

165a. London, British Library, Additional 37472 (1)

Pictorial Preface to a Psalter

(with Cambridge Trinity College R. 17. 1 [85],

London, Victoria and Albert Museum 661 [319a],

New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 521 and M. 724 [332a])

[Ker —, Gneuss —]

HISTORY: A single illustrated leaf thought to be from the “Eadwine Psalter” (Cambridge, Trinity College R. 17. 1 [85]), dated to 1155–1160, from Christ Church, Canterbury, and forming part of a series of illustrations prefacing the Psalter, along with the single leaf, London, Victoria and Albert Museum 661 [319a], and the two leaves, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library M. 521 and M. 724 [332a]. Likely removed from the “Eadwine Psalter” before it came to Cambridge, Trinity College in the early 17c. See history of “Eadwine Psalter” [85]. All four leaves recorded in the W. Young Ottley Sale of 1838; this leaf was lot 131 (*Ottley Sale Catalogue* 1838) and was bought by Tindall for £1; David McIntosh sold the leaf at Christie’s, London, on 20 May 1857 as lot 771; bought by the British Museum (Kauffmann 1975: 95).

CODICOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION: A single leaf mounted in mat board and contained in a mat board folder, in turn kept in a box containing six other unrelated mounted illuminated fragments. Leaf measures 405 × 296 mm. On the verso at the top is written ‘G. R.’, at the bottom a stamp ‘1857-5-[a crown]-20-37’. Pricking visible along the top of the leaf, probably to secure a protective cloth (silk) curtain. Similar sewing pattern is seen on top of the leaf of the “Eadwine Psalter” holding the Eadwine Portrait (f. 283v) (see the description of New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 521 and M. 724 [332a]). Like its counterparts, each side of the leaf comprises 12 frames, some subdivided, and each bordered with gold. The frame borders are colored in red, peach, green, and light Prussian and ultramarine blue, with white used for decoration within. The scenes are colored in green, red, purple, brown, ochre, blue (of varying shades), pink, blue-grey, and gold;

background colors are predominantly blue, green, and ochre. The green is flaking off in most places, but has burned into the vellum. The recto seems somewhat better preserved than the verso. The bottom right corner of the leaf (from the recto) has been dog-eared and is worn, with the inner blue border completely lost. A note on the box containing the fragments reads: 'Transferred from the Dept. of Prints and Drawings, 26 Feb. 1907'.

CONTENTS: The frames depict Gospel scenes from the life of Christ, beginning with the announcement to the shepherds and ending with the death of Herod on the recto and from Christ's baptism to the raising of a dead girl to life, Matt. 9.25 (for biblical references, see Gibson et al. 1992: 40). The sequence of the leaves seems originally to have been: M. 724, Add. 37472 (1), M. 521, and 661. For details, see the description of New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 521 and M. 724 [332a].

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†P.P. / A.N.D.