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**Texts for the Commemorative Office of the Virgin Mary and Noted Office of the Dead  
In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper  
Germany (Bavaria), Elchingen, dated 1596**

131 folios on paper, with an unidentified watermark, fragments visible in the gutter, modern foliation in pencil, 1-126, top outer corner recto, leaving the five blank leaves at the beginning unnumbered, so the foliation begins at f. 6, original foliation, middle, upper margin in red Arabic numerals, 1-96, corresponding to the modern folios, 2-98 (collation, i<sup>6</sup> [-1, cancelled; blank unnumbered leaves] ii<sup>10</sup> iii<sup>6</sup> iv<sup>10</sup> v<sup>6</sup> vi<sup>10</sup> vii-ix<sup>6</sup> x<sup>10</sup> [-1, before f. 61, cancelled, with no loss of text] xi-xiii<sup>8</sup> xiv<sup>8</sup> [f. 96, single leaf added after 2] xv<sup>8</sup> [-6, after f. 107, and -8, after f. 108, cancelled with no loss of text] xvi<sup>10</sup> xvii<sup>8</sup>), horizontal catchwords, lower, inside margin at the end of each page of text, no leaf or quire signatures, frame ruled in red ink with the horizontal rules full across, and full-length vertical bounding lines, double between the columns, prickings, top and bottom margins, at the intersections of all the bounding lines, i.e., four prickings in the upper margin and four in the lower margin, very faint horizontal rules in lead for each line of text visible on some folios, widely spaced so the script is aligned with the rule along the top (justification, 172-168 x 117-115 mm.), ff. 1v-96, written below the top line in a beautiful, mannered, late gothic fraktur in two columns of twenty-six to twenty-seven lines, ff. 97v-107v, text accompanying music copied in a rounded gothic book hand, with bufnagel musical notation on brown five-line staves, with five staves and five lines of text on each page, f. 108rv, later addition, with square notation on brown four-line staves, occasional majuscules within the text highlighted with red, red folio numbers, middle, top margin on the recto, red rubrics, one- to three-line initials throughout in red, mauve, blue and green, decoratively shaped, and some with red pen decoration, 5-line initial, f. 2, with a scroll-work border in red, blue and green in all four margins, f. 84v, eight-line red initial, with red and green decoration, ff. 1v, 54v, 69v, with full-page decoration including elaborately decorated columns, ff. 97v-107v, musical notation accompanied by large decorative red initials, and striking cadel-initials in black ink with red highlights. In excellent condition, fifth unnumbered leaf before f. 1, now mostly detached; f. 126, a blank leaf, missing its outer half, musical section, ff. 97v-107v, worn through use, with soiling, worn edges, f. 105v, traces of paste (?), f. 106, red smudges, and f. 104, small holes, sections were marked by leather tabs (one remaining, f. 96), which have left several small rectangular holes. Bound in its ORIGINAL gold-stamped binding of vellum over pasteboard, gold tooled borders with fleurons at each corner, framing large round panel stamps (now worn), measuring approximately 65 x 47 mm, on the upper board of the Annunciation, and on the lower board of the Nativity, edges dyed red, except ff. 97-108v, flat spine tooled to form five compartments, each with a small fleuron, in good condition, but with some wear especially to the edges and to the central stamps, once with green cloth ties (tiny fragment remains, lower board, and partially visible, inside back cover).  
Dimensions 205 x 138 mm.

This attractive manuscript signed and dated by its scribe at a monastery in Bavaria is a fascinating example of the continued importance of manuscripts a century and a half after the first printed book. It is distinguished both by its very controlled script, and its exuberant decoration, including

three full-page designs featuring architectural columns. The section of text including the noted Office of the Dead bears many signs of use and includes corrections and additions to the text in a later hand, making it clear that this was a functional liturgical book in the monastery.

## PROVENANCE

1. Signed and dated by the scribe, Georgius Keyffer, at Elchingen, 21 December 1596, who describes himself as a monk and priest of that monastery. The Benedictine Abbey of Elchingen, near Neu-Ulm in Bavaria in the diocese of Augsburg was founded in 1128; throughout the Middle Ages it was a wealthy and influential foundation. In the fifteenth century, it was one of the monasteries reformed by the Abbey of Melk. During the Reformation, the monks were forced to temporarily leave the monastery, which suffered considerable devastation in 1546. This manuscript was copied in 1596, during the period of relative tranquility between the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 and the Thirty Year's War (1618-1648). The monastery was secularized in 1802.

Sigrid Krämer lists twenty-one manuscripts once belonging to Elchingen; most are from the fifteenth century, and all are in public collections in Germany, the majority in Augsburg and Munich; see Krämer, Munich, 1989-1990, part one, p. 204. Another manuscript copied by Georgius Keyffer is listed among the rubbings of bindings preserved in the Victoria and Albert museum; Weale's catalogue describes the binding with a large panel stamp of the Mercy seat, dates the manuscript c. 1585, and lists the contents as Antiphons, Responses and Lessons in the Office of the Virgin Mary; he unfortunately does not identify the manuscript further; see Weale, London, 1894-1898, p. 296, no. 812.

