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**Monastic Ritual or Ceremonial; liturgy for the Clothing and the Profession of Nuns  
 In Latin and Spanish, decorated manuscript on parchment  
 Spain (Castile?), c. 1575-1625**

*ff. ii (paper) + 22 + i folios on parchment, rather stiff, with pronounced color difference between hair and flesh side, modern foliation in pencil, bottom, outer corner, recto (collation, i-iii<sup>o</sup> iv<sup>a</sup>), no signatures or catchwords, ruled very lightly in lead, single full-length vertical bounding lines, (justification, 209-208 x 138-135 mm.), written in a rounded late liturgical gothic bookhand in twenty-four long lines, red rubrics, two-line red initials, three-line initial with pen decoration in silver (?), f. 1, now smudged, and three-line red initial, f. 1, with void spaces within the initial filled in black, infilled and on a rectangular ground with bright pink and black pen decoration, in very good condition, with some soiling at the edges, and on ff. 4v-5, with smudges where the red ink has run. Bound in its ORIGINAL BINDING of black morocco over wooden boards, spine with four raised bands, blind tooled with two sets of fillets forming an outer border with decorative tooling (very worn and indistinguishable) with a diamond-shaped fleuron center ornament and fleurons at each corner, two original brass clasps and catches, fastening front to back, edges dyed red, in very sound condition, apart from slight damage to the lower portion and bottom of the spine, covers and spine are very worn, but intact. Dimensions, 257 x 187 mm.*

This is a fine example of a late sixteenth-century or early seventeenth-century liturgical manuscript from Spain from a monastery of Augustinian Nuns dedicated to Our Lady of the Incarnation. The text is a carefully written copy of the Clothing and Profession Rituals for Nuns entering the monastery, both liturgical occasions of considerable beauty and pathos. Liturgical manuscripts of this type are uncommon.

**PROVENANCE**

1. Written in Spain in the late sixteenth century or the early seventeenth century, as indicated by the script and language; the manuscript was written for the use of a monastery of nuns dedicated to "Nostra Senora de la Encarnacion," that is, to our Lady of the Incarnation (see f. 10).

Although the exact monastery for which this manuscript was made has not been identified, there are a number of clues in the text itself that may make this identification possible in the future. Augustine is the only saint mentioned by name in the various prayers; for example, f. 9, f. 9v, and especially f. 12v, where he is invoked as the author of the Order's rule ("... et beati Augustini quem precipium huius sanctae institutionis legislatorem dedisti ..."). There were numerous houses of nuns in the Middle Ages that followed the Augustinian Rule,

including monasteries associated with the Hermits of Saint Augustine. In early modern Spain, there were several reforms of Monasteries of Augustinian Nuns, including one originally associated with the Discalced Augustinians in 1589, and another reform in 1597 by John de Ribera, Archbishop of Valencia, which combined the Augustinian Rule with the Constitutions of the Discalced Carmelites.

Mariana de San José (1568-1638) founded the Order known as the Recollects in 1603; the first monastery of this Order in Eybar was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception of Mary. One puzzling feature of our manuscript is the fact that a number of prayers mention the Order of the Conception of Mary (cf. f. 1, "... famula tua N. pro forma habitus Conceptionis beatae virginis Mariae ..."; f. 8v, "... et in ordine Conceptionis beatae Mariae Virginis ..."). We have been unable to determine if this language is usual in the liturgy of the Recollect Sisters, but the fact that their first foundation was dedicated to the Immaculate Conception seems to suggest that this may be the case.

Two possible candidates for the original ownership of this manuscript may be suggested: a Discalced Augustinian foundation in Valladolid founded in 1606 and dedicated to the Encarnacion, and the famous Royal Monastery of the Encarnacion, founded c. 1612 in Madrid by Mariana de San José at the request of Queen Margarita, wife of Philip III, a Recollect monastery. Further research would be needed to support either suggestion, and there are likely other possibilities as well.

