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**Processional (Dominican), Office of the Dead and Hours of the Virgin  
In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment  
France (Poissy), c. 1475-1525**

*Parchment, very thin, i (marbled paper) + ii (paper) + 151 + ii (paper) + i (marbled paper) folios, modern foliation in pencil, (collation i<sup>s+1</sup> [-1, excised, + one singleton, f. 4, after 4] ii-iv<sup>s</sup> v-vi<sup>s</sup> vii-xii<sup>s</sup> xiii<sup>s</sup> [-5 through 8, possibly with loss of text] xiv-xvii<sup>s</sup> xviii<sup>s</sup> [-8, before f. 136, with loss of text] xix-xx<sup>s</sup>), vertical catchwords, no leaf or quire signatures, written below the top line in a conservative gothic bookhand in twenty-two long lines or seven lines of text and seven lines of music (red four-line staves and square notation), ruled in red ink, usually with the top two and bottom two lines full across, single full-length vertical bounding lines (justification 88 x 57 mm.), majuscules within text filled with pale yellow, red rubrics, one-line brushed gold initials on alternate grounds of blue and dark red, with decorative pen work in the contrasting color, bar line fillers, decorated in brushed gold, well-executed two- to four-line brushed gold initials, infilled with decorative motifs in brushed gold, on rectangular blue grounds, and usually with pen decoration in red or blue; faces incorporated into pen decoration on ff. 12v, 21v, 24v; f. 24v, also depicts the head of a woman, probably a nun, in excellent condition, with almost no signs of use, except for a few excised leaves. Bound in eighteenth-century mottled-leather over pasteboard, top and bottom covers with three narrow gilt fillets; spine with five raised bands separating gilt ornaments, edges gilt and marbled, marbled paper endleaves, edges and corners worn, and top headband missing. Dimensions, 140 x 95 mm.*

This small portable Processional was copied at the Royal Abbey of Poissy, founded by Phillip IV in 1304 in honor of his grandfather, St. Louis, King of France. Joan Naughton, in her study of the manuscripts of the Abbey identified twenty-four Processionals; she did not know of this manuscript. The varied contents of this attractively decorated manuscript—including some texts clearly for the education of a novice and others for more advanced devotions—are evidence of the type of texts used by a Dominican nun in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.

### PROVENANCE

There is little doubt that this manuscript was copied at the Royal Abbey of St. Louis de Poissy in the fifteenth century; it includes processions for St. Dominic, St. Louis (the patron of the Abbey), as well as Corpus Christi, the Birth of the Virgin, and John the Baptist; the latter two Processions were unique to Poissy, and were celebrated at the Abbey from the fifteenth century. It is decorated throughout with brushed-gold initials in a Renaissance style, which suggests a date from the end of the fifteenth, or early sixteenth century.

front flyleaf: "la partiens a loffice de Chantre 1700. du monastère Roial de saint Louis de poissi de l'order de saint Dominique. Loffice des morts."

## TEXT

ff. 1-4v, Litany, now beginning imperfectly with the Apostle John, including Dominic among the confessors, and Anastasia, Elizabeth, Christina and Ursula among the Virgins; includes prayers to the St. Dominic and St. Peter Martyr, O.P.;

ff. 5-19, Office of the Dead, Dominican Use (see Knud Ottosen, *The Responsories and Versicles of the Latin Office of the Dead* [Aarhus, 1993] 108-109, and 239-242), with noted responses, versicles, and Psalms;

ff. 19-24, *Transeundo pro cymiterium*, ... [Texts for the Procession to the Cemetery and Burial Services, masculine and feminine forms given];

ff. 24v-38, Hours of the Virgin, Dominican Use, with suffrages to All Saints from lauds to compline, and the Salve regina after compline, and the Hours of All Saints; f. 37, alphabet, followed by the Pater noster, Ave maria, and Creeds [f. 38v, blank];

ff. 39- 44v, *Letania pro defunctis*, including Dominic, Bernard and Louis among the confessors, and Martha and Margaret among the Virgins [ends mid f. 44v, remainder blank];