2. Sold at Sotheby's, December 8, 1981, lot 100 (Schoenberg Database no. 28137).

## TEXT

References are to the modern folio numbers, in pencil, top, outer corner recto; internal references within the manuscript are to the original foliation.

ff. 1v-4, [preceded by five blank unnumbered leaves]; f. 1v, incipit, "In nomine Jesu omne genu flectatur caelestium terrestrium et infernorum"; f. 2, *In nomine domine, Amen. Sequuntur antiphona et responsoria et lectiones de commune beate mariae semper virginis, A festo purificationis et ab octava penthecostes vsque ad aduentum domini, ad matutinas, inuitatoria, incipit, "Ave maria."*

Antiphons, responses, and versicles for matins and lauds for the Commemorative Office of the Virgin Mary; f. 4, concludes with notes that Psalms, hymns, and canticles for matins and lauds are found on f. 84 [modern foliation, f. 84v], and that Absolutions and Benedictions are found on f. 53 [modern foliation, f. 53v].

ff. 4v-53, *A festo purificationis marie et ab octava penthecostes usque ad aduentum domini lectiones, Sermo domini Rabani archiepiscopi de beata maria semper virgine, incipit, "Ave gratia plena dominus ... Ave virgo mater deificata ..."* [f. 50v-53, blank, but ruled];

Lessons for the Commemorative Office of the Virgin from the Purification (2 February) to Advent for eighteen days with twelve lessons for each.

ff. 53v-54, Absolutions and benedictions for matins [ends top, f. 54, remainder blank];

ff. 54v-69, *Infra tricesimum assumptionis maria [sic] antiphona super psalmos . . . quere fol. 1*; f. 55, *Lectiones infra tricesimum beate mariae semper virginis, Ex sermone beati Jeronimi prespiteri de assumptione marie virginis*, incipit, "Oportet tantam ac talem virgine . . ." [Ends, top, f. 64, column b; remainder and ff. 64v-69, blank];

Lessons "infra tricesimum assumptionis marie"; in the dioceses of Bavaria during the Middle Ages a thirtieth day of the Assumption was celebrated on September 13 (a custom still observed in the diocese of Augsburg).

ff. 69v-84, [f. 69v, architectural frame, no text] *De commune beatae mariae semper virginis post octavas epiphaniae ad purificationem, Sequuntur antiphona super psalmos in prima nocturna*, incipit, "Benedicta tu . . ."; f. 72v, *Sermo beati Bernhardi de beata maria semper virgine, lectio prima*, incipit, "Non est quod me magis delectet . . ."; f. 80v, *Sequens oratio dicitur ab omnes horas canonicas . . .*, incipit, "[D]eus que salutis eterne beate marie virginitate . . ." [ends top, f. 81; remainder, and ff. 81v-84, blank];

Antiphons, responses and versicles for the Commemorative Office of the Virgin Mary after the octave of Epiphany to the Feast of the Purification, ff. 70-72, followed by lessons for three days, ff. 72v-81, with twelve lessons for each.

ff. 84v-96v, *Incipiunt Matutine*, incipit, "Deus in adiutorium meum . . ."; f. 95rv, Suffrages for lauds, including "de beata maria virgine [marked vacat]," "de sancta cruce," "de apostolis," "de sancto benedicti," and "pro pace", f. 96, *Explicit faeliciter liber iste vigesimo primo die Decembris anno millesimo quingentesimo nonogesimo sexto per me fratrem Georgium Keyffer professum et sacerdotem in Elchingen. Omnia ad maiorem dei gloriam*. [f. 96v, blank].

Psalms, invitatory and hymn (not noted) in full for matins and lauds; f. 85v, concludes with a note that other texts are found on f. 1; f. 85v, column b, blank.

ff. 97-126v, f. 97, added later, incipit, "Kirie eleison," noted; ff. 97v-107v, *Sequuntur antiphona ad placebo, ad vigilas et ad laudes una cum Responsoriis*, incipit, "Placebo domino in regione vivorum . . ."; f. 108rv, added later, noted texts for the day of burial, incipit, "Subveni te . . ., In paradisum . . ." [ff. 109-126v, blank, but ruled].

Noted texts for the Office of the Dead, Use of Rome (cf. Ottosen, 135-140, and 269-275; esp. p. 272, the Roman Office of the Dead was followed in German Benedictine monasteries such as Elchingen, that followed the reforms introduced by the Abbey of Melk.

