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[Cistercian Legendary]. *Vitae sanctorum*, selection from JACOBUS DE VORAGINE,
Legenda aurea

In Latin, manuscript on parchment

[Southern Germany or Lower Austria, Diocese of Passau, c. 1350-1400]

192 ff., on parchment, mostly in regular quires of 8 (collation i-xvi⁸, xvii^{7(s-1)}} [missing fol. between ff. 128-129], xviii⁸, xix^{7(s-1)}} [missing fol. between ff. 149-150], xx⁸, xxi⁸ [with righthand margins of ff. 163-164 cut short], xxii⁶, xxiii⁶ [with righthand column cut off on fol. 171], xxiv^{7(s-1)}} [missing fol. between ff. 172-173], xxv^{5(s-3)}} [last 3 ff. likely cancelled], xxvi^{8(10-2)}} [text interrupted]), written in brown and black ink in a highly abbreviated gothic textualis bookhand, on up to 35 lines, text on two columns (justification 180 x 57 x 57 mm.), ruled in lead, rubrics in red, paragraph marks in red, some capitals touched in red, 3-4 line high red monochrome initials (some with calligraphic penwork), some contemporary marginal corrections or addenda. Bound in a modern limp "Hollandaise" parchment binding, smooth spine, edges dyed in blue (some folios cut short, affecting some marginal annotations). Dimensions 165 x 220 mm.

Comprising a collection of 73 lives of the saints mostly taken from Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, this Passional or Legendary for the Winter Portion of the liturgical calendar presents a distinctive grouping of saints specially honored in the diocese of Passau and of particular interest to the Cistercians. An eighteenth-century provenance placing the manuscript in the library of the celebrated Cistercian Abbey of Säusenstein (diocese of Passau) located in Ybbs-an-der-Donau could reflect the manuscript's original provenance.

PROVENANCE

1. Script and the choice of saints suggest a southern German or Austrian origin for this manuscript, probably c. 1350-1400. Beginning with the Invention of Saint Stephen, the manuscript concludes with the added lives for saints Godehard of Hildesheim (4-5 May), Erasmus of Formiae (3 June) and Gertrude of Nivelles (17 March). The Cathedral of Passau is dedicated to Saint Stephen, and Godehard and Gertrude, not included in the standard *Golden Legend*, are especially venerated in the diocese of Passau, as is Erasmus (see Grotefend, II, respectively pp. 110, 94, 109). The

selection of lives from the Golden Legend also gives priority to Cistercian saints, such as Stepeh, Elizabeth of Hungary (feast adopted by the Cistercians in 1236), Lambert, Matthew, Ludger, Remy, Brice, and Bernard. The unrefined nature of the parchment and the monochromatic red initials are also features of Cistercian manuscript production, reflecting the sobriety of their products.

2. Later inscription (18th century?) copied on first folio (former pastedown) that reads: "Catalogo Monasterii B.V. in Valle Dei inscriptus." This monastery is identified as that of *Vallis Dei* or Säusenstain (also written Sewsenstain) (see Cottineau, II, col. 2960: Säusenstein, *Vallis Dei*, abbaye de Cisterciens, fondée en 1338, diocese de Passau, à Ybbs, Autriche inférieure; *Austria sacra*, 1780-1788, VIII, 226; L. Janauschek, *Originum Cisterciensium tomus I*, Vienna, 1877, p. 271; and J. Stulz, *Geschichte des Cistercienser-Klosters*, Linz, 1840, pp. 46, 587). The same inscription is found partially truncated in the upper margin of another legendary described on this site. It is possible that both legends, extracts from the *Golden Legend*, were considered a pair in the monastic library. Other manuscripts with the same Cistercian provenance and a similar eighteenth-century inscription are described in Lackner, 1988, nos. 42, 47, 94 and 105, now in the libraries of Herzogenburg and St.-Pölten (see Winner [Herzogenburg], 1978, pp. 112-113 and 132; and Winner [St.-Pölten], 1978, pp. 120ff).

