

**LIBER VITAE ECCLESIAE  
DUNELMENSIS;  
NEC NON OBITUARIA  
DUO EJUSDEM ECCLESIAE**

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Liber Vitae Ecclesiae Dunelmensis; Nec Non Obituaria Duo Ejusdem Ecclesiae by Durham Cathedral

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**DURHAM CATHEDRAL**

**LIBER VITAE ECCLESIAE  
DUNELMENSIS;  
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THE  
PUBLICATIONS  
1873.  
OF THE  
SURTEES SOCIETY.

ESTABLISHED IN THE YEAR

M.DCCC.XXXIV.



M.DCCC.XLI.

13

**LIBER VITÆ  
ECCLESIE DUNELMENSIS;**

NEC NON

**OBITUARIA DUO EJUSDEM ECCLESIE.**

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**LONDON:**

**J. B. NICHOLS AND SON, PARLIAMENT STREET;  
WILLIAM PICKERING, CHANCERY LANE,**

**EDINBURGH:**

**LAING AND FORBES.**

At a Meeting of the COUNCIL of the SURTERS SOCIETY,  
on the fifth day of January, 1841, it was

ORDERED,—That the LIBER VITÆ ECCLESIÆ DUNEL-  
MENSIS be printed under the editorial superintendence of Mr.  
Stevenson; and the COLDINGHAM LETTERS and ACCOUNT  
ROLLS, under the editorial superintendence of Mr. Raine, at  
the usual rate. These books to constitute the publications of  
the Society for 1841.

JOHN WARD, CHAIRMAN.

JAMES RAINE, SECRETARY.

## P R E F A C E.

The "Liber Vitæ" formerly preserved at Durham, § 1; its value, § 2; meaning of the term, § 3; instances of its use, § 4; modifications, § 5, 6; description of the manuscript, § 7; arrangement of its contents, § 8; its binding, § 9; plan of the present edition, § 10, 11; appendices, § 12.

§ 1. THE following passage is extracted from a book entitled "The Ancient Rites and Monuments of the Monastical and Cathedral Church of Durham, collected out of Ancient Manuscripts about the Time of the Suppression."<sup>1</sup>

"There did lie on the High Altar an excellent fine book, very richly covered with gold and silver, containing the names of all the benefactors towards St. Outhbert's Church from the very original foundation thereof, the very letters of the book being, for the most part, all gilt, as is apparent in the said book till this day. The laying that book on the High Altar did show how highly they esteemed their founders and benefactors; and the quotidian remembrance they had of them in the time of Mass and divine service. And this did argue, not only their gratitude, but also a most divine and charitable affection to the souls of their benefactors, as well dead as living; which book is yet extant, declaring the said use in the inscription thereof."

§ 2. The volume now presented to the members of the Surtees Society contains an imprint of the manuscript here alluded to; and it has many claims upon their attention.

<sup>1</sup> "Published by J. D[avies], of Kidwelly. Tempora mutantur.—London: printed by W. Henman, at the King's Head in Westminster Hall, MDCCLXXII." Small octavo, pp. 164.



It is the only document spared by time which throws light upon the benefactors of Durham during the period anterior to the Norman Conquest; and during the period after that event it furnishes us with many particulars, of which we should otherwise have been ignorant. It is interesting, as affording materials whence may be gathered information respecting the successive colonization of the ancient kingdom of Northumbria, and from its pages a philologist may obtain a few valuable hints regarding the structure and peculiar formation of the language there spoken. It is natural to regard with some interest a document which, for more than six centuries, lay upon the High Altar of the Cathedral Church of St. Cuthbert, whether at Lindisfarne, Chester-le-Street, or Durham, and which presents a connected, though a brief, record of the piety and generosity of our ancestors during that period.

§ 3. It will be observed, that the volume is described on its title as the "Liber Vitæ" of the Church of Durham, and by this appellation it, and similar compilations, were known during the period in which they were in use in the Church. The fact of the benefactor's name being recorded in the "Liber Vitæ" belonging to the particular church which he assisted by his liberality, was coupled with the hope, and the prayer, that the same name might at last find a place in the "Book of Life" in which those are enrolled who shall be faithful unto death.

§ 4. We have evidence of the very remote origin of the custom which has been mentioned<sup>3</sup> as prevailing at Durham, in accordance with which the names of benefactors were read from the High Altar during Divine Service. Of this there

<sup>3</sup> The term is clearly scriptural, and is founded on such passages as Phil. iv. 3; Rev. iii. 5; xvii. 8; xx. 12; xxii. 19. See also Exod. xxxii. 32; Ps. lxxix. 29.

