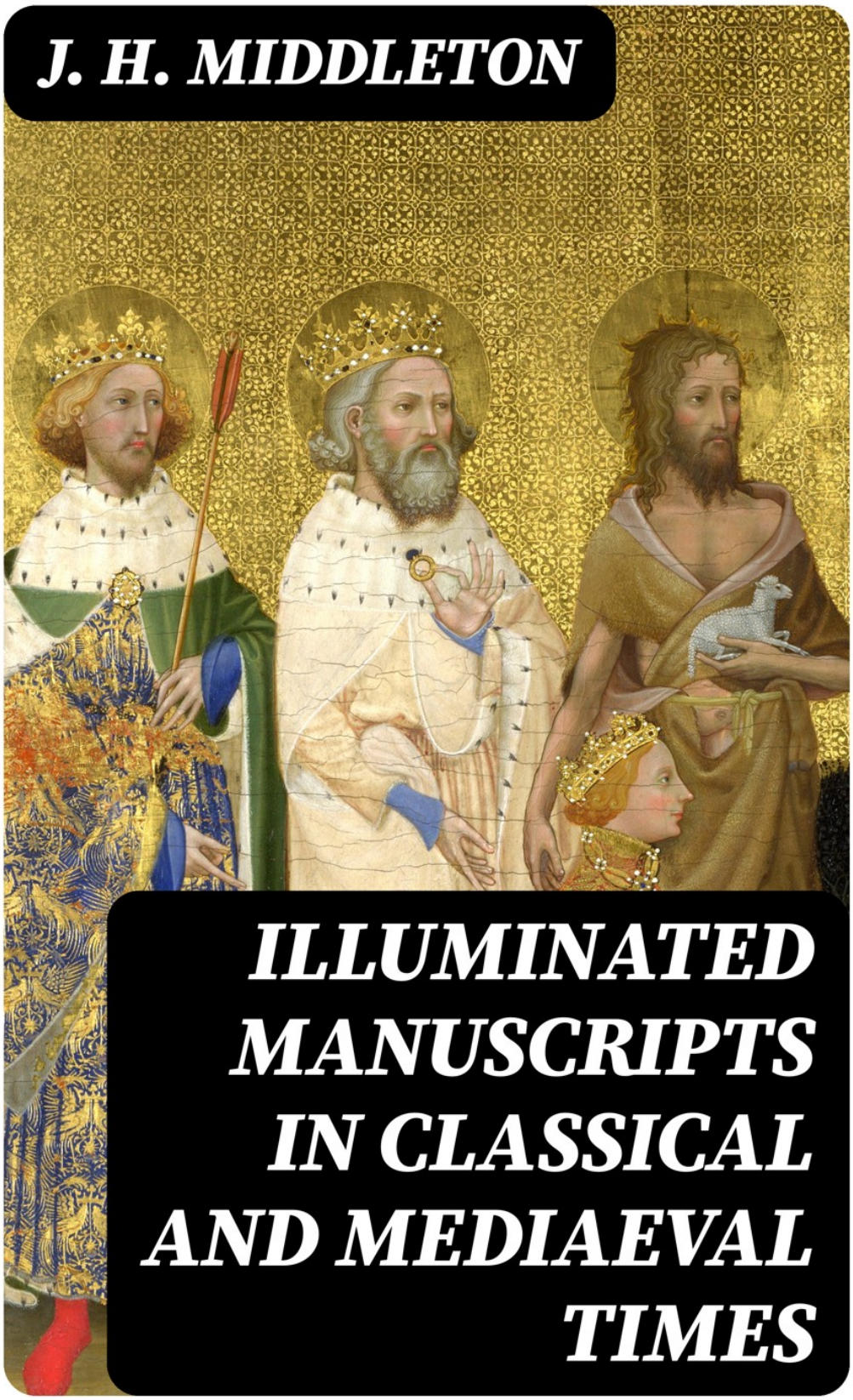

ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS IN CLASSICAL AND MEDIAEVAL TIMES

J. H. Middleton

Illuminated Manuscripts in Classical and Mediaeval Times

Their Art and Their Technique

EAN 8596547013877

DigiCat, 2022
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PREFACE.

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The object of this book is to give a general account of the various methods of writing, the different forms of manuscripts and the styles and systems of decoration that were used from the earliest times down to the sixteenth century A.D., when the invention of printing gradually put an end to the ancient and beautiful art of manuscript illumination.

