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Missal

**In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment and paper
Austria or Hungary, circa 1460-1470**

95 ff., apparently complete according to the table of contents placed on the upper pastedown (collation i⁷ (10-3) [missing the first 3 ff. of quire], ii¹², iii¹², iv¹⁰, v¹², vi¹⁰ (12-2) [with first and last folio of quire cancelled], vii¹², viii¹⁰, ix¹⁰), on paper with outer and inner bifolia of quires in parchment (watermarks close to Briquet, "Balance dans un cercle, à plateaux rectangulaires, surmontée d'une étoile," no. 2450, Innsbruck, Passau, 1467; Gurck, 1469; Vieme, 1469-1471, Hongrie, 1471), written in a Gothic textualis script on up to 22 lines (justification 140 x 90 mm), ruled in light brown ink, prickings still visible, rubrics in red, headings in red, some capitals stroked in red, numerous painted 1- to 3-line high initials alternately in green or red, painted bright green 3- to 6-line high initials with red penwork, 3 larger parti-colored initial in bright green and red enhanced with red and green penwork (ff. 1, 5, 8v), some original parchment finding tabs stained in green. Bound in a fifteenth-century blind-stamped dark brown calf on wooden boards, back sewn on 3 raised thongs, covers tooled in blind to a saltire design within a frame composed of triple fillets, lozenge pattern with small discs marking intersections, front and back covers both with four brass cornerpieces and centerpiece, leather catch and brass clasp, parchment pastedowns with fragments of 14th c. manuscript (or late 13th c.), some traces of another German language manuscript used to reinforce the pastedowns (Covers a bit scruffy, pastedowns detached, a few waterstains in no way affecting legibility). Dimensions 225 x 140 mm.

Preserved in its original monastic binding, this Missal with its ornate painted initials bears an inscription revealing its first (or very early) owner, a Brother Erasmus, member of the order of the Carmelites, in a region named "Lyff." This could very well be a locality in Lyffland, now in modern Latvia and Estonia, from which few manuscripts survive. Many unique codicological features enhance the special interest of this codex as an wholly intact example of medieval book-making.

PROVENANCE

1. Script, decoration and watermarks suggest an Austrian or Hungarian origin for this manuscript.
2. Inscription on lower pastedown reads: "Ego frater Erasmus ordine carmelitarum cooperatore in lyffii anno domini 1481." The missal thus belonged in 1481 to a Brother Erasmus of the order of the Carmelites in a town or region called Lyff. Also on f. 4v, an interrupted inscription and a date: "Item ist liber pertinet ad pulcher [...]. Anno 1481." It seems probable the manuscript traveled to a region (rather than a town) referred to as Lyff. A possibility would be "Königriek Lyffland" which in Low German designates the region of Lyffland or Livland, better known as historical Livonia, in the

Baltic region of modern-day Latvia and Estonia. In the Middle Ages Livonia designated a much broader territory controlled by the Livonian Order on the eastern coasts of the Baltic Sea in present-day Latvia and Estonia. Its frontiers are the Gulf of Riga and the Gulf of Finland in the north-west, Lake Peipus and Russia to the east, and Lithuania to the south. Livonia was ruled by an upper class of Baltic Germans (*Deutschbalten*) that quickly came to control all the administrations of government, politics, economics, education, and culture of these territories for over seven centuries until 1918.

TEXT

Front pastedown, [Table of contents], rubric, *Registrum huius specialis et missarum quod continentur in eo; Registrum Commune de apostolis de virgini et de die*; noteworthy is the alpha-numerical system of reference to contents reported in red headings in upper margins of each folio (a1 to h9, quire signatures serving double function as foliation and quire signatures);

ff. 1-4v, Canon of the Mass, incipit, "Te igitur clementissime pater per Ihesum Christum...";

ff. 5-66v, Masses for the Temporal and Sanctoral (*Proprium de tempore; Proprium Sanctorum*), *Primo omnis tres misse in die nativitatis Christi* [as announced in the *Registrum* on front pastedown], incipit, "Dominus dixit ad me filius meus...";

ff. 66-95v, Common of the Saints (*Commune Sanctorum*), rubric, *Comune de sanctis et primo in vigilia apostoli*.

This Missal is interesting as a liturgical text with its selection of masses but also for its numerous codicological features that make it an excellent candidate for studying manuscript book-making and circulation towards the end of the fifteenth century. The manuscript was most certainly copied in an Austrian or Hungarian environment and likely transported quite early on to the Baltic region of Livonia. It is interesting to see how manuscripts copied in German circulated to be used by "expatriate" Baltic Germans.

A remarkable codicological feature is the contemporary foliation that refers back to the table of contents pasted over the upper pastedown. The foliation here takes the form of signatures that have been copied in red in the upper margin ("a" to "h"), which are quite unusual, quire signatures usually figuring at the bottom right margin of folios in printed books (and sometimes in manuscripts, where they were intended to be trimmed off). It is worth noting that these foliation-signatures appear to replace catchwords, not present in the manuscript, and so must also have served the binder, who sorted the quires to put together the volume, and in this manner reflects the influence of printed books. The manuscript survives as a wholly intact example of medieval book-making, displaying many, many features of production: an original binding, bosses and cornerpieces, pastedowns (perhaps from a legal manuscript), binding waste, table of content, finding tabs (of the same color as the initials), unusual foliation, etc. Added to these special features are the highly decorative, ornate initials in bright green and red which have yet to be localized in a specific center of production in the Germanic regions.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

On Livonia

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Livonia>

British Library on the Mass

<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/TourLitMass.asp>