

**Sequentiary (Prosar) for Dominican Use
In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment with musical notation
France, (likely Poissy), c. 1480-1520**

ff. i (early parchment pastedown) + 182 + i (parchment) on parchment, modern foliation in pencil top outer corner recto, lacking two leaves at the beginning (collation i¹⁰ [-1 and 2, although the first text is complete] ii-xxi⁸ xxii⁶ [2, f. 170, and 5, f. 173, single] xxiii⁸ [-8, cancelled with no loss of text], horizontal catchwords lower inside margin in a few quires, some signatures with a letter designating the quire and tally marks the leaf, ruled in lead with widely spaced horizontal rules for the text, the top and bottom horizontal rules full across and single full-length vertical binding lines, prickings top and bottom margins, a few folios with prickings in the outer margins for the horizontal rules but not for the red four-line staves, ff. 99-102v, two sets of prickings in the outer margin, perhaps one for lead ruling for script and one to anchor the rastrum for the staff (justification 103 x 63-58 mm.), written in a late gothic bookband probably by several scribes (e.g. change of hand at f. 89) with five lines of text and five four-line red staves with square musical notation, ff. 171v-181, seventeen to nineteen long lines of text (justification 110-105 x 68-60 mm.), guide letters within initials, majuscules touched in pale yellow, red rubrics, one-line alternately red and blue initials, larger initials equivalent to one line of text and accompanying music alternately red and blue and on f. 1 parted red and blue, in very good condition. Bound in a modern(?) orange rough suede binding over wooden boards cut flush with the book block (possibly original boards), spine with five slightly raised bands, edges gilt and possibly gauffered, in good condition, damage to top outer corner lower board, some wear along the bands, first and last quires reinforced with paper strips. Dimensions 173 x 117 mm.

Sisters of the kings of France, the author Christine de Pizan, and Balzac's droll fictitious heroines – these are among the residents of the prestigious royal foundation of the Dominican nuns at Poissy. Every manuscript that becomes known from Poissy is worthy of special note not just because of the fame of the abbey but also because of the contribution of its women to late medieval liturgical music. Whereas Processionals survive in increasingly large numbers from Poissy, Sequentiaries, such as this one containing the sequences of the Mass, are relatively rare; only six other examples have so far been identified from Poissy.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in France almost certainly at Poissy in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century; liturgical evidence allows us to date it after 1461 (includes Vincent Ferrer, canonized 1456, Catherine of Siena, 1461), and probably before 1524, since it lacks Antoninus (canonized 1524). Certainly for Dominican Use, as evidence by the numerous Dominican saints: Dominic, Peter Martyr, Thomas Aquinas, Vincent Ferrer, and Catherine of Siena. All the texts here are copied with musical notations apart from the hymn (partially noted) and prayers ff. 171-182.

The liturgical contents are further evidence that this was almost certainly copied for the use of, and most likely at, the royal foundation for Dominican Nuns at Poissy. Joan Naughton (Naughton, 1995) identified six manuscripts from Poissy with Prosaes, not including this manuscript (see Appendices, Part B, "Surviving manuscripts," nos. 8, 12, 25, 43, 61, 65, and Appendix 2, "Sequences included in Poissy manuscripts," first by folio number, followed by cues and identifications). The feasts included in this manuscript, their order, and the sequences chosen all follow those in the other manuscripts described by Naughton (our manuscript lacks later feasts including

Antoninus, as noted above, Holy Cross, and Maurice). Note that there are two sequences for King Louis, founder of Poissy, and feminine forms are used in two of the prayers.

In particular, the order and contents of Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, McClean MS 63, a Poissy Processional-Sequentiary, is almost identical to the contents of the manuscript described here.

2. Interlinear translations into French (ff. 87-91, 94, 95v) are an interesting feature, demonstrating careful use by someone not completely comfortable in Latin; see for example on f. 87, "perficit" (acompli); f. 87v, "con nubio" (mariage), and "in morte laxatur" (elle ne cesse); also note in French in the very bottom margin, f. 94.
3. Early (seventeenth century?) inscription, front pastedown, "Ce liure est de <lothee> de sous prieure."
4. f. 1, top margin, N°17, 176 f <?> (perhaps eighteenth century).
5. Owners's and dealers's notes, inside front cover: a nineteenth-century brief description in French; a price code in pencil; a clipping from a dealer's catalogue in French.

TEXT

ff. 1-30, Noted sequences for the Temporale beginning with Advent, including Trinity Sunday and Corpus Christi, concluding with the Dedication of a Church;

ff. 30-133v, Noted sequences for the Sanctorale, including Agnes (21 January), Vincent (22 January), Conversion of Paul, Thomas Aquinas (7 March), Annunciation, Vincent Ferrer (5 April), Peter Martyr (29 April), Catherine of Siena (first Sunday in May), John before the Lateran Gate (6 May), Nicholas (translation, 9 May), Dominic (translation 24 May and feast 5 August), John the Baptist (24 June), Peter and Paul (29 June), Commemoration of Paul (30 June, with incorrect rubric), Margaret (20 July), Mary Madalene (22 July), Anne (26 July), Assumption (incorrect rubric), King Louis (two) (25 August), Decollation of John (29 August), Augustine (28 August), Nativity (8 September) and Conception of Mary, Michael Archangel, "De angelis" (29 September), 11,000 Virgins, All Saints (1 November), Martin (11 November), Catherine (25 November), Andrew (30 November), Barbara (4 December);

ff. 133v-164, Twelve Sequences for feasts of the Virgin Mary (noted);

ff. 164v-168v, *De beata elysabeth*, incipit, "Gaude syon quod egressus a te deprecor [noted; *Analecta hymnica*, vol. 55, p. 140]";

ff. 168v-171, *De <erased>*, incipit, "Agnum sponsum virginum regem regum dominum ...";

