

Liturgical Calendar

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment

Northern Italy, c. 1180-1220 (before 1253)

i (paper) + 8 + i (paper) folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil top outer corner recto, (collation, i⁸), ruled in lead with the top two and bottom two horizontal rules full across and with four sets of full-length vertical bounding lines, first, second and fourth double, third, triple, prickings in three outer margins (justification, 224 x 153-152 mm.), written on the top line (except f. 8, written below the top line) in an upright rounded early gothic bookhand in red and black in three columns of twenty-two lines, except f. 8, with forty-two lines, and f. 8v, with forty-nine lines, red rubrics, two- to three-line red KL-monograms with blue or brown pen decoration, open and closing folios darkened, ff. 1-2, and 8rv, extensive stains, although text is legible, minor stains on remaining folios. Bound in modern (nineteenth-century?) paper boards, half bound in leather and marbled paper, spine lettered in gold, "Kalendarium ecclesiasticum, Codex membr. saec. XIII," corner pieces missing, minor scuffs on covers and spine, worn at hinges, but in good condition. Dimensions, 333-320 x 220-207 mm.

This handsome large-format liturgical calendar of relatively early date may once have been part of a longer manuscript, or it may have always circulated independently. Manuscripts copied in one region were often customized by the addition of calendars reflecting the liturgical customs in a particular monastery or region, and newer calendars were added to volumes to update them. In its own right, this calendar is of interest for its script and contents, including verses on the Egyptian days apparently known in only one other manuscript, and for comparison with other calendars.

PROVENANCE

1. The evidence of the script, layout, and decoration, suggest that this calendar was copied c. 1180-1220 in Northern Italy, probably for use in a Benedictine monastery. The script is a good example of a very early gothic minuscule; it is upright, lacks compression, and generally avoids letter unions; it is copied above the top ruled line (except f. 8rv), an indication of a date early in the thirteenth century. It must date before 1253, when Peter martyr (or Peter of Verona, O.P.) was added to the calendar on April 27 (usually celebrated on April 29). The absence of many of the saints added to the Roman calendar in the late twelfth and first half of the thirteenth century is worthy of note (although not evidence to definitively suggest an earlier date); Thomas Becket (1173, 29 December), Bernard (1174, 20 August), Francis (1228, 4 October), Anthony of Padua (1232, 13 June), Elizabeth of Hungary (1235, 19 November), and Dominic (1254, 5 August) are all lacking.

Probably written for use in a Benedictine Abbey; although the calendar is not graded, two feasts, the Feast of the Circumcision (1 January), and Maurus (15 January), include added annotations specifying twelve readings (signifying monastic rather than secular use); other Benedictine saints include Scholastica (10 February), Benedict (21 March), translation of Benedict (11 July), Augustine, apostle

to the English (26 May), and Pope Gregory (12 March), and his Ordination, in red (3 September). This last feast is the only feast in red, which may be significant, but since it is the first feast listed in September it may be copied in red simply because the scribe neglected to change his pen.

The calendar includes a number of saints associated with Northern Italy, and especially Pavia; includes Syrus, bishop of Pavia (9 December), and his translation (17 May), and Dalmatus, bishop of Pavia (5 December). Other saints associated with Northern Italy include Peter martyr, or Peter of Verona, O.P. on 27 April (usually 29 April), Zeno, bishop of Verona (ordination, here 8 December, usually 9 December; his feast on 12 April is not included) and Gaudentius, bishop of Novarra, added on 3 August.

Additional saints worthy of note are Fortunatus (3 May), Albinus (1 March; Angers, but generally very popular), Desiderius, bishop of Langres (23 May, born in Orleans), Anianus, bishop of Orleans (17 November), and his translation (14 June), Margaret (added on 13 July, but in the original hand on 5 July), Germanus, bishop of Auxerre (31 July), and Germanus (1 October). Further research into the origin of this manuscript may explain their presence in the calendar.

The exact origin of this calendar will probably always be a matter for speculation. It is certainly possible that it was once the first quire in a longer manuscript (see discussion of calendars, below). However, the first and even more significantly, the last leaves are darkened and stained, suggesting an independent circulation for a long period of time before it was bound in the present nineteenth-century or early twentieth-century binding, and it is possible that it was always an independent quire, copied to supplement the monastery's older, outdated calendars, or more generic calendars that included fewer local saints.

2. Modern owners' and dealers' notes: inside front cover, unidentified armorial bookplate; in pencil, "Luigi librario"; upper margin, f. 1, clipping from Italian book dealer, no. 81.
3. European Private Collection.

