

Dominican Breviary (Winter Portion)

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment

The Netherlands (Haarlem?), 1465-1475 (after 1462)

ii (paper) + 347 + ii folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil top, outer corner recto, 1-346 with f. 160bis, manuscript is complete, but collation is impractical given the condition of the binding, no catchwords or signatures, ruled very lightly in lead with single full-length vertical bounding lines, and with the top and bottom horizontal rules full across on some folios, (justification, 65-64 x 47-45 mm.) written below the top line in a controlled, very small hybrida script in twenty-four long lines, liturgical directions underlined in red, red rubrics, one-line initials, alternately red and blue within the line of text, two-line initials alternately red and blue, two-line blue initials, with simple red pen decoration, three-line red or blue initials, with pen decoration in violet with green wash, or red, respectively; f. 248v, large 4-line blue initial infilled with red and green with violet and green pen decoration, with empty gold frame above the initial, TWO ELABORATE PENWORK FULL BORDERS, ff. 1 and 151, with five- to seven-line initials and complex decoration in red and violet pen, including beading, stiff three-dimensional curling acanthus, and large flowers and other vegetal decoration, on f. 151, with touches of brushed gold; edges trimmed, with some loss to the penwork borders, ff. 1 and 151, ff. 1-3, small hole with rust stain, outer margins, slight staining upper margins, ff. 327-346, but overall in very good condition. Bound in seventeenth- or eighteenth-century vellum over pasteboard, front and back covers with a simple gold-tooled tendril borders, spine with four raised bands, edges gilt and gauffered, partially split along front spine, covers are bowed, slightly skewed, and darkened with only traces of gold remaining. Dimensions 90 x 68 mm.

This is an exceptionally small Breviary, with a clear, well-articulated text, complete with rubrics and liturgical directions for a Dominican House in North Holland. Small format prayer books and breviaries are not unknown in Middle Ages, but one cannot help admiring the skill that was used to make this small volume, doubtless the daily companion of a Dominican brother. Exuberant and skillful penwork borders, such as those found in this manuscript, are a hallmark of fifteenth-century Dutch manuscripts.

PROVENANCE

1. Based on the script and style of decoration, the manuscript was probably copied in North Holland third quarter of the fifteenth century, probably between 1465 and 1475, and possibly in Haarlem (see discussion of decoration, below); the text does not include many locally venerated saints, but it seems significant that Saints Ursula and Odulf are included. Ursula was especially associated with Cologne, but was widely venerated, and Odulf is associated closely with Utrecht).

The manuscript was certainly made for Dominican Use, and liturgical evidence allows us to date it after c. 1462; the Sanctorale includes numerous Dominican saints including Catherine of Siena, canonized in 1461, and Vincent Ferrer, canonized in 1455. The litany includes numerous Dominican saints, including Peter Martyr, Dominic, Vincent Ferrer (added to litany 1456), and Catherine of Siena (added to litany 1462). The liturgical evidence also indicates the manuscript was made for masculine use (see below,

ff. 342-345). If in fact the manuscript was made in Haarlem, the Dominican presence in Haarlem dates from 1254.

2. Belonged to Harry A. Walton Jr. of Covington, Virginia; his manuscript A-2852 (pencil note, inside front cover), but not included among the manuscripts from his library catalogued in C. U. Faye and W. H. Bond, *Supplement to the Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, New York, The Bibliographical Society, 1962, pp. 517-524.

TEXT

ff. 1-150v, Temporale from the first Sunday in Advent to Ascension Sunday, concluding with the dedication of a church, f. 144, and the last Sunday after Trinity Sunday, f. 148v;

ff. 151-235, Ferial Psalter and Canticles; psalms are not in biblical order, includes antiphons, versicles, responses and prayers, with rubrics indicating the liturgical office; some psalms are abbreviated with cues only, and psalms 118-133 appear to have been omitted from the outset (i.e. omission does not indicate loss of original text);

ff. 235-237, Litany including Peter martyr, Dominic, Thomas Aquinas, Vincent Ferrer, Agnes, Agatha, Catherine of Siena, Elizabeth, Barbara and Ursula;

ff. 237-240v, Psalm 118, added in a later hand, with the customary divisions and rubrics dividing the Psalm;

ff. 241-248v, liturgical directions, *de festis in communi, de concomitantia festis, de translatione festivitatum, de festo trium lectionum, de festo simplicis, ... de festo totum duplex, de octavis sanctorum, de memoriis faciendum, de ordine memoriarum, ... que requirenda sunt in communi sanctorum*;

