

Lay Breviary (Franciscan use)
In Latin and Dutch, manuscript on paper
Southern Netherlands (Louvain?), c. 1525–1550

299 leaves, paper, modern foliation in pencil on rectos in the upper right corner on the first, each tenth and the last leaf (1, 10, 20, 30 ... 270, 280, 290, 299), mostly in quires of eight leaves, collation: i^s (ff. 1–8), ii^s (ff. 9–16), iii^s + 1 leaf after 8 (ff. 17–25), iv⁶ (ff. 26–31), v¹⁰ (ff. 32–41), vi^s–ix^s (ff. 42–73), x^s lacking 1 (ff. 74–80), xi^s (ff. 81–88), xii^s lacking 8 (ff. 89–95), xiii–xiv^s (ff. 96–111), xv^s lacking 8? (ff. 112–118), xvi^s lacking 8? (ff. 119–125), xvii–xxxiv^s (ff. 126–188), xxv¹⁰ (ff. 189–198), xxvi–xxvii^s (ff. 199–214), xxviii⁴ lacking 3 and 4 (ff. 215–216), xxix–xxxviii^s (ff. 217–296), xxxix⁴ lacking 4 (ff. 297–299), no loss of text; no catchwords, (remnants of) four different series of signatures still present in the upper and lower outer corners of many rectos, written in a littera hybrida by four hands: Hand A ff. 1r–37r, Hand B ff. 37r–53v and 217r–294v, Hand C ff. 55r–216v, Hand D ff. 295r–299r; ruled on ff. 1–40 in pale brown ink for the boundary lines only, 1 column, justification: 110–105 x 70–65 mm, 17–27 lines: Hand A 17–18 lines, Hand B 25–27 lines, Hand C 18–20 lines, Hand D 22–23 lines, some corrections written on pasted-in paper strips (e.g. on ff. 242v and 254v); several four-, three- and two-line Lombards in red and blue, many one-line Lombards in red, majuscules in text stroked in red, rubrics in red, 6 INSERTED WOODCUTS; in reasonable condition, first leaf loose, holes in last leaf, last page rubbed, several lower corners strengthened, some of the pasted-in engravings rubbed, some minor soiling. Simple 17th-century binding, vellum over pasteboard, with single filets along the edges, flat spine (binding loose). Dimensions 146 x 103 mm.

Unusual para-liturgical, bilingual manuscript, offering the psalms, hymns, and canticles of the Breviary with a verse-by-verse Dutch translation of the Latin. It was made in the second quarter of the sixteenth century for a Franciscan religious community, possibly the convent of Annunciates in Louvain. A striking example of the toilsome continuation of medieval manuscript production during the reign of the printing press, this hybrid book also includes inserted woodcuts.

PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript was made for use in a Franciscan convent, since it contains hymns for the feasts of “den heylighen vader” (the holy father) St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, one of his first followers (ff. 22v–34v), and for the feasts of St. Anthony of Padua and St. Louis of France (ff. 293r–294v), both patron saints of the Third Order of St. Francis. This convent may have been the convent of Annunciates in Louvain, Belgium, where the manuscript was in the early 17th century (see below). The Order of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a contemplative order for nuns called Annunciades or Annunciates, was founded by St. Joan of France in 1500 at Bourges. In 1517 the Order was placed under the jurisdiction of the Order of St. Francis. During its most flourishing period the Order possessed forty-five convents in France, Belgium, the southern part of the Netherlands, and the Lower Rhine region in Germany. The convent of Annunciates in Louvain was founded in 1530 (for this convent, see De Moreau 1940–1952, tome complémentaire, p. 488; Van de Wiel 1976–1977, pp. 133–134).
2. In the early 17th century the manuscript was in use of sister Sara de Licht, who had it on loan from the convent where she lived, according to an inscription in the lower margin of f. 1r: “Tot gebruyck van

suster Sara de Licht soe langhe alst haer m[oede]r ooverste belieft" (In use of sister Sara de Licht, as long as her mother superior approves). Sara is known to have had at least one other manuscript, now Tongerlo, library of the Norbertines, MS H I 30, containing a Middle Dutch translation of the summer part of St. Bernhard's *Sermones*. It has an owner's inscription of the Louvain Annunciates and an inscription stating that it was in the use of Sara. There are more manuscripts known from the Louvain Annunciates (see Stooker & Verbeij 1997, II, pp. 249–250, and the online *Bibliotheca Neerlandica Manuscripta*). One of them, now Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, MS 2957, has an inscription similar to the one cited above: "Desen boek hoort toet Suster Bastyaetken Yans soo langhe alst haer oversten belyeft" (This book belongs to sister Bastyaetken Yans, as long as her superior approves).

