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In Litanis Majoribus et Processionibus Ecclesiae Primatialis Pisane [The Greater Litanies and Processions for the Primatial Church of Pisa]

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment with musical notation
Northern Italy (Pisa), late sixteenth century and c. 1622-1630

ii + 34 + ii folios on parchment, contemporary foliation in Roman numerals in brown ink, I-XXXIV (with double foliation for the first 12 leaves, II-XIII), lacking two blank leaves (collation i-ii^s iii^s [-7, -8, lacking two leaves after f. 22, without loss of text] iv-vi^t), ruled in gray ink (justification c. 156 x 105 mm.), written in brown ink in gothic textualis and humanistic bookhands by several different scribes with six lines of text and six staves of music in square notation on four-line brown staves (ff. 1-22v) and four-line red staves (ff. 23-34), rastrum 12 mm. (ff. 1-22v) and c. 14-16 mm. (ff. 23-34), rubrics in red ink and liquid gold, 1-line initials in red and occasionally in liquid gold, one 1-line strapwork initial, one 3-line humanistic initial with foliage decoration (f. 31), ILLUMINATED TITLE PAGE painted in the eighteenth century in colors and liquid gold, stains and thumbing, but in overall good condition. Bound in the eighteenth century in brown calf gold-tooled panels on the plates and flowers on the spine, leather in corners and spine worn, otherwise in good condition. Dimensions 195 x 135 mm.

Charming Processional with an illuminated frontispiece that offers direct access to the liturgical customs in the diocese of Pisa in the early seventeenth century. This small manuscript of chants for processions on the Rogation Days and other occasions is especially interesting due to its very specific liturgical use, the beautiful church of Santa Maria della Spina in Pisa. Processionals for use in secular churches are less common than monastic processionals.

PROVENANCE

1. Evidence of the script allows us to date the first part of the manuscript, ff. 1-22v, to the late sixteenth century, while the inclusion of St. Teresa of Avila in the litanies is evidence that the second part, ff. 23-34, was copied soon after 1622, when the saint was canonized. The title page reveals that the text is for the liturgical use of the churches of Pisa. The litanies include the local St. Torpes of Pisa and also St. Maria de Spina, which undoubtedly refers to the church of Santa Maria della Spina in Pisa, named after the relic of the thorn (*spina*) from the crown of thorns, brought to the church in 1333. Furthermore, the rubric to the prayer on f. 31 mentions that the church where the prayer was said had relics (displayed on the Sundays following Easter).

The church of Santa Maria della Spina was erected around 1230 and enlarged after 1325. It was originally known as Santa Maria di Pontenovo, but the bridge that gave it its name collapsed in the fifteenth century, and by the time our manuscript was made, the church had been renamed after its most important relic. Its edifice with intricate sculpted decoration is one of the finest Gothic edifices in Europe.

2. Still in use in the eighteenth century when the illuminated frontispiece (described below) was added, and the volume was rebound.

3. On the front pastedown, in modern hand, "32" circled.

TEXT

[Second front flyleaf, added decorated title page], *In Litanis Majoribus, et Processionibus Ecclesiae Prim[atia]lis Pisane*;

ff. 1-23v, Chant for a funeral procession, incipit, "Absolve domine animas eorum ab omni vinculo delictorum non eas tormentum mortis attingat non reorum chatena constringat..."; [*Corpus antiphonalium Officii*, no. 1211]; Responsories for Sundays in Advent, incipit, "Ecce dies veniunt..., Ecce Dominus veniet et omnes sancti eius cum eo et erit..., Suscipe verbum..., Non auferetur..."; Responsories for Sundays in Septuagesima, incipit, "Ecce Adam..."; Chants for Sundays leading to Easter season, and for Easter season, ending, ff. 22v-23, incipit, "Crucifixum in carne laudemus. Alleluia Alleluya Alleluya. Et sepultum propter nos glorificemus. Alleluia. Resurgentem de morte venite adoremus. Alleluia..." [on the Resurrection of Christ]; ff. 23-24v, Antiphon to the Virgin Mary, copied by a different, larger hand, "Sub tuum presidium"; [f. 24, blank];