I have attempted to give a historical sketch of the growth and development of the various styles of manuscript illumination, and also of the chief technical processes which were employed in the preparation of pigments, the application of gold leaf, and other details, to which the most unsparing amount of time and labour was devoted by the scribes and illuminators of many different countries and periods.

An important point with regard to this subject is the remarkable way in which technical processes lasted, in many cases, almost without alteration from classical times down to the latest mediaeval period, partly owing to the existence of an unbroken chain of traditional practice, and partly on account of the mediaeval custom of studying and obeying the precepts of such classical writers as Vitruvius and Pliny the Elder.

To an English student the art-history of illuminated manuscripts should be especially interesting, as there were two distinct periods when the productions of English

illuminators were of unrivalled beauty and importance throughout the world[1].

In the latter part of this volume I have tried to describe the conditions under which the illuminators of manuscripts did their work, whether they were monks who laboured in the *scriptorium* of a monastery, or members of some secular guild, such as the great painters' guilds of Bruges or Paris.

The extraordinary beauty and marvellous technical perfection of certain classes of manuscripts make it a matter of interest to learn who the illuminators were, and under what daily conditions and for what reward they laboured with such astonishing patience and skill.

The intense pleasure and refreshment that can be gained by the study of a fine mediaeval illuminated manuscript depend largely on the fact that the exquisite miniatures, borders and initial letters were the product of an age which in almost every respect differed widely from the unhappy, machine-driven nineteenth century in which we now live.

With regard to the illustrations, I have to thank Mr. John Murray for his kindness in lending me a *cliché* of the excellent woodcut of the *scriptorium* walk in the cloisters of the Benedictine Abbey of Gloucester, which was originally prepared to illustrate one of Mr. Murray's valuable *Guides to the English Cathedrals*.

The rest of the illustrations I owe to the kindness of Mr. Kegan Paul. They have previously appeared in the English edition of Woltmann and Woermann's valuable *History of Painting*, 1880–7.

I have to thank my friend and colleague Mr. M. R. James for his kindness in looking through the proofs of this book. He is not responsible for the opinions expressed or for the errors that remain, but he has corrected some of the grosser blunders.

J. HENRY MIDDLETON.

KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

BOOKS ON ILLUMINATED MSS.

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The following are some of the most important works on this subject, and the most useful for the purposes of a student. Many others, which deal with smaller branches of the subject, are referred to in the following text.

Bastard, *Peintures et Ornemens des Manuscrits, classés dans un ordre Chronologique*, Imper. folio, Paris, 1835, &c.; a very magnificent book, with 163 plates, mostly coloured.

Birch and Jenner, *Early drawings and illuminations*, London, 1879; this is a useful index of subjects which occur in manuscript miniatures.

Bradley, J. W., *Dictionary of Miniaturists and Illuminators*, 3 vols. 8vo. London, 1887–1890.

Chassant, *Paléographie des Chartes et des Manuscrits du XIme au XVIIIme Siècle*, 12mo.; a useful little handbook, together with the companion volume, *Dictionnaire des Abbréviations Latines et Françaises*, Paris, 1876.

Denis, F., *Histoire de l'Ornementation des manuscrits*; 8vo. Paris, 1879.

Fleury, E., *Les Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque de Laon étudiés au point de vue de leur illustration*, 2 vols., Laon, 1863. With 50 plates.

Humphreys, Noel, *Illuminated Books of the Middle Ages*, folio, London, 1849; a handsome, well-illustrated book.

Humphreys, Noel, *The Origin and Progress of the Art of Writing*; sm. 4to., with 28 plates; London, 1853.

Kopp, *Palaeographia Critica*, 4 vols. 4to., Manheim, 1817–1819; a book of much historical value for the student of Palaeography.

Lamprecht, K., *Initial-Ornamentik des VIII.-XIII. Jahrh.*, Leipzig, 1882.

Langlois, *Essai sur la Calligraphie des Manuscrits du Moyen Age et sur les Ornements des premiers livres imprimés*, 8vo. Rouen, 1841.