ff. 45- 96, Noted Processional, beginning with Dominic, Louis (f. 46v), Corpus Christi (f. 49), John the Baptist (f. 52), Nativity of Mary (f. 54v), Palm Sunday (f. 58), Maundy Thursday, with a note on the cleansing of the altars: "Hic ponantur antiphone et versiculi et orationes de sanctis secundum depositioni altarium in quolibet conventu" (f. 72v), Good Friday (f. 79v), Ascension (f. 83v), Purification (f. 86), Assumption (f. 90), and Receptions (f. 93); [f. 96v, blank];

ff. 97-102, Services for the dead and burial; prayers are given with feminine forms or with both masculine and feminine forms, now beginning "*Quandoque corpus deffuncte defferendum est ad ecclesiam dicat sacerdos. Dominus Vobiscum. Oremus. Suscipe domine animam famule tue ...*; [probably now begins imperfectly (preceded by four excised leaves)];

ff. 102v-112v, Readings for Holy Week; John 13-17:26;

f. 112v-135v, *Incipit lectio legenda in die parasceues in collatione*, Nam si pie et diligenter attendimus omnia que hodie per christum ... [ps. Bernard, *Sermo*; also in Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 1962, and Tours, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 345.II.2] ; f. 120, Ut aliquatenus possis comprehendere cum omnibus sanctis ... [ps. Bonaventure, *De myserio S. Crucis*; cf. G. E. Mohan, "Initia opera Franciscalium, *Franciscan Studies* 38 [1975], 445; ff. 135rv, concluding prayers: Ineffabilem misericordiam tuam ...; Deus cui cor omne patet ...; Deus qui iustificas imperium ... poteris vero addere de beata virginem ... de beato dominico, de beato ludouico, et de aliis secundum deuotionem tuam ...; Infirmittatem nostram ... beate marie beati// [Ending imperfectly.]

ff. 136, Prayers before and after Communion: *Ante communionem*. #Summe sacerdos et uere pontifex ... me non dimittas. Amen; f. 141, [no rubric, written continuously with preceding prayer] #Aue rex noster fili dauid ... ; f. 141v, *Diuisio*. \*Consciencia quidem trepida et tepida ... ; f. 143, *Post communionem*. \*Gratias ago tibi domine deus meus qui me peccatricem ... ; *Oratio*. \*Cruor ex latere ... ; \*Quod ore sumpsi domine pura ... ; f. 143v, *Oratio*. \*Perceptio corporis et sanguines ... ; \*Corpus tuum domine quod sumpsi ... ; *Oratio*. +Deprecor te domine ... ; f. 144, *Oratio*. + Domine ihesu christe fili dei uiui corpus tuum ... ; *Oratio*. +Purificent nos quesumus domine ... ; *Oratio*. Non de meritorum qualitate ... ; f. 145, *Oratio*. +Gloria in excelsis deo et in terra pace ... [RH 7280]; f. 146, *Totum dicite salutacio*. Aue ueni in christi natum ...

Texts marked \* are also included in two other Poissy Processionals with *Horae*, both from the fourteenth century, with later additions: London, British Library, Additional MS 18,845, *Horae*, Processional, Liturgy for Death and Burial (see Naughton, 1995, 322-324) and in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Rawlinson, Liturgical f 35, *Horae*, Processional, Office of the Dead (see Naughton, 1995, 365-367); texts marked + are found in Additional MS 18,845, and those marked # are found in MS Rawlinson Liturgical f35.

ff. 146-147, *Salutationes beati augustini ab singula membra corporis christi*. Salue tremendum caput christi cunctis potestatibus pro nobis ...

ff. 147-151, *Extractiones ex uerbis mellifluis in comparabilis dulcissimi patris augustini*, O fons mellifluens dulcedine bonitatis ... ; [f. 149v] *Oratio*. O anima christi sanctifica me ... ; [f. 150] *Oratio*. Concede michi domine misericors deus ... ; [f. 151v, blank].

