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Noted Gospel Lectionary for Holy Week
In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Germany (Northwest), c. 1460-1500

100 folios (parchment generally uniform and good quality; some holes), modern foliation, in pencil, upper right corner, recto, collation (i-vi^s vii^s [+ one leaf, f. 56, after 7] viii-xi^s xii^s [-3, following f. 91, and -6, following f. 93] xiii^s [-1, before f. 94, -5, following f. 96, and -8, following f. 98] xiv^s [original structure uncertain; two leaves, ff. 99-100, preceded by three stubs]), traces of a few catchwords remain, very bottom, inside margin, for example, ff. 16v and 40v, no signatures, written below the top line in a formal liturgical gothic bookhand in one column of twenty lines of text, or nine lines of text and nine lines of musical notation (Hufnagelschrift on red four-line staves), with text and music alternating, ruled in ink, single full-length vertical bounding lines, prickings top margin, and occasionally, bottom margin, (justification 227-224 x 133-131 mm.), capitals in text touched with red, red rubrics, numerous one-line initials alternating red and blue, six 3- to 4-line decorated initials, red and blue, with contrasting pen decoration (ff. 57, 86v, 90, 93, 96, and 98), seven 2- to 4-line initials, some red on fine turquoise grounds, with violet pen decoration forming a full-length border, others in red or blue with contrasting pen work (ff. 74v, 95v, 98v, 99, 99v [partly cut-away], 100 and 100v), SIX VERY-FINE ILLUMINATED OR DECORATED INITIALS with exceptionally detailed pen decoration forming three-quarter borders around the text (ff. 1, 39v, 61, 88v, 94 and 95) in a variety of styles including scrolling violet acanthus leaves infilled with red, ONE L-SHAPED PAINTED BORDER, f. 22v, of large, stiff red and green acanthus, ending with flat ribbons, TWO FULL PAINTED BORDERS, ff. 87 and 89, with lush red and blue acanthus and green foliage, framing the text, with dull-pink rosettes and other motifs, eight folios removed before the current foliation was added (see collation above), initial, f. 90v, cut out; some margins trimmed, with no loss of text (cf. ff. 11, 47, 63, and 94), soiling in margins, and other signs of use including water stains (ff. 84-85), informal modern jottings in the margins include the alphabet in red crayon, f. 40v, and in the same hand, f. 41v, "E.R.L." Bound in fifteenth-century brown blind-stamped calf, with a center panel of diamonds formed by intersecting double fillets, with small stamps of fleur-de-lis, rosettes, and griffons, surrounded by a border of double fillets, also with stamps, over medium-weight wooden boards, square with a slight bevel, sewn on five double bands (hemp cord?), spine with five raised bands, rebacked, once fastened back to front, with only two handsome brass catches remaining, upper board, boards exposed at the edges and corners, lacks pastedowns, bands breaking. Dimensions 314 x 215 mm.

The chanting of the Passion highlights the liturgy of Holy Week, but Lectionaries rarely include the music for these texts. With complete musical notation for the Passion accounts from each Gospel, this Gospel Lectionary is thus remarkable and deserves to be better known and further studied. Beautifully and carefully written, the manuscript is adorned with two exuberantly painted

full-borders and very fine illuminated initials with exceptionally detailed and skilled pen decoration, and it survives in its original blind-stamped binding.

PROVENANCE

1. The style of decoration and script suggests that this manuscript was written and decorated in northwestern Germany; cf. W. Oeser, "Die Brüder des gemeinsamen Lebens in Münster als Bücherschreiber," *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 5 (1962), 197-398.

2. Belonged to Alvin W. Krech (d. 1928), Chairman of the Equitable Trust Company, Manhattan, in 1893; printed bookplate, inside front cover.

TEXT

ff. 1-22, Gospel reading for Palm Sunday, noted (Passion according to Matthew);

ff. 22v-39, Gospel reading for Tuesday in Holy Week, noted (Passion according to Mark);

ff. 39v-49v, Gospel reading for Wednesday in Holy Week, noted (Passion according to Luke);

ff. 50-60v, *Sequentia sancti evangelii secundum Iohannem*, the account of the Last Supper, not noted;

ff. 60v-74, Gospel reading for Good Friday, noted (Passion according to John);

ff. 74-80, Easter Vigil; blessing of the candle; noted;

ff. 80-86v, Blessing of the Font, noted;

ff. 86v-87, *Sequentia* from Matthew; not noted;

f. 87rv, Gospel reading from Mark for Easter; not noted;

ff. 87v- 100v, Gospel readings for votive Masses and other Feasts, not noted; f. 87v, the Virgin Mary; f. 88v, the Sacrament; f. 89, Dedication of a Church; f. 90, Assumption; f. 90v, Nativity of Mary; f. 93, *Sequentia* from Luke; f. 94, Epiphany; f. 95, Purification of Mary; f. 96, Ash Wednesday; f. 97v, for rain; f. 98, for serenity; f. 98v, for going on a journey; f. 99, for the funeral of a nobleman or magnate; ff. 99v and 100, for the dead (two readings); and f. 100, for Bishops and Priests.