Monte Cassino, *Paleografia artistica di Monte Cassino*, published by the Benedictine Monks of Mte. Cassino, 1870, and still in progress. This work contains a very valuable series of facsimiles and coloured reproductions of selected pages from many of the most important manuscripts in this ancient and famous library, that of the Mother-house of the whole Benedictine Order.

Reiss, H., *Sammlung der schönsten Miniaturen des Mittelalters*, Vienna, 1863–5.

Riegl, A., *Die mittelalterl. Kalenderillustration*, Innsbruck, 1889.

Seghers, L., *Trésor calligraphique du Moyen Age*, Paris, 1884; with 46 coloured plates of illuminated initials.

Shaw, Henry, *Illuminated Ornaments of the Middle Ages from the sixth to the seventeenth century*; with descriptions by Sir Fred. Madden; 4to. with 60 coloured plates, London, 1833. A very fine and handsome work.

" " *The Art of Illumination*, 4to. London, 1870; with well-executed coloured plates.

" " *Hand-book of Mediaeval Alphabets and Devices*, Imp. 8vo. London, 1877; with 37 coloured plates.

Silvestre, *Paléographie Universelle*, 4 vols., Atlas folio, Paris, 1839–1841. This is the most magnificent and costly work on the subject that has ever been produced.
The English Edition in 2 vols., Atlas folio, translated and edited by Sir Fred. Madden, London, 1850, is very superior in point of accuracy and judgment to the original French work. A smaller edition with 72 selected plates has also been published, in 2 vols. 8vo. and one fol., London, 1850.

Waagen, G. F., *On the Importance of Manuscripts with Miniatures in the history of Art*, 8vo. London (1850).

Westwood, J. O., *Palaeographia Sacra Pictoria*, royal 4to. London, 1843–5. This is a very fine work, with 50 coloured plates of manuscript illuminations selected from manuscripts of the Bible of various dates from the fourth to the sixteenth century.

" " *Illuminated Illustrations of the Bible*, royal 4to. London, 1846. This is a companion work to the last-mentioned book.

" " *Miniatures and Ornaments of Anglo-Saxon and Irish Manuscripts*, fol., London, 1868; with 54 very finely executed coloured plates of remarkable fidelity in drawing. The reproductions of pages from the *Book of Kells* and similar Celtic manuscripts are specially remarkable.

Wyatt, M. Digby, *The Art of Illuminating as practised in Europe from the earliest times*; 4to. London, 1860; with 100 plates in gold and colours.

The best work on the form of books in ancient times is Th. Birt, *Das antike Buchwesen in seinem Verhältniss zur Literatur*, 8vo., 1882.

The publications of the Palaeographical Society, from the year 1873, and still in progress, are of great value for their well-selected and well-executed photographic reproductions of pages from the most important manuscripts of all countries and periods.

CHAPTER I.

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Classical Manuscripts written with a Stilus.

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Before entering upon any discussion of the styles and methods of decoration which are to be found in mediaeval manuscripts and of the various processes, pigments and other materials which were employed by the mediaeval illuminators it will be necessary to give some account of the shapes and kinds of books which were produced among various races during the classical period.

Survival of methods.

The reason of this is that classical styles of decoration and technical methods, in the preparation of paper, parchment, pigments and the like, both survived to greater extent and to a very much later period than is usually supposed to have been the case, and, indeed, continued to influence both the artistic qualities and the mechanical processes of the mediaeval illuminator almost down to the time when the production of illuminated manuscripts was gradually put an end to by the invention of printing.

The pen and the stilus.

The word *manuscript* is usually taken to imply writing with a pen, brush or *stilus* to the exclusion of inscriptions cut with the chisel or the graver in stone, marble, bronze or other hard substance. The science of *palaeography* deals with the former, while *epigraphy* is concerned with the latter. The inscribed clay tablets of Assyria and Babylon might be considered a sort of link between the two, on account of the

cuneiform writing on them having been executed with a stilus in soft, plastic clay, which subsequently was hardened by baking in the potter's kiln, but it will be needless to describe them here.

Writing on metal.

Manuscripts on metal plates. Another form of writing especially used by the ancient Greeks, which falls more definitely under the head of manuscripts, consists of characters scratched with a sharp iron or bronze *stilus* on plates of soft tin, lead or pewter, which, when not in use, could be rolled up into a compact and conveniently portable cylinder.

A considerable number of these inscribed lead rolls have been found in the tombs of Cyprus; but none of them unfortunately have as yet been found to contain matter of any great interest.