<sup>4</sup> See § 1.

are traces in Tertullian,<sup>4</sup> and a clear proof in Cyprian,<sup>5</sup> who commands that the name of Geminus Victor should no longer be included among those read by the priest at the altar. The custom was general in both the Greek and the Latin Church, and was, in all probability, introduced by Augustine into England. We certainly find traces of it, in a somewhat modified form, in the Prologue to the Life of St. Cuthbert, addressed by the Venerable Beda to Eadfrith, bishop of Holy Island, in which the writer requests that his name may be inserted in the "Album" of that congregation.<sup>6</sup> Bertran, bishop of Sens, in like manner, in his will, requests that his name may be placed in the "Book of Life" belonging to a monastic establishment to which he was a benefactor.<sup>7</sup>

§ 5. As the system progressed, it became customary for various ecclesiastical societies to enter into arrangements among themselves by which the benefactors to any one establishment reaped the benefit to be derived from the prayers of the whole association. This custom certainly prevailed as early as the time of Boniface, archbishop of Metz. In one of his letters, addressed to abbot Aldhere, (probably an Englishman,) we find him sending by a messenger a list of those whose names he wished to have commemorated in the prayers of his correspondent.<sup>8</sup> In a letter from Kineheard, bishop of

<sup>4</sup> Tertull. de Corona Militiæ, cap. lii: Oblationes pro defunctis, pro natalitiis annua die facimus.

<sup>5</sup> Neque enim apud altare Dei meretur nominari in sacerdotum prece, qui ab altari sacerdotes et ministros voluit avocare. Ep. l. p. 2, edit. Geradorf, Lips. 1838.

<sup>6</sup> . . . . . sed, et me defuncto, pro redemptione anime mee, quasi familiaris et vernaculi vestri, orare, et missas facere, et nomen meum inter vestra scribere dignemini. Nam et tu, sanctissima antistes, hoc te mihi promississe jam retines, in cujus etiam testimonio future conscriptionis religioso fratri vestro Gudfrido mansionario precepisti, ut in albo vestre sancte congregationis meum nunc quoque nomen apponeret. Ven. Bedæ Opp. Hist. ß. 47, edit. Lond. 1841.

<sup>7</sup> Rogo Abba illustris loci illius, ut nomen meum in Libro Vitæ recitetur. Testam. Bertranni, ap. Mabill. Vet. Analecta, p. 267, edit. fol. Par. 1723.

<sup>8</sup> Similiter, ut pro dormientium fratrum animabus, qui nobiscum laborant in Do-

Winchester, to Lull, archbishop of Metz, we see the process in operation; the names of the deceased friends were interchanged, and, on the arrival at their respective destinations, they were transmitted by the bishop to the various ecclesiastical establishments in his diocese. The passage is curious, and is worth adducing.<sup>9</sup> Another quotation from a letter written by Dodo, abbot of Hornbach,<sup>10</sup> may be added, for the sake of completing the information upon this subject.<sup>11</sup> Of this mutual process there are many instances in the ensuing pages. The monks of Durham made agreements of this nature with their brethren of Westminster,<sup>12</sup> Gloucester, Winchester, Coventry, Fescamp,<sup>13</sup> Caen, Canterbury, Glastonbury,<sup>14</sup> and various other places.<sup>15</sup> Some of these letters of fraternity, (if the expression may be used,) of which the notices contained in the text of the present volume are only abstracts, are extant; and a few are printed in the Appendix to this Preface.

mino, orationum adjuvamina et missarum solemnia celebrare faciatis precamur, quorum nomina gerulus harum litterarum demonstraverit. Ep. 100, p. 270, edit. Wurdw.

<sup>9</sup> Nomina quoque presbyterorum vestrorum, diaconorumque ac monachorum vel monacharum, sive ceterorum, que misistis, per monasteria et per ecclesias nostrae diocesis direximus, ad celebranda pro eis missarum solemnia et orationum suffragia. Id ipsum facere vestram sanctitatem suppliciter exoramus pro eis, quorum nomina vobis habemus dirigenda et nominatim cum personis suis scribenda; eorum scilicet, qui mihi proprie atque huic ecclesiae, cui servio, amicissimi, vel subditi fiebant, vel prelati. Id. Ep. 115, p. 298.

<sup>10</sup> See, however, Mabill. Annal. Ord. S. Bened. A. D. 758, § 40.

<sup>11</sup> Igitur cum salutationis officio humiliter prece deprecemur, ut istam familiam Christi et S. Petri, in vestra commemoratione semper habeatis; et ipsi pro omnibus amicis vestris tam episcopis et eorum clero, quam abbatibus et eorum monachis, seu abbatibus et Deo dicatis, in ista congregatione S. Petri, oratores vestros, tam vivos quam defunctos, in vestra mercede commemorare faciatis; ut in sacris orationibus illorum eam assidue memorare debeant, quatenus per illorum suffragia olim optatam adire mereamus patriam paradisi. Similiter vos deprecamur, ut omnium amicorum vestrorum nomina, tam vivorum, quam defunctorum, per presentem fratrem Sagaldum, per breve ad nos dirigeretis, ut ipsos, sicut de aliis fratribus nostris facimus, ita in nostris assiduis orationibus ipsos memorare debeamus. Id. 121, p. 307.

<sup>12</sup> p. 71.

<sup>13</sup> p. 72.

<sup>14</sup> p. 73.

<sup>15</sup> pp. 32, 33.