The Gospel Lectionary or Evangeliary includes the Gospel Readings for the Mass, arranged according to the liturgical year. This manuscript includes the Gospel Readings for Holy Week, which were chanted in parts (marked by "C" for the narrator "S" for the crowd and a cross for Christ, added). Most Evangeliaries, however, do not include musical notation. This manuscript is highly unusual and important because it includes extensive musical notation for the important Gospel texts (cf. Pierre Salmon's catalogue of liturgical books in the Vatican library, cited below; none of the Evangeliaries catalogued have comparable amounts of noted readings). The manuscript also includes other texts important to the Holy Week liturgy, including the blessing of the candle and the font during the Easter Vigil.

ILLUMINATION

The style of the decoration of this manuscript is our most important clue to its place of origin; its mix of elements from the Netherlands and the Rhineland points to Northwestern Germany (cf. W. Oeser, "Die Brüder des gemeinsamen Lebens in Münster als Bücherschreiber," *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 5 (1962), 197-398).

It is interesting that the pen decoration, which is extremely elaborate (a characteristic of manuscripts from the Netherlands) is much more skillful than the painted borders (cf. Anne S. Kortweg, *Kriezels, aubergines en takkenbossen, randversiering in Noordnederlandse handschriften uit de vijftiende eeuw* [Zutphen, Walburg Pers, 1992]). The borrowing of motifs from other mediums is also possible; the acanthus borders on ff. 88v and 95, have a curiously stiff appearance, and are decorated with small holes, perhaps suggesting an origin in metalwork (cf. the decoration in Kortweg, p. 101, no. 69, Haarlem 1469). See James Marrow, "A Book of Hours from the Circle of the Master of the Berlin Passion: Notes on the Relationship between Fifteenth-century Manuscript and Printmaking in the Rhenish Lowlands," *Art Bulletin* 60 (December 1978) 590-616, for a discussion of a Book of Hours, London, British Library, Harley MS 1662, from the lower Rhine from the third quarter of the fifteenth century, which is not related to this lectionary, but presents interesting parallels, including borrowings from other mediums and pen decoration that is more skillful than the painted decoration.

The exuberant, if less skillfully executed painted borders are f. 87, with a full painted border of red and green acanthus interspersed with beige rosettes; and f. 89, a full painted border of red and blue acanthus, green vines and foliage, with rosettes, a branch and other motifs. The L-shaped border on f. 22v, in contrast, consists of rather fine and bold large red and green acanthus leaves, which are connected and terminate in stiff ribbon banderoles

The six very large initials with exceptional borders include: f. 1, puzzle initial of polished gold and blue on a red ground with three-quarter border of red and blue motifs; f. 39v, very fine red and blue puzzle initial on a turquoise ground, with very detailed violet pen decoration infilled with red, which forms a bold three-quarter-border extending from the initial with large acanthus and other foliage and rosettes in a rectangular band with triangular extensions, ending with pen filigree and beading, and a face in profile; f. 50, 2-line blue initial decorated with red pen work forming a three-quarter border infilled with rosettes and polished gold balls; f. 61, blue initial with red pen decoration interspersed with large rosettes; f. 88v, very fine red and blue puzzle initial with purple pen decoration infilled with red, with large stiff acanthus which may be copied from metalwork (note punchwork); f. 94, gold initial on a red ground, with violet pen border; and f. 95, red and blue parted initial, with violet pen border including large acanthus possibly copied from metalwork (cf. f. 88v above).

LITERATURE

John Plummer, *Liturgical Manuscripts for the Mass and the Divine Office*, New York, The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1964, 9-27, "Mass Books," especially 17-19, nos. 13-15, "Evangelaries."

Pierre Salmon, *Les Manuscrits liturgiques latins de la bibliothèque vaticane. II. Sacramentaires, Épistoliers, Évangélistes, Graduels, Missels*. (Studi e testi 253), Vatican, Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1969.

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