The manuscript, copied almost one hundred and fifty years after the first printed book, in terms of the beauty of its script and its fanciful, carefully executed decoration, is certainly a calligraphic showpiece. Nonetheless, it was also a working liturgical book, used for worship in choir. Breviaries contain the psalms, lessons and prayers for the Divine Office, celebrated by the clergy and

members of the religious orders throughout the day and night, beginning with Matins, said during the night, and continuing through the day, from Lauds at dawn to Compline at the end of the day. This manuscript is not a complete Breviary, but instead includes only the lessons, psalms, and other prayers for the Commemorative Office of the Virgin Mary at Matins and Lauds. Matins is the longest office, and includes a lengthy series of readings from various sources including patristic writings and commentaries. The lessons in this manuscript include writings by Rabanus Maurus, Augustine, St. Bernard and other authors. The Commemorative Office of the Virgin replaced the usual Office of the day; it was commonly recited once a week, most often on Saturdays.

Augsburg, Staats- und Stadtbibliothek, 2° Cod 537, is a Lectionary from the end of the fifteenth century from Elchingen; based on the catalogue description of this manuscript, it includes lessons for the Commemorative Office of the Virgin Mary on ff. 124-159 which may be the same as the lessons included in this manuscript on ff. 4v-53, and 72v-80; see Gehrt, Wiesbaden, 1993, pp. 137-138. Elchingen was dedicated to the Virgin Mary.

Following these texts is a section which includes the Office of the Dead, with both text and music. This is clearly an independent section, with a different script and style decoration. It was also the most heavily used section of the manuscript, with soiling, frayed edges, and signs showing use. It begins and ends with additional noted texts in a later hand, and includes corrections and additions within the text itself.

The script and layout of the manuscript are interesting; each page was carefully designed, with decorative frame ruling in red, and red folio numbers in Arabic numerals between the columns. In addition, there is also ruling for each line of script in very faint lead, designed to be imperceptible. The lead ruling is visible, for example, on ff. 26v-27, and also clearly visible on the blank leaves, ff. 68v-69. F. 69 has rulings in lead, but lacks the red frame ruling, which therefore may have been added to the rest of the manuscript after the scribe copied the text, as part of its decoration (at which point the lead lines may have been erased). The script itself is mannered, but very legible and attractive, with simple, pointed "a," long "f" and "s" which extend below the line, and dotted "i." Any rounded shape is copied as a pointed lozenge, which is noticeable in "o," and especially in the bottom of "d." The scribe does not use letter unions, and round "r" is used both initially and in other places where it would not have been used by earlier scribes. Interestingly, the scribe did not write on the ruled lines, but rather aligned the top of each line of script so that they hang off the ruled lines. The scribe ends each page with the word that begins the following page, written at the bottom of the second column of text, effectively providing catchwords for each page; this custom was characteristic of printed books of the time.

The initials are carefully executed, but sometimes seem oddly placed, cf. "H," on f. 18, which crowds the surrounding script, and "S," on the same page, which is followed by a gap; on f. 31, the "S," is slightly crooked and smudged. Some letters within the text script also include tiny breaks if examined very closely; see for example, the "S," line 2 of f. 16v. The musical section uses a different script, and a different set of decorative initials, but also exhibits some peculiar features; cf. f. 97v, line four, "meus prolongatus," with breaks visible in both round "s" and "g," and f. 101v, red "H," overlapping the musical notation. The method used to produce the initials in this manuscript,

and possibly even the script itself, deserves careful study. The question of whether stencils or some other method was used is certainly an open one.

## ILLUSTRATION

Decoration, f. 1v, full-page decoration, with elaborate columns in green, blue, and red, framing a monogram of Ihesu; f. 2, five-line green and red initial with full scroll-work border in red, blue and green;

f. 54v, full-page architectural frame, with columns in the inner and outer margins, in red and green;

f. 69v, full-page, two elaborate columns in red, blue and green;

f. 84v, eight-line red initial, elaborately decorated in red and green;

f. 96, scribal colophon in red and green, with strapwork decoration below in red and green;

## LITERATURE

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

"Klöster in Bayern"

<http://www.hdbg.de/kloester/>

"Elchingen":

[http://www.hdbg.de/kloester/kloester\\_detailansicht\\_basisdaten.php?id=KS0093&templ=relaunch\\_vorlage\\_detail\\_geschichte](http://www.hdbg.de/kloester/kloester_detailansicht_basisdaten.php?id=KS0093&templ=relaunch_vorlage_detail_geschichte)

Manuscripta Mediaevalia Handschrifendatenbank; Handschriftenkatalog (Wolf Gehrt. *Die Handschriften der Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg 20 Cod 401-575*, Handschriftenkataloge der Staats- und Stadtbibliothek Augsburg, 5, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz, 1993):

[http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/hs/katalogseiten/HSK0238\\_b137\\_JPG.htm](http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de/hs/katalogseiten/HSK0238_b137_JPG.htm)

Introduction to liturgical manuscripts:

"Celebrating the Liturgy's Books":

[www.columbia.edu/itc/music/manuscripts](http://www.columbia.edu/itc/music/manuscripts)

The History of the Breviary:

[www.newadvent.org/cathen/02768b.htm](http://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](http://www.breviary.net)