TEXT

f. 1, former pastedown, blank; added later inscription (see Provenance above) with unidentified monogramatic stamp;

f. 1v, Jacobus de Voragine [Jacopo da Varazze], *Legenda Aurea*, index beginning: "De inventione sancti prothomartiris Stephani; De sancto Dominico; de sancto Sixto; De sancto Donato; De sancto Cyriaco...";

ff. 2-184v, Jacobus de Voragine [Jacopo da Varazze], *Legenda Aurea*: rubric, *De invencione sancti Stephani prothomartiro*; incipit, "Invencio corporis prothomartiris Stephani anno domini .cccc. xvii. vii. Honorii principis anno"; rubrics, *De sancto Pelagio papa* (ff. 151v-160v); *De dedicatione ecclesie* (ff. 160v-165v); *De Barlaam et Josephat* (ff. 165v-170); *De sancto Godebardo* (ff. 170-183v); *De sancto Erasmo* (ff. 183v-184); *De sancta Gedrude* [sic] (ff. 184-184v) with explicit, "[...] ubi cottidie orationum preparantur beneficia meritis virginis Christi";

ff. 185-192v, excerpt from an unidentified treatise on Virtues and Vices: incipit [beginning incomplete], "[...] felicitatis aliene que sit corrodit... linguam. Ira est animi perturbation que impedit animum ne posit cernere [...] Accidia est tedium boni tum mentis dolore [...]; single rubric, *Que remedia*; explicit [lacks ending], "[...] Precepit autem dues ut extundis estis que mandi poterunt comportarentur in archani. Nulla autem [...] melior quam doctrinam

sacre (?) scripture [...]” [not identified in Bloomfield due to its incomplete beginning; perhaps an excerpt from Jacopo da Voragine’s own *Summa virtutum et vitiorum*.

A Passional, sometimes called a Legendary, contains a collection of lives of the saints recited and celebrated in the liturgy (as opposed to a *libellus* dedicated to the life, miracles, and passion of a single saint) and intended to honor the saints. Passionals, or Legendaries, vary widely in their selection of the saints and the texts devoted to them. They can contain narratives of variable length that recount the life, martyrdom, translation of relics, and miracles of the saints, but their order normally follows that of the liturgical year. The present manuscript fits with a group of texts commonly referred to as “*Legenda nova*” or “*Passionale novum*” that developed between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries composed by specific authors who, rather than borrowing from the lives that circulated in written and oral traditions, wrote new versions. The most famous of these “new lives” (*Legendae novae* or *Passionale novum*) remains that of Jacobus de Voragine (see G. Philippart [1977], p. 24).

The present Passional consists of a selection from the collection of hagiographies or lives of saints assembled by Jacobus de Voragine. His *Legenda Aurea* or *Golden Legend* was designed to accompany the major feasts in the church calendar, detailing the legendary lives and miracles of saints, and ordered according to the liturgical year. A Dominican friar, blessed “Jacopo” or Jacobus de Voragine (1230-1298), was archbishop of Genoa and a reputed hagiographer. Assembled c. 1264, his *Legenda Aurea* remains a valued source for assessing the later cult of saints in western Europe. Over one thousand manuscripts of the *Legenda Aurea* survive, making this collection a veritable medieval best-seller.

Here, a selection of 73 chapters on the lives of the saints, instead of the complete 178 to 182 chapters in the *Golden Legend*, covers roughly the Winter Portion of the liturgical year from December 26 (the Invention of Saint Stephen) to Saint Pelagius, pope, on June 26, ending with the Dedication of the Church. The first half of the *Golden Legend* is omitted, and the manuscript begins not with the start of the Winter Portion, which would include the Saint Andrew and the Advent season, but with Stephen Proto-martyr probably because the Cathedral in Passau was dedicated to this saint (see Provenance above). Among the added saints not found in the *Golden Legend* are Godehard and Gertrude, both specially venerated in Passau. The placement of Barlaam and Josephat (ff. 165-70) out of order in the present manuscript (Barlaam’s feast is November 19, which falls in the Summer Portion of the liturgical calendar instead of the season covered in this compilation), still needs to be explained. In making his selection from the complete *Golden Legend*, the compiler insisted not only on saints of regional interest but also on saints honored by the Cistercians, which further defines the distinctiveness of this manuscript.

Whereas recent scholarship on Jacobus de Voragine and the traditions of the lives of the saints (see Fleith and Morenzoni, 2001; Maggioni, 1998; and Boureau, 2004) has made great strides at unraveling the extensive manuscript tradition, much research remains to be done. In particular, the deviant versions of distinctly local or regional character, such as the present one, defy traditional editorial procedures and beg instead for independent study, which would evaluate them in the context of regional religious practices.

LITERATURE

Acta sanctorum Augusti. . . tomus II. . . quae ex latinis et graecis aliarumque gentium antiquis monumentis collegit. . . Johannes Bollandus. . ., Paris, V. Palmé, 1866, pp. 356-389 [Acta SS].

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Winner, G. *Katalog der Handschriften der Diözesanbibliothek Polten*, St. Pölten, 1978.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Selections from the *Legenda Aurea*

<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/vorag.html>

Index to the *Legenda Aurea*

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/voragine1.html>