Noted sequence for St. Ursula; Chevalier, 1892-1912, no. 760; *Analecta hymnica*, vol 9, p. 262.

ff. 171-172, *Ymmus*, incipit, *Veni creator spiritus mentes tuorum ...* [partially noted]"; ... *Oremus*, incipit, "Deus qui corda fidelium ..."; incipit, "Pretende domine famule tue dexteram";

Hymn for Pentecost at Vespers and Terce and prayers; feminine forms used in the second prayer.

ff. 172-181, *Oratio ad dominum ihesum christum*, incipit, "Aue ihesu christe qui pro salute humanan [sic] a mortis ..."; incipit, "Coram te dulcissime ihesu christe corde ..."; incipit, "Domine ihesu christe esto michi adiutor ..."; incipit, "Aue rex noster fili dauid redemptor ..."; incipit, "Non de meritorum cercitate ... Tu ergo domine fac in me peccatrice ..."; *Deuota oratio*, incipit, "O fons mellifluous dulcedine ..."; *Oratio*, incipit, "Domine ihesu chrstie peccata mea magna sunt ..."; [f. 181, blank, with traces of glue].

Feminine forms used in the fifth prayer.

This manuscript is a collection of a special type of musical text for the Mass known as a sequence, arranged according to the liturgical year. A sequence (*sequentia*, in Latin, or *prosa*) is a text sung after the Alleluia chant and before the reading of the Gospels. Sequences may have originated as embellishments, or tropes, of the Alleluia, a proper chant, developed to the point that they became independent musical texts. By the later Middle Ages, sequences were metrical and rhymed; unlike hymns their melody changed from stanza to stanza.

These musical texts were often copied in other liturgical books for the Mass (early in the Middle Ages as a section within Sacramentaries, and later in Graduals or Missals), and were also sometimes gathered together in a separate volume like the one described here called a Sequentiary or Prosar. A Sequentiary is a relatively uncommon type of liturgical book, and certainly one that has been rare on the market; the Schoenberg Database lists only fifteen results when searching "Sequentiary," and an additional eighteen under "Prosar," all but one in institutional collections.

This Sequentiary was copied at the Royal Abbey of Poissy, founded by Phillip IV in 1304 in honor of his grandfather, St. Louis, King of France on the Seine outside of Paris. It was a prestigious house, restricted by its foundation charter to women of noble blood, which maintained close relationships to the royal family. Numerous manuscripts (c. 80) associated with the monastery survive, dating from the fourteenth through the sixteenth century, many of them illuminated. A striking number of these manuscripts (to date approximately 31) are Processionals, which contain the texts and chants necessary for liturgical processions. Prosaes from Poissy are much less common.

Joan Naughton (Naughton, 1995), identified six manuscripts from Poissy with Prosaes, not including this manuscript (see Appendices, Part B, "Surviving manuscripts," nos. 8, 12, 25, 43, 61, 65). Of these one (now in the Museum of Fine Arts Boston), is an independent collection of sequences only; other examples are combined volumes (Processionals-Prosaes, Gradual-Prosaes, and a Missal-Processional-Prosa). Our manuscript is one of the earlier examples; three listed by Naughton are almost certainly later.

With Pope Saint Pius V's reform of the Roman Rite in 1570 almost all of the many liturgical sequences that characterized the medieval liturgy were expunged from the Roman Missal. Four were kept (the *Victimae Paschali Laudes* of Easter, the *Dies Irae* of All Souls Day and Requiem

Masses, the *Lauda Sion* of Corpus Christi, and the *Veni Sanctae Spiritus* of Pentecost). In the Dominican Rite, however, on Christmas Day (and Epiphany and Candlemas) the sequence *Laetabundus* (Joy Abounding) was preserved (Online resources).

A vivid demonstration of the continuation of medieval traditions of book-making long after the invention of movable type, this manuscript is of special interest to liturgical historians, musicologists, and historians of the makers and users of books in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Catalogue des manuscrits notés du Moyen Age des bibliothèques publiques de France (CMN)
Dirigé et édité par Christian Meyer (CNRS)
<http://www.musmed.fr/CMN/CMN.htm>

Catalogue thématique des Séquences
CthS
<http://www.musmed.fr/CMN/CMN.htm>

Christian Meyer, "Les sources manuscrites des séquences et des proses notées"
http://www.musmed.fr/CMN/proseq/proseq_sources2.htm

Dominican History and Sources
http://home.kpn.nl/otto.vervaart/dominican_order.htm

Text of the Christmas Sequence, "Letabundus" (Joy abounding)
<http://liturgialatina.blogspot.com/2010/12/laetabundus.html>
Chanted by the Dominican Friars of the Holy Spirit in Oxford.
<http://www.chantcafe.com/2012/12/christmas-sequence-laetabundus.html>

Dominican Sequentiary from Poissy, Boston, MFA, inventory number 80.504
<http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/sequentiary-53348>

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