ff. 24v-32, The Greater Litanies of Saints, sung on the feast day of St. Mark, April 25, and the second Rogation day (i.e. Monday after Rogation Sunday), *In Festo S. Marci Evangelistae Et Feria .II. Rogationum*, with antiphons for saints Joseph, Anne, Lawrence, Elizabeth, Andrew, Martha, Matthew, and Peter; and on the third Rogation day (i.e. Tuesday after Rogation Sunday), *Feria III. Rogationum*, with antiphons for saints Teresa of Avila (1515-1582, canonized in 1622; however, although the rubric announces an antiphon for St. Teresa, the chant that follows is "Gloria tibi trinitatis equalis una" for the feast of the Holy Trinity), Vitus of Sicily, Paul, Benedict, Maria de Spina, Christina, Sebastian, Christopher, Martin; and on the fourth Rogation day (i.e. Wednesday after Rogation Sunday), *Feria IV. Rogationum*, with antiphons for saints John the Baptist, Thomas, Lazarus, Torpes of Pisa, Peter, Felix, Stephen, Sixtus II ("Xystum"), Luke, and Stephen; ff. 32v-33v, blank;

The rubrics were written in red, and the names of the saints in liquid gold. The antiphon for St. Sixtus ends at the top of f. 31, and that for St. Luke, only begins on the verso. The space left blank in between them, on f. 31, was filled later by a different hand with a prayer to be said on Sundays after Easter, requesting God's forgiveness and protection in the life's adversities through the intercession of the Holy Relics that were kept in the church, *Sequens Oratio dicitur completa Sacrarum Reliquiarum ostensione, post Vesperas Dominicae in Albis peragenda. Versicle*, incipit, "Benedictus Deus... Oremus. Propitiare quaesumus domine nobis famulis tuis per horum sanctorum tuorum, qui in praesenti requiescunt ecclesia, merita gloriosa, ut eorum pia intercessione ab omnibus semper protegatur adversis. Per Christum Dominum Nostrum. Amen."

f. 34, [copied by a different hand], Prayer for the dead, to be said during the Advent procession, incipit, "In processionibus Adventus... Oremus. Deus cujus miseratione anime fidelium..."; f. 34v, blank;

f. i (first end flyleaf), *INDEX*, a contemporary contents list that selects four items (in this order): the *Absolve* antiphon on f. 1, the prayer for the dead on f. 34, the Marian *Sub tuum* antiphon on f. 23, and the antiphons for the Rogation days on f. 25 (f. 24v);

f. ii (second end flyleaf), copied on a parchment leaf pasted onto the flyleaf, an antiphon for St. Francis, incipit, "Similabo eum viro sapienti"

Liturgical processions were an essential element in the liturgy of the medieval and early modern church. At numerous occasions throughout the year celebrants, accompanied by the choir, sang and walked through the church and beyond out into the fields and towns. Processionals, as their name indicates, are the liturgical book that includes the chants, rubrics, and prayers for these liturgical processions. They were almost always copied in a small format, designed as volumes that could be easily carried by individual members of the choir as they walked and sang. The Processionals from the Dominican nuns of the royal abbey of Poissy are particularly well-known examples of the genre, but monks, nuns, and friars from all Orders used Processionals, as did members of the secular clergy. This is an example for a Processional for use by the secular clergy of the church of Santa Maria della Spina in Pisa. The music in this manuscript is written in fine square notation throughout; the additions between the sixteenth and the eighteenth centuries are evidence that the manuscript continued to accompany generations of choristers.

Notable here is the liturgy for the processions for the Rogation Days celebrated on April 25 and on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before the Ascension. These processions included the Litany of the Saints and were designed to invoke God's mercy, their name coming from *rogare* (Lat.), "to ask." In addition to singing the litanies, it was typical to fast, or to eat vegetables, on the days of preparation for the feasts of Ascension and Pentecost. The Major Rogation Day on which the Greater Litanies are sung is the feast of St. Mark, April 25, the ancient pagan day for blessing the growing crops (Harper, 1991, p. 137).

The locally venerated St. Torpes of Pisa was included in the litanies, with his antiphon chanted on Wednesday after Rogation Sunday. According to his legend, Torpes was a native of Pisa and an attendant to Emperor Nero. He was converted by St. Paul. After he was executed, his body was placed in a small boat, which, according to the tale, arrived in the harbor of a town that became named after him Saint-Tropez. The Pisans credit St. Torpes with ending the plague in the city in 1633.

ILLUSTRATION

A title page was painted in the eighteenth century on the second front flyleaf, with scrolling curves typical of the rococo style of the late Baroque. Colors and liquid gold were used for the decoration and the title, *In Litanis Majoribus, et Processionibus Ecclesiae Prim[atia]lis Pisane*.

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