Since 1616 Sara de Licht was mother superior of the then founded convent of Annunciates in Brussels. From then she was called "Mother Ancilla," the usual name given to superiors in some religious female orders. The new convent needed books, so Sara gave order to copy manuscripts. At least two specimens have survived, now Antwerp, Ruusbroec Genootschap, MS 190, and Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, MS II 2269. The first contains *Gheestelijcke oeffeningen*, or spiritual meditations, the other sermons in Dutch by Jan van Tienen, copied from a manuscript which was borrowed from the Annunciates of Louvain: "Desen Boeck is ons gheleent geweest van de Annuntiaten van Loven ende onse eerweerdeghe Moeder Ancilla Suster Sara de Licht heeft denselven int beginsel deser fondatie tot consolatie van de hylege gemynte doen uijtschryven door Suster Petronella Uuytenhond, om in den Refter te lesen. Requiescant in pace." (This book has been lent to us by the Annunciates of Louvain, and Mother Ancilla sister Sara de Licht had it copied by sister Petronella Uuytenhond, at the start of the foundation, in order to be read in the refectory, as a consolation of the holy community. May they rest in peace.).

3. A modern pencil ownership entry on the front pastedown states that the manuscript has been in the possession of Aernout van Ghelmer, from Ardoorie, in West-Flanders, Belgium. Then follows the name of Xaveer Koelman, from Diksmuide, also in West-Flanders. Modern pencil notes by other hands mention the names of a certain Lauwers, with the address Kortegasthuisstraat, Antwerp, and of Maurits de Breyer, living in Wilrijk, near Antwerp.

4. European Private Collection.

TEXT

ff. 1r–22v, Hymns from the Temporal: for the feast of All Saints (Vespers, Lauds), for Christmas Day (Vespers, Lauds), for Easter (Vespers, Nocturne, Lauds), for Pentecost (Vespers, Nocturne, Lauds).

ff. 22v–34v, Hymns for the feasts of St. Francis (Prime/Vespers, Nocturne, Lauds, second Vespers), and St. Clare of Assisi (Vespers, Nocturne, Lauds, second Vespers).

ff. 34v–37r, Prayer to the Virgin, Praise of St. Anne, Prayer when observing Lent.

ff. 37r–53v, Hymns from the Temporal: for Advent (Vespers, Matins, Lauds), for Lent (Vespers, Nocturne, Lauds, second Vespers), for Passion Sunday (Vespers, Nocturne, Lauds), for Ascension Day (Vespers, Matins), for Trinity Sunday (Vespers, Lauds), for Maundy Thursday (Vespers, Nocturne, Lauds), for the feast of the Virgin (Vespers, Nocturne, Lauds); antiphons, verses and responsories (f. 54r–v blank).

ff. 55r–216v, Psalms, hymns and canticles for the liturgical year: ff. 55r–57v, Hymns *Nocte surgentes vigilemus omnes* and *Primo dierum omnium*; ff. 58r–99v, Psalms 1–3 and 6–20 (numbers referring to the Vulgate); ff. 100r–102v, Hymn *Te Deum laudamus*; ff. 102v–106v, Psalms 92, 99, 62 and 66; ff. 106v–109r, Canticle of the Three Young Men: *Benedicite Dominum*; ff. 109r–113r, Psalms 148–150; ff. 113r–115v, Hymns *Ecce iam noctis tenuatur*

umbra and *Aeterne rerum conditor*; ff. 116r–118r, Canticle of Zechariah: *Benedictus Dominus Deus Israel*; ff. 118r–124v, Psalms 21–25 and 117; ff. 124v–140r Athanasian Creed: *Quicumque vult*; ff. 140v–145v, Psalms 53 and 118:1–32; ff. 145v–146r, Hymn *Nunc sancte nobis spiritus*.

ff. 146r–153r, Psalm 118:33–80; ff. 153r–v, Hymn *Rector potens verax Deus*; ff. 153v–160r, Psalm 118:81–128; f. 160r–v, Hymn *Rerum Deus tenax vigor*; ff. 160v–167r, Psalm 118:129–176; ff. 167v–176r, Psalms 109–113; ff. 176r–177r, Hymn *Lucis creator optime*; ff. 177v–178v, Canticle of the Virgin: *Magnificat*; ff. 178v–198r, Psalms 115, 131, 138, 84, 116, 121–127, 147, 128 and 130; ff. 198r–v, Hymn *O lux beata Trinitas*; ff. 199r–204r, Psalms 4, 30, 90 and 133.

f. 204r, Hymn *Te lucis ante terminum*; f. 204v, Canticle of Simeon: *Nunc dimittis*; ff. 205r–216v, Psalms 44–45, 86 and 95–97;

ff. 217r–253r (rubric on f. 216v), Psalms for several unspecified feasts (“*verscheyden hoechtijden*”): Psalms 28, 85, 83, 87, 98, 29, 46, 102, 103, 88, 67, 31, 87, 75, 71, 33, 42, 74, 47, 80, 31, 60, 63;

ff. 253r–256r, Psalms for Maundy Thursday: Psalms 139–141;

ff. 256r–273v, Psalms and canticle from the Office of the Dead: Psalms 114, 119, 120, 129, 137, 94, 5, 26, 39–41, 50, 64; Canticle of Ezechias: *Ego dixi in dimidio*;