Lead rolls.
Tin rolls.

For the most part they consist either of monetary accounts, or else of formulae of imprecations, curses devoting some enemy to punishment at the hands of the gods. We know however from the evidence of classical writers that famous poems and other important literary works were occasionally preserved in the form of these inscribed tin or lead rolls. Pausanias, for example, tells us that during his visit to Helicon in Boeotia he was shown the original manuscript of Hesiod's *Works and Days* written on plates of lead; see Paus. IX. 31. Again at IV. 26, Pausanias records the discovery at

Ithome in Messenia of a bronze urn (*hydria*) which contained a manuscript of the "Mysteries of the Great Deities" written on "a thinly beaten plate of tin, which was rolled up like a book," κασσίτερον ἐληλασμένον ἐς τὸ λεπτότατον, ἐπείλικτο δὲ ὥσπερ τὰ βιβλία. This method of writing would be quite different from the laborious method of cutting inscriptions on bronze plates with a chisel and hammer, or with a graver.

A scribe could write on the soft white metal with a sharp stilus almost as easily and rapidly as if he were using pen and ink on paper, and the manuscript thus produced would have the advantage of extreme durability.

We may indeed hope that even now some priceless lost work of early Greece may be recovered by the discovery of similar lead rolls to those which Cesnola found in Cyprus.

Gold amulets.

Some very beautiful little Greek manuscripts, written on thin plates of gold, have also been discovered at various places. The most remarkable of these were intended for amulets, and were rolled up in little gold or silver cylinders and worn round the neck during life. After death they were placed with the body in the tomb. Several of these, discovered in tombs in the district of Sybaris in Magna Graecia, are inscribed with fragments from the mystic Orphic hymns, and give directions to the soul as to what he will find and what he must do in the spirit-world.

Petelia tablet.

The most complete of these little gold manuscripts, usually known as the Petelia tablet, is preserved in the gem-room in the British Museum. The manuscript consists of thirteen hexameter lines written on a thin plate of pure gold measuring 1½ inches by 2⅝ inches in width; it dates from the third century B.C.[2]

In classical times, manuscripts were of two different forms; first, the *book* form, πίναξ, πινάκιον or δελτίον, in Latin *codex* (older spelling *caudex*); and secondly the roll, κύλινδρος, βίβλος or βιβλίον, Latin *volumen*[3].

Waxed tablets.

Manuscripts on tablets. Both the Greeks and the Romans used very largely tablets (πίνακες, Lat. *tabulae* or *cerae*) of wood covered with a thin coating of coloured wax, on which the writing was formed with a sharp-pointed *stilus* (γραφὶς) of wood, ivory or bronze. The wax was coloured either black or red in order that the writing scratched upon it might be clearly visible. The reverse end of the stilus was made flat or in the shape of a small ball so that it could be used to make corrections by smoothing out words or letters which had been erroneously scratched in the soft wax.

Waxed diptychs.

These tablets were commonly about ten to fourteen inches in length by about half that in width. The main surface of each tablet was sunk from ⅛ to 1⁄10 of an inch in depth to receive the wax layer, leaving a rim all round about the size of that round a modern school-boy's slate. The object of this was that two of these tablets might be placed together face

to face without danger of rubbing and obliterating the writing on the wax, which was applied in a very thin coat, not more than 1⁄16 of an inch in thickness. As a rule these tablets were fastened together in pairs by stout loops of leather or cord. These double tablets were called by the Greeks πίνακες πτυκτοὶ or δίπτυχα (from δίς and πτύσσω) and by the Romans *pugillares* or *codicilli*. Homer (*Il.* VI. 168) mentions a letter written on folding tablets—

πόρεν δ' ὅ γε σήματα λυγρά
Γράψας ἐν πίνακι πτυκτῷ.

Tablets on coins and gems.

Representations of these folding tablets occur frequently both in Greek and in Roman art, as, for example on various Sicilian coins, where the artist's name is placed in minute letters on a double tablet, which in some cases, as on a *tetradrachm* of Himera, is held open by a flying figure of Victory.

A gem of about 400 B.C., a large scarabaeoid in chalcedony, recently acquired by the British Museum, is engraved with a seated figure of a lady holding a book consisting of four leaves; she is writing lengthwise on one leaf, while the other three hang down from their hinge.

