

Processional (Use of the Dominican nuns of Poissy)
In Latin with some rubrics in French, decorated manuscript on parchment
Northern France (Poissy, or perhaps Paris), c. 1450-1500

iii (paper) + 123 + iii (paper) folios on parchment, foliation in nineteenth-century pen in upper outer corner, 1-123, a number of leaves mounted on small parchment guards or protected by them (see ff. 2v and 7v where the text continues on the following folio despite the presence of the stub, ff. 12v-13 and 118v-119 where the catchword agrees with the next gathering despite apparent stub; and ff. 45v-46 where three such stubs are present between the leaves but with no loss to text), physical evidence suggests the construction of the volume included the combination of two physically distinct sections, or even the combination of two volumes into one: f. 56 is smaller and bound into the centre of the volume leaving its text unaligned with the rest, f. 57 has had its first two lines erased, which possibly completed a text which once preceded it but are now missing, missing three leaves at the end with loss of some text, collation (*i*¹² *ii-vi*⁸ *vii*⁴ [structure uncertain, 4, f. 56, is a smaller leaf tipped in] *viii-ix*⁸ *x*⁸ [-7, following f. 78, stub remains, cancelled with no apparent loss of text] *xi-xiv*⁸ *xv*⁷ [beginning f. 112, structure uncertain, no apparent loss of text] *xvi*⁸ [-6, 7, 8, following f. 123, with loss of text]), horizontal catchwords, remains of leaf and quire signatures with a letter designating the quire and roman numerals, the leaf at the very bottom outer corner of the leaf, often trimmed, ruled lightly in red ink, (justification, 95 x 67mm.), written in a number of late medieval bookhands showing influence of *lettre bâtarde* in nineteen lines of text and four lines of square musical notation on 4-line red staves, capitals touched in yellow, decorative *cadell* initials within music, rubrics in red, small initials in alternate red or blue, three larger parted red and blue initials (ff. 1, 21 and 46v), first leaf slightly discoloured, some small spots and scuffs throughout, else good condition. Bound in late eighteenth-century morocco over pasteboards, gilt-tooled on spine with floral motifs in compartments and title "PROCESSIONALE," marbled endpapers, edges dyed red, scuffs and splits but overall sound. Dimensions 134 x 91mm.

This small book of plainchant music contains the liturgical processions sung by a nun in the celebrated royal abbey of St.-Louis at Poissy in the second half of the fifteenth