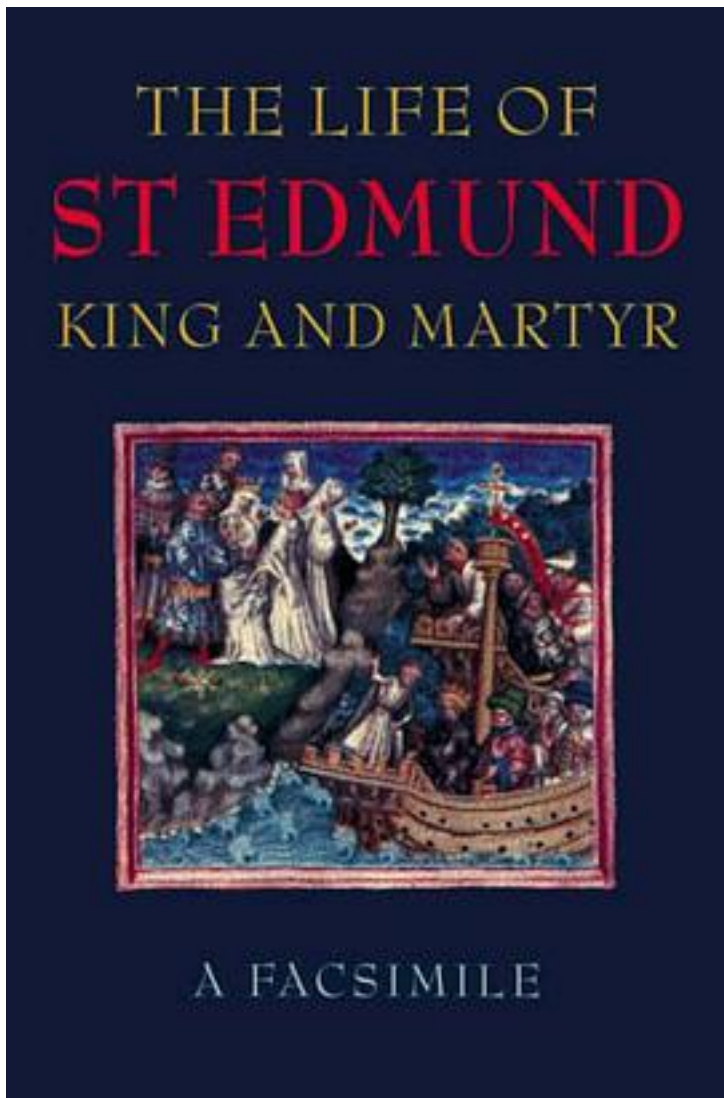


# The Life of St. Edmund, King and Martyr



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On Christmas Eve 1433, the young King Henry VI arrived at the abbey at Bury St Edmunds, one of the largest religious foundations in fifteenth-century England. He remained there until Easter and at the end of his stay was admitted to the abbey's confraternity. To cement the abbey's relationship with the king, abbot William Curteys conceived the idea of commemorating Henry's visit with a 'life' of the Anglo-Saxon king, St Edmond, the patron saint of the abbey. The man charged with the task of translating the 'life' of St Edmond was John Lydgate, a monk at the abbey and the pre-eminent poet of the fifteenth century. It is hard to overstate the importance of the resulting manuscript, both as a monument to the development of the English language, and for its illustrations - 120 images, forming narrative sequences integrated to form a coherent visual parallel to the text and with a careful fidelity to detail. The completed manuscript that was presented to the young king remained in his library until after his deposition, and although it left royal hands for a time, it reappears in the inventories of the library of Henry VIII. It was acquired by The British Library in 1742. In both the number and quality of its illustrations and in the degree of integration, The Life of St Edmond, King and Martyr is unsurpassed.

作者介绍:

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