This processional 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 associated with the monastery survive, dating from the fourteenth through the sixteenth century, many of them illuminated. A striking number of these manuscripts (at least twenty-four) are, like the present manuscript, Processionals, which contain the texts and chants necessary for liturgical processions. Most of these were small, portable books, appropriate for the use of a particular nun. Our manuscript also includes the Hours of the Virgin, the Hours of All Saints (a much less common text), the Office of Dead and other texts for funerals, readings for Holy Week, as well as Eucharistic prayers and homilies.

As Joan Naughton, author of a study of the surviving manuscripts from Poissy, has observed, Books of Hours from Poissy are uncommon. The small Processionals from the Abbey, however, in many cases seem to have been the functional equivalent of Books of Hours for the nuns; personal books which included not only the texts necessary for liturgical Processions and the Rites associated with death and burial, but also texts for personal devotion and the Mass. The contents of this manuscript (which was not known to Naughton) clearly place it in that category (see Naughton, 1995, 108-112).

The text of the Processional leaves little doubt that it was made at Poissy, and it reflects fifteenth-century liturgical practices: in addition to Dominic and St. Louis (the patron of Poissy), our

manuscript includes *Corpus Christi*, generally observed in the Dominican Order from c. 1324, as well as the processional offices for John the Baptist and the Birth of the Virgin, which date from the fifteenth century. Textually, it is closely related to two fourteenth-century Processionals from Poissy, both of which also include *Horae*, and the Office of the Dead or other texts associated with Funerals. These three manuscripts include many of the same prayers to be said before and after Communion (see description above).

The text of this Processional, however, also includes a number of features that set it apart from other Processionals from Poissy. The first Litany seems to have been copied, without alterations, from an earlier Dominican manuscript (it lacks, for example, Louis, 1301, Bernard, 1303 and Thomas Aquinas, 1326), and includes a number of female saints, not found in other Poissy processionals: Anastasia, Elizabeth, Christina and Ursula. The Litany for the Dead, in contrast, reflects slightly later liturgical practices, but also probably reflects an earlier manuscript; it also lacks Thomas (1326), and Vincent (1505), but includes Louis (1301), Martha (1303), and Bernard (1303).

The type of texts included in our manuscript shows two very different sides of the life of the nuns. Following the *Horae* in our manuscript are the alphabet, and very basic prayers (the Lord's Prayer, the Hail Mary, and the Creeds), suggesting the user of this manuscript was at the very beginning of her education. The later texts in the manuscript, in contrast, suggest an owner who was not only educated, but comfortable with Latin theological texts, including the Readings for Holy week from the Gospel of John, two related medieval Homilies, and prayers related to the Eucharist.

## LITERATURE

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Naughton, Joan, "Books for a Dominican Nuns' Choir: Illustrated Liturgical Manuscripts at Saint-Louis de Poissy, c.1330-1350," in *The Art of the Book. Its Place in Medieval Worship*, eds. Margaret Manion and Bernard Muir, Exeter, University of Exeter Press, 1998, 67-109.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Introduction to liturgical manuscripts: "Celebrating the Liturgy's Books"  
[www.columbia.edu/itc/music/manuscripts](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/music/manuscripts)

General introduction to liturgical processions:

[www.newadvent.org/cathen/12446b](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12446b) (New Catholic Encyclopedia, "Processions")

Naughton, Joan, *Manuscripts from the Dominican Monastery of Saint-Louis de Poissy*, PhD Dissertation, University of Melbourne, Department of Fine Arts, 1995:

[http://dtl.unimelb.edu.au/R/5PAI14LD21YBRLH921B6KKPNJ6799RSLV57VSXVLSBSP98198C-00545?func=dbin-jump-full&object\\_id=72417&pds\\_handle=GUEST](http://dtl.unimelb.edu.au/R/5PAI14LD21YBRLH921B6KKPNJ6799RSLV57VSXVLSBSP98198C-00545?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=72417&pds_handle=GUEST)

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