

Jeroen Reyniers

An Iconographic Approach to the Study of the Saint Odilia Shrine (1292)

The Crosiers (Order of the Holy Cross) in Huy (Belgium) acquired the relics of Saint Odilia in 1287 and in 1292 placed them in a painted relic shrine depicting several scenes from her life. A few centuries later, the reliquary was reduced in size. As a result it became difficult to identify the iconography of several panels. The oldest - and less known - description of Saint Odilia's life and her translation is kept in the University library of Liège (Ms. 135C). Documentary evidence found in this manuscript indicates that in 1467 Crosier Wolterus of Nijmegen copied the legend from an earlier edition. Further analysis reveals that the original description of Saint Odilia's life was finished in 1291, a year before the painted shrine arrived in the monastery. The manuscript in Liège is thus an important edition that is key to identifying each depicted scene and the original structure of the reliquary.