ff. 248v-313v, Sanctorale from Vitalis and Agricola (probably here on 27 November) to Gervasius and Protasius (19 June); full offices with nine lessons including Agnes, translation of Thomas Aquinas (28 January), Thomas Aquinas (7 March), Vincent Ferrer (5 April), Peter martyr (29 April), Corona domini (4 May), Catherine of Siena (29 April), and translation of Dominic (24 May); brief offices for Odulf (12 June);

ff. 314-336, Common of Saints;

ff. 336-342, Office of the Virgin, Dominican Use (see http://www.chd.dk/use/hv_dominican.html; the text in this manuscript is very similar, but with some variation), followed by changed office and a commemoration of St. Dominic;

ff. 342-345, Liturgical directions for the Office of the Dead, followed by Prayers for the dead, Compline (masculine forms, "Fratres sobrii estote...") and benedictions [f. 346rv, blank].

Breviaries include the text of the Divine Office, prayers said throughout the day and night at the Offices of Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, Compline and Matins. This is a Breviary for Dominican Use, and as such includes nine lessons at Matins for major Feasts.

This Breviary is a remarkable example of a medieval manuscript copied in a very reduced format for portability, measuring only 90 x 68 mm.; cf. Julian I. Edison, *A Miniature Lesson in the History of the Book*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Houghton Library, Harvard College Library, 2005, p. 36, classifying miniature books measuring between three and four inches in height as "macro-minis."

The small size of this Breviary was made possible both by very thin parchment and minute script, and by an abbreviation of its text, since it includes texts only for the first half of the year, from Advent through June. The text of many of the Psalms is abbreviated as well, with only the first few words of each verse copied. Dominicans were known for small-format manuscripts from the Order's earliest days, since many friars traveled frequently to preach. Given the effort to present the text in a very small format, it is interesting that the manuscript nonetheless includes notably long and complete liturgical directions, which deserve further study.

DECORATION

The style of this pen decoration suggests an origin in North Holland, possibly in Haarlem, ca. 1470-75; manuscripts with similar decoration can be found in Anne S. Korteweg. *Kriezels, aubergines en takkenbossen, randversiering in Noordnederlandse handschriften uit de vijftiende eeuw*, Zutphen, Walburg Pers, 1992, pp. 102-103, no. 71, Amsterdam UB, V H 6, Psalter, North Holland (Haarlem?), c. 1470-75; no. 72, Nijmegen, JBB, 5000 C 87, Book of Hours, North Holland (Haarlem?), c. 1470-75; and especially no. 73, Amsterdam UB XXI C5, Book of Hours, North Holland (Haarlem?), 1472, and see also folio reproduced in Medieval Manuscripts in Dutch Collections: <http://www.mmdc.nl/static/site/index.html>).

The decoration includes two full borders with skillful and exuberant pen decoration; f. 1, five-line blue initial, infilled with curling red acanthus with touches of green wash, with red pen work surrounding the initial and extending into a full border in red and purple with touches of green wash, including purple beading, stiff, curling three-dimensional acanthus, flowers, and leaves; and f. 151, six-line parted red and blue initial, with a similar but more detailed border, which also includes flowers and vegetal motifs touched with brushed gold. Space has been left in the top margin of f. 248v, surrounded by a rectangular gold frame in brushed gold; the frame is empty, but it is possible it was intended for a woodcut.

LITERATURE

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Battifol, P. *History of the Roman Breviary*, London and New York, 1898.

Harper, John. *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford, 1991.

King, Archdale, *Liturgies of the Religious Orders*, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1955.

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Ottosen, Knud. *The Responsories and Versicles of the Latin Office of the Dead*, Aarhus, 1993.

Plummer, John. *Liturgical Manuscripts for the Mass and Divine Office*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, 1964.

Salmon, Pierre. *The Breviary through the Centuries*, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1962.

ONLINE RESOURCES

The History of the Breviary:

www.newadvent.org/cathen/02768b.htm (Catholic Encyclopedia, "Breviary")

"The Roman Breviary" (text of modern Roman Breviary in Latin and English, with historical introduction):

www.breviary.net

Introduction to liturgical manuscripts:

"Celebrating the Liturgy's Books":

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/music/manuscripts/>

"Late Medieval and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts – Books of Hours 1400-1530. Institute for Studies of Illuminated Manuscripts in Denmark. CHD Center for Handskriftstudier i Danmark," notes on identifying the liturgical Use of the Hours of the Virgin:

<http://www.chd.dk/use/index.html>

Mandonnet, P, "Order of Preachers," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1911; retrieved March 20, 2009 from New Advent:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12354c.htm>

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