TEXT

ff. 1-8v, Liturgical calendar, January-December, each month begins with two sets of verses on the Egyptian days, the common verses, incipit, "Prima dies mensis et septima truncat ut ensis ...," (Walther, 1959, no. 14563; transcribed and translated in the Online version of the Saint Albans Psalter, see Online Resources, and printed in Steele, 1919, p. 117), and another much less common version, incipit, "Est ianus in nona vel quinta scorpius hora [January] ... Condepnat prima decembris horaque sexta [December]" (a version printed in Steele, 1919, p. 118, from Venice, Marciana, MS Lat 173; listed only in the Venice manuscript in the In Principio Database, Thordinke and Kibre, 1963, and Walther, 1959, no. 5709; not listed in *Iter italicum* or *Manuscripta mediaevalia*).

Liturgical calendars accompanied a wide variety of different types of manuscripts in the Middle Ages; liturgical books for the Mass and Office – Sacramentaries, Missals, and Breviaries, among others, as well as books primarily for private devotion, Psalters and Books of Hours, all included calendars; calendars are also found in some Bibles, in astronomical anthologies, chronicles and others "miscellaneous" collections.

Calendars, especially in liturgical manuscripts, are not uncommonly of an independent origin; manuscripts copied in one region were customized by the addition of calendars reflecting the liturgical customs in a particular monastery or region, and newer calendars were added to volumes to update them. The origin of these leaves is therefore a matter for interesting speculation – they definitely circulated independently for a long time, judging from the wear and stains. Were they originally part of a liturgical volume such as a Psalter or of a Sacramentary or Missal, or possibly included in a non-liturgical volume (only two feasts are graded), or were they copied as an independent quire for reference or to supplement outdated or non-local calendars? This is a question that merits further research.

Calendars were often copied in quires of six leaves (or twelve pages), so that each month fit neatly on a single page; in this case the scribe copied January through the beginning of October on the first seven folios in a large script with well-spaced lines beginning each month as soon as he finished the last one so none of the months (except January) begin on a new page; he had to severely compress the text for the remainder of October, November and December to fit it on the two pages remaining in his quire; f. 8 is copied with 42 lines, and f. 8v, with forty-nine lines (compared with the twenty-two lines in the remainder of the manuscript).

Liturgical calendars differ from our modern calendars. At the beginning of each month of this calendar, the number of days in the solar and lunar months is recorded, followed by two sets of verses on the Egyptian days (days considered unlucky for blood-letting and other activities). This calendar is then divided into five columns; the largest, prominent column on the far right lists the feasts celebrated by the church honoring Saints, as well as events in the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary. In this case all the liturgical feasts are copied in black (with the exception of the Ordination of Gregory, see above, provenance). Additional notes in red include information on moveable feasts, and astronomical and astrological events, including notes on the seasons and astrological signs; for example, 8 January, the preceding new moon for Septuagesima, 11 March, the *terminus paschae* (the “terminus” of Easter), and a note on the end of the “dog days,” on 5 September, “Hic finiunt dies caniculares” (see the useful discussion of the calendar in the St. Albans Psalter, Online resources, which includes notes of a similar type). The Egyptian days are also noted in red.

The far left column lists the Golden numbers, from I to XIX, indicating the appearance of new moons and full moons throughout the year, and the next column records the Dominical letters to help find Sundays and the days of the week. This information was necessary to determine the date of Easter (a feast that varies each year). Alongside these entries are two columns, copied in red, that list the Roman system of calendar days, a complex system in which each month has three fixed points, Kalends (always the first day of the month and from which we derive our term “calendar”), Ides (the middle of the month, either the thirteenth or fifteenth), and Nones (the ninth day before the Ides, counting inclusively; it fell on the fifth or seventh of the month). All the days in between were counted backward from these three fixed points.

LITERATURE

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<http://aedilis.irht.cnrs.fr/initiation-liturgie/calendrier.htm>

"Keeping Time" (Introduction to calendars and feast days), St. Albans Psalter Online, with transcription and translation

<http://homepages.abdn.ac.uk/lib399/english/essays/calendar.shtml#keepingtime>

Calendars (Les Enluminure's website for Books of Hours, including a discussion of calendars)

http://www.medievalbooksofhours.com/advancedtutorial/tutorial_advanced_structure.html#

In Principio, Incipit index of Latin texts

<http://www.brepolis.net/>

Manuscripta mediaevalia (online catalogue of manuscripts in German Libraries)

<http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de>

Iter Italicum, the electronic version of Paul Oskar Kristeller's *Iter Italicum: a finding list of uncatalogued or incompletely catalogued humanistic manuscripts of the Renaissance in Italian and other libraries*, print ed., 6 vols 1963-92

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TM 633