2. The manuscript seems to have stayed in Spain until relatively recently; modern owners' marks include, front flyleaf, f. i, and f. ii verso, stamp in purple ink, "Ex Libris R. D. E. Gelin," and in pencil, below, "Gel. E"; inside front cover, printed book plate, "Ex libris Romero et Martinez; cataloguing notes in Spanish, in pencil, f. ii verso.

3. Belonged to the Franciscan Convent in Brussels, library stamp in blue ink, front flyleaf, f. ii verso: "Couvent des Franciscains, Bibliothèque, Chant d'oiseau, Bruxelles."

## TEXT

ff. 1-3v, Blessing of the Habit, Veil, Girdle, Candle and Garland; *R.*, incipit, "Adiutorium nostrum in nomine domini qui fecit Caelum et Terram ... ; *Oratio*, incipit, "Deus qui sola tua pietate inefabili qua non minus suaviter sapienterque uniuersa disponis, lanam uestium ad usum hominum de uelleribus ... ut haec indumenta quae presens famula tua N. pro forma habitus Conceptionis beatae uirginis Marie ad tibi in ipso ordine laudabiliter seruiendum intendit assumere ...": f. 1v, *Despues destas Oraciones dichas, diga lo siguiente sobre los Velos, O Tocas blancas...*, *Oratio*, incipit, "Domine Jesu Christe, fili Dei uiui cuius Apostolus muliebrem sexum in signum subiectionis humilitatis uelamen super caput suum propter Angelos Dei habere precepit ..."; f. 2v, *Bendicio sobre la Cinta ...* *Oratio*, incipit, "Omnipotens sempiternae et misericors deus qui pietatis tuae misericordia peccatoribus veniam et misericordiam tribuisti oramus immensam clementiam tuam ut hoc cingulum benedicere ..."; f. 2v, *Bendicion de la Candela ...* *Oratio*, incipit, "Benedic domine Jesu Christe hanc creaturam cerei ..."; f. 3rv, *Bendicion de la Guirnalda ...*, *oratio*, incipit, "Benedic domine coronam istam ut sit remedium salutare ..."

ff. 3v-5v, Blessing with Holy Water and Incense, ... *estas bendiciones sobre los habitos velos candela y Guirnalda eche Agua benedicta e incensio sobre todo lo bendezido ...*, Oratio, incipit, "Deus qui in Abrahae famuli tui opera humano generi obedientie exemplare tribuisti ...",

Note ff. 4v-5 are water damaged.

ff. 5v-9v, Clothing Ceremony, *Acabada binquese la nouicia de rodillas en el suelo y digasele esta Oracion por el Ministro*, incipit, "Oremus dilectissimi fratres et sorores dominum nostrum Jesum Christum pro hac famula sua N. ..."; ff. 8v-9, Oratio, incipit, "Quaesumus omnipotens deus pater misericordiarum ... ob amorem merita et intercessionem gloriosissimae matris tuae intemeratae uirginis Mariae et beati Augustini respice illo pietatis oculo quo beatum Petrum in atri o Pontificis aspexisti praesentem famulam tuam ... et in ordine Conceptionis beatae Mariae uirginis ..."; f. 9v, Oratio, incipit, "Intercessio nos quesumus domine beati Augustini commendet ut quod nostris meritis non valeamus eius patrocinio asequamur, per d. n. J. x";

ff. 10-21v, Rite of Profession, *Horde[m] y forma q[ue] se a de tener y guardar en hazer Profession en este monasterio de n[ost]ra Senora de la Encarnacion quando alguna Religiosa tomare Uelo. Diga lo nouicia lo sigue[n]te*, incipit, Amo Christum in cuius thalamum introiui cuius Mater uirgo est ...": *Loqual acabado por la nouicia luego lea la Carta de la Professio en la manera siguiente*, Ego Soro f ... ,