Some of the beautiful terra-cotta statuettes from the tombs of the Boeotian Tanagra represent a girl reading from a somewhat similar double folding tablet.

On Greek vases and in Roman mural paintings the *pugillares* are frequently shown, though the roll form of manuscript is

on the whole more usual.

Tablets from tombs.

Some examples of these tablets have been found in a good state of preservation in Graeco-Egyptian tombs and during recent excavations in Pompeii.

Part of a poem in Greek written in large uncial characters is still legible on the single leaf of a pair of tablets from Memphis in Egypt, which is now in the British Museum. Though the coating of wax has nearly all perished, the sharp stilus has marked through on to the wood behind the wax, so that the writing is still legible. Its date appears to be shortly before the Christian era[4].

Pompeian tablets.

Some well preserved *pugillares* found in Pompeii are now in the Museum in Naples; the writing on them is of less interest, consisting merely of accounts of expenditure. Though the wood is blackened and the wax destroyed, the writing is still perfectly visible on the charred surface.

A more costly form of *pugillares* was made of bone or ivory[5]; in some cases the back of each ivory leaf was decorated with carving in low relief.

Consular diptychs.

A good many examples of these tablets, dating from the third to the sixth century A.D., still exist. These late highly

decorated *pugillares* are usually known as *Consular diptychs*, because, as a rule, they have on the carved back the name of a Consul, and very frequently a representation of the Consul in his *pulvinar* or state box presiding over the Games in the Circus. It is supposed that these ivory diptychs were inscribed with complimentary addresses and were sent as presents to newly appointed officials in the time of the later Empire.

Many-leaved tablets.

In some cases the ancient writing-tablets consisted of three or more leaves hinged together (τρίπτυχα, πεντάπτυχα &c.); this was the earliest form of the *codex* or *book* in the modern sense of the word. The inner leaves of these *codices* had sinkings to receive the wax on both sides; only the backs of the two outer leaves being left plain or carved in relief to form the covers.

Waxed tablets.

When the written matter on these tablets was no longer wanted, a fresh surface for writing was prepared either by smoothing down the wax with the handle of the stilus, or else by scraping it off and pouring in a fresh supply. This is mentioned by Ovid (*Ar. Am.* I. 437); "cera… rasis infusa tabellis[6]." These tablets were sometimes called briefly *cerae*; the phrases *prima cera*, *altera cera*, meaning the first page, the second page. The best sorts of wooden writing-tablets were made of box-wood, and hence they are sometimes called πυξίον. In addition to the holes along one edge of each tablet through which the cord or wire was passed to hold the leaves together and to form the hinge, additional holes were often made along the opposite edge in

order that the letter or other writing on the *tabulae* might be kept private by tying a thread through these holes and then impressing a seal on the knot. Plautus (*Bacch.* IV. iv. 64) alludes to this in mentioning the various things required to write a letter,

Effer cito stilum, ceram, et tabellas et linum.

In some cases wooden tablets of this kind were used without a coating of wax, but had simply a smooth surface to receive writing with ink and a reed pen. Many examples of these have been found in Egypt. The writing could be obliterated and a new surface prepared by sponging and rubbing with pumice-stone.

Whitened boards.

Among the Greeks wooden boards, whitened with chalk or gypsum, were often used for writing that was intended to be of temporary use only. Charcoal was used to write on these boards, which were called λευκώματα or γραμματεῖα λελευκωμένα[7]. Public advertisements and official announcements were frequently written in this way and then hung up in a conspicuous place in the *agora* or market-place of the city.

Sacred accounts.

Thus some of the inscriptions of the fourth century B.C., found at Delos mention that every month a λεύκωμα was suspended in the *agora*, on which was written a statement of the financial management and all the expenses of the Temple of the Delian Apollo during the past month. Finally,

at the end of the year, an abstract of the accounts of the Temple was engraved as a permanent record on a marble *stele*. This was also the custom with regard to the financial records of the Athenian Parthenon, and probably most of the important Greek temples. In connection with the sacred records, the Delian inscriptions mention, in addition to the λευκώματα, other forms of tablets, the δέλτος and the πίναξ, and also χάρται or writings on *papyrus*; manuscripts of this last kind will be discussed in a subsequent section[8].

Late survivals.