ff. 273v–283v, Hymns from the Proprium Sanctorum: for the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul (Vespers), for the feast of St. Peter ad Cathedram (Vespers, Lauds), for the feast of the Apparition of St. Michael (Vespers, Lauds), for the feast of the Birth of St. John the Baptist (Vespers, Nocturne, Lauds), for the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul (Vespers), for the feast of the Visitation (Vespers, Nocturne, Lauds), for the feast of St. Mary Magdalene (Vespers), for the feast of St. Peter ad Vincula (Vespers), for the feast of the Transfiguration (Vespers, Nocturne, Lauds);

ff. 283v–291v, Commons from the Commune Sanctorum: for the apostles (Vespers/Lauds, Nocturne), for one martyr (Vespers, Lauds), for many martyrs (Vespers, Nocturne, Lauds), for a confessor (Vespers, Lauds), for a confessor not a bishop (Vespers), for a virgin (Vespers, Matins);

ff. 291v–294v, Hymns for the Dedication of a Church (Vespers, Lauds) and for the feasts of St. Anthony of Padua (Vespers, Matins, Lauds) and St. Louis of France (Vespers, Matins, Lauds);

ff. 295r–299r, Hymns for the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus (Vespers, Matins, Lauds);

f. 299v, Musical scores for the first lines of three hymns: *O salutaris hostia*, *Defensor noster aspice*, and a partly illegible, unidentifiable one.

Offering the psalms, hymns and canticles of the Roman Breviary with a translation in the vernacular, this manuscript may be considered as an abridged Lay Breviary, or, as Youri Desplenter calls it, a “*basislekenbrevier*” (basic Lay Breviary). Some textual components commonly found in a Breviary, such as a calendar, are absent in this manuscript, but in essence it gives the texts needed for the Divine Office during the liturgical year.

The Dutch translation accompanying the Latin text reflects a tendency to worship in the vernacular, which, in the Low Countries, had started with the religious movement called *Devotio Moderna*, led by Geert Grote (1340–1384), who himself translated many offices from the Latin for inclusion in Dutch-language Books of Hours, the semi-liturgical counterparts for lay people of the official Latin Breviary. Contrary to most Books of Hours and Lay Breviaries, the manuscript described here is bilingual. The Dutch translation is verse-by-verse (Hand A even wrote the alternating Latin and Dutch verses in red and black script respectively). It gave

the manuscript three possible functions: for use in collective worship during the Divine Office, for private devotion, and as a kind of exercise book for understanding Latin.

Made in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, this manuscript illustrates how the tradition of monastic manuscript production continued during the reign of the printing press. But in a modest way: the manuscript's design and layout are simple and sober, the script is unstable, decoration and illumination are lacking, and the modest illustration consists of cuttings from printed sources, pasted into the manuscript and then rather crudely colored by hand. In all aspects this manuscript reflects the humbleness of a contemplative nunnery clinging to medieval traditions in post-medieval times.

ILLUSTRATION

The following woodcuts, perhaps cut out from illustrated printed books but not identifiable by us, are inserted in the text:

f. 58, David in Prayer (50 x 35 mm., uncolored);

f. 145v, Crowning with Thorns (31 x 23 mm., colored-in);

4 small pasted-in circular engravings, diameter 25 mm., all colored-in;

f. 153, the Carrying of the Cross;

f. 160v, the Crucifixion;

f. 167v, the Pietà;

f. 199, the Entombment.

LITERATURE

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Desplenter, Youri. "Lofzangen voor derden. Middelnederlandse vertalingen van Latijnse hymnen in terriarissenhandschriften," *Queeste. Tijdschrift over Middeleeuwse Letterkunde in de Nederlanden* 9 (2002), pp. 117–130. Also online: http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/_que002200201_01/_que002200201_01_0011.php.

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Harper, John. *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the tenth to the eighteenth Century*, Oxford, 1991 (repr. 2001).

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Stooker, Karl & Theodorus Johannes Verbeij. *Collecties op orde. Middelnederlandse handschriften uit kloosters en semi-religieuze gemeenschappen in de Nederlanden*, 2 vols. I: Studie. II: Repertorium, Leuven, 1997. (= *Miscellanea neerlandica*, 15–16).

Wiel, C. van de. "Franciscaanse archiefbronnen in het aartsbisschoppelijk archief te Mechelen," *Franciscana* 31 (1976), pp. 9–35; 32 (1977), pp. 39–58, 129–142.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Introduction to liturgical manuscripts, "Celebrating the Liturgy's Books"

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

Psalms:

<http://www.medievalist.net/psalmstxt/home.htm>

Hymns:

<http://www.hymnary.org>

<http://www.preces-latinae.org/thesaurus/Hymni.html>

Database of Middle Dutch manuscripts, the Bibliotheca Neerlandica Manuscripta:

<http://www.library.leiden.edu/special-collections/manuscripts/subcollections-whs-bnm.html>

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