f. 10v, *Yentre tanto qui se dize la Novicia besse los pies al Abadessa yatodas las Monjas de uelo negro y despues tornese al lugar donde estrava yalli se eche prostrada en el suelo los bracos en cruz, ...*;

f. 11, Oratio, incipit, "Domine Jesus Christus apud te fit ut te defendat, Amen. Intra te fit ut te reficiat, Amen. Circa te fit ...", with litany and prayers for the New Nun; prayer, f. 12v-13, Oratio, incipit, Sancte spiritus qui te Deum ac dominum reuelare .. et per intercessionem beatissimae uirginis Mariae et beati Augustini quem precipium huius sancte institutionis legislatorem dedisti ...;

f. 14v, *Acabadas de dezir estas ... y despues desto quinterle el manto seglar yel Scapulario ysino tuiniere mantilla bastara que tenga Scapulario ...*, incipit, "Eripiat Deus de corde tuo seclui ...";

f. 16v, *Y despues tome el Anillo el Ministro y delo a la Nouicia y rescibalo ella con los tres de dos de laniano dizendo el Minsitro*, incipit, "Accipe ergo Annulum fidei signaculum Spiritus Sancti ut sponsa Dei uoceris ..."; f. 21v, Oratio, incipit, "Adesto supplicationibus nostris omni potens deus ... intercedente beato Augustino confessore tuo atque pontifice consuetae misericordiae tribue benignus effectum. Per d. n. J. X. Amen"; [f. 22rv, blank but ruled].

This manuscript preserves the liturgical services marking the important stages in the life of a woman entering a monastery. The first service is one for the consecration of postulants, including the blessing of the Habit and Veil, and the Clothing ceremony. The second section details the services marking her profession as a full member of the community at the end of her novitiate, and includes a formal profession, the bestowal of the scapular, and slight differences in the habit itself (for example, a black instead of a white veil).

Linguistically, the manuscript reveals that we are in a period when Latin has become the formal language of the liturgy only. Rubrics (liturgical directions) are here in Spanish, and while the manuscript uses singular forms throughout, plural forms are carefully written in red above the line, witnessing the general unfamiliarity with the language. Interestingly, the Latin grammatical ending, "ae," which was written simply "e" in the later Middle Ages, is here carefully written "e-cedilla" (the transcriptions here use "ae" for convenience). This manuscript was clearly used; in both sections of the text that describe blessings with Holy Water, the pages have clearly been wet, and are crinkled and blurred.

Whereas liturgical books for the Mass and Office were quite well-defined by the late Middle Ages, books containing other services, including those for Monastic Profession, as in this manuscript, and also the liturgy associated with Baptism, Matrimony, Penance, and the Anointing of the Sick, and Burial, are found in a number of different types of liturgical manuscripts. Many services of this type are found in Rituals, which include the services outside of the Mass and Office said by priests, or Pontificals, which include services reserved for Bishops. Technically, the ritual of consecration and benediction of virgins was reserved for Bishops, and thus would have been included in a Pontifical. In practice, it was often observed in the monastery by the Abbess and the monastery's priest, and thus were included in a monastery's Ritual or Ceremonial. Many of these liturgical services also circulated independently, usually in small format manuscripts including only one rite, an eminently practical solution. There is no evidence that the texts included here were ever part of a longer manuscript, and this manuscript is evidence of the continuation of this custom in the early modern period.

Although no formal census has ever been attempted, manuscripts including only the liturgy associated with monastic profession seem quite uncommon. The Schoenberg Database lists none, although this result might reflect cataloguing problems that mask the actual content of these manuscripts. There is another example of this type of manuscript at Columbia, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Plimpton MS 79, in Dutch and English from the Low Countries from the first half of the seventeenth century, and another, currently offered by Les Enluminures (Text manuscripts, reference number 318), from Northern Italy, c. 1500-1525, in Italian and Latin. Further research to uncover additional examples, especially from earlier in the Middle Ages, would be of interest.

## LITERATURE


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