



Early Christian Lives (Penguin Classics)

Athanasius, Jerome, Sulpicius Severus, Gregory the Great

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Written between the mid-fourth and late sixth centuries to commemorate and glorify the achievements of early Christian saints, these six biographies depict men who devoted themselves to solitude, poverty and prayer. Athanasius records Antony's extreme seclusion in the Egyptian desert, despite temptation by the devil and visits from his followers. Jerome also shows those who fled persecution or withdrew from society to pursue lives of chastity and asceticism in his accounts of Paul of Thebes, Hilarion and Malchus. In his *Life of Martin*, Sulpicius Severus describes the achievements of a man who combined the roles of monk, bishop and missionary, while Gregory the Great tells of Benedict, whose Rule became the template for monastic life. Full of vivid incidents and astonishing miracles, these *Lives* have provided inspiration as models for centuries of Christian worship.

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