Late survivals of writing on tablets. Before passing on to describe other forms of classical manuscripts, it may be interesting to note that the ancient waxed tablets or *pugillares* continued to be used for certain purposes throughout the whole mediaeval period, down to the sixteenth century or even later. Many of the principal churches, especially in Italy, but also in other countries, possessed one or more diptychs on which were inscribed the names of all those who had in any way been benefactors either to the ecclesiastical foundation or to the building. In early times, during the daily celebration of Mass, the list of names was read out from the *diptych* by the Deacon standing in the gospel ambon; and the congregation was requested or "bid" to pray for the souls of those whose names they had just heard.

"*Bidding the beads.*"

The "bidding prayer" before University sermon at Oxford and Cambridge is a survival of this custom, which in the fifteenth century was termed "bidding the beads," that is "praying for the prayers" of the congregation. In some cases

fine specimens of the old ivory *Consular diptychs* were used for this purpose in Italian churches till comparatively late times, but as a rule they fell into disuse before the eleventh or twelfth century, as the list of names became too long for the waxed leaves of a diptych, and so by degrees vellum rolls or else *codices*, often beautifully written in gold and silver letters, were substituted. One of the most splendid of these lists, the *Liber vitae* of Durham, is now preserved in the British Museum; *Cotton manuscripts*, Domit. 7. 2.

For many other purposes, both ecclesiastical and secular, the classical waxed tablets were used in England and on the Continent, especially for lists of names, as for example in great Cathedral or Abbey churches the list for the week of the various priests who were appointed to celebrate each mass at each of the numerous altars.

List of guild-members.

The British Museum possesses a very interesting late example of a waxed tablet which in shape, size and general appearance is exactly like the Roman *pugillares*. This is an oak tablet, about 20 inches long by 10 inches wide, covered with a thin layer of wax protected by the usual slightly raised margin about half an inch wide. Along one edge are three holes with leather loops to form the hinges; the other leaf is lost. On the wax is inscribed a list of the names of the members of a Flemish guild; each name is still as sharp and legible as the day it was written. The form of the writing shows that it belongs to the end of the fifteenth century. Such tablets were used both by the trade guilds of the middle ages and by the religious guilds formed for the cult of some special Saint.

Wooden Book.

The most interesting mediaeval example of the classical form of manuscript made up of several leaves of waxed tablets was found a few years ago in a blocked-up recess in the old wooden church at Hopperstad in Norway. It was enclosed in a casket of wood covered with leather, and thus it still remains in a very perfect state of preservation; it is now in the University Museum at Christiania. The book consists of six tablets of box-wood, coated with wax within the usual raised margin, and hinged with leather thongs. The outer leaves are decorated on the back with carving mixed with inlay of different coloured woods.

Bestiary.

The manuscript itself which is written on the wax is a *Bestiary*, dating, as its style shows, from the latter part of the thirteenth century, though the book itself is probably older. It contains lists of animals in Latin with a Norwegian translation, and it is copiously illustrated with drawings of scenes from agricultural and domestic life, executed in fine outline on the wax with a sharply pointed stilus. In every detail, except of course in the character of the writing and drawings, this book exactly resembles an ancient Greek or Roman many-leaved wooden book, πολύπτυχον, a very striking example of the unaltered survival of ancient methods for an extraordinarily long period.

Ivory tablets.

During the mediaeval period, sets of ivory tablets hinged together were frequently made for devotional purposes. This

form of manuscript has no layer of wax, but the writing is executed with a pen on the thin smooth leaf of ivory. Each leaf has its margin raised, like the ancient *pugillares*, to prevent the two adjacent surfaces from rubbing together.

These ivory tablets usually contain a set of short prayers, and they are frequently illustrated with painted miniatures of sacred subjects exactly like those in the vellum manuscripts of the same date.

Tablet with eight leaves.

The South Kensington Museum possesses a very beautiful example of these ivory books; it is of Northern French workmanship dating from about the middle of the fourteenth century. It consists of eight leaves of ivory, measuring 4⅛ inches by 2⅜ inches in width. The six inner pages are extremely thin, no thicker than stout paper, and have paintings on both sides, the two covers are of thicker substance, about a quarter of an inch, and are decorated on the outside with beautiful carved reliefs.

This remarkable work of art has on the inner leaves fourteen very delicately executed miniatures of sacred subjects, single figures of Saints and scenes from Christ's Passion, painted in gold and colours in the finest style of French fourteenth century art, evidently executed by some very skilful illuminator.

Ivory diptychs.

Tablets like this with as many as eight ivory leaves are rare, but a very large number of beautiful ivory diptychs still

exist, with carved reliefs on the outside of very graceful style and delicate execution. Most of these diptychs date from the fourteenth century, and are of French workmanship, but they were also produced in England at the same time and of quite equal merit in design and execution.

Inscribed lead tablet.

Manuscripts on lead plates, like those of the ancient Greeks, were occasionally used in mediaeval times.

A single lead leaf of an Anglo-Saxon manuscript from Lord Londesborough's collection is illustrated in *Archaeologia*, Vol. XXXIV, Plate 36, page 438. This leaf measures 6½ inches by 5 inches in width. On it is incised with a stilus in fine bold semi-uncial writing the beginning of Aelfric's preface to his first collection of *Homilies*, which in modern English runs thus:—"I, Aelfric, monk and mass-priest, was sent in King Aethelred's time from Aelfeage the Bishop, the successor of Aethelwold, to a certain minster which is called Cernel, &c." At the top of the page there is a heading in large Runic characters. Aelfric was sent by Aelfeage Bishop of Winchester to be Abbot of Cerne in 988 or 989, and this interesting page appears to be of contemporary date. It was found by a labourer while digging in the precincts of the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds. Along one edge of the leaden page there are three holes to receive the loops which hinged the plates together, but the other leaves were not found.

Horn-books.

Horn-books. One form of wooden tablet continued in use, especially in boys' schools, till the sixteenth century. This was a wooden board, rather smaller than an ordinary school-boy's slate, with a long handle at the bottom; on it was fixed a sheet of vellum or paper on which was written or (in the latest examples) printed *the Alphabet*, *the Creed*, *the Lord's Prayer* or such like. Over this a thin sheet of transparent horn was nailed, whence these tablets were often called "horn-books." A good example dating from the sixteenth century is now preserved in the Bodleian library at Oxford.

CHAPTER II.

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To return now to classical forms of manuscripts, it appears to have been a long time before the *book* or *codex* form of manuscript was extended from the wood and ivory tablets to writings on parchment or paper.

The roll form of MS.
The codex form.

It seems probable that throughout the Greek period manuscripts on paper or vellum were usually, if not always, in the shape of a long roll; and that it was not till about the beginning of the Roman Empire that leaves of parchment or paper were sometimes cut up into pages and bound together in the form of the older tablets. During the first two or three centuries of the Empire, manuscripts were produced in both of these forms—the *codex* and the *volumen*; but the *roll* form was by far the commoner, almost till the transference of the seat of government to Byzantium.

The roll form of book is the one shown in many of the wall paintings of Pompeii; but on some sarcophagi reliefs of the second century A.D. books both of the *roll* and the *codex* shape are represented[9].

Writing with a pen.

Having given some account of the various classical forms of manuscript in which the writing is incised with a sharp *stilus*, we will now pass on to the other chief forms of manuscript

which were written with a pen and with ink or other pigment.

Books of the dead.

Manuscripts on papyrus; the oldest existing examples of this class are the so-called *Rituals of the Dead* found in the tombs of Egypt, especially in those of the Theban dynasties; the oldest of these date as far back as the sixteenth or fifteenth century B.C.[10]

They are executed with a reed pen in hieroglyphic writing on long rolls of papyrus, and are copiously illuminated with painted miniatures illustrating the subject of the text, drawn with much spirit and coloured in a very finely decorative way. Immense numbers of these Egyptian illuminated manuscripts still exist in a more or less fragmentary condition. One of the most perfect of these is the *Book of the Dead of Ani*, a royal scribe, dating from the fourteenth century B.C., now in the British Museum. An excellent facsimile of the whole of this fine illuminated manuscript has been edited by Dr. Budge and published by the Trustees of the British Museum in 1890.

Egyptian psalter.

Manuscripts of this important class are not very accurately described as *Rituals of the Dead*; as Dr. Budge points out they really consist of collections of *psalms* or *sacred hymns* which vary considerably in different manuscripts.

They appear to have been written in large numbers and kept in stock by the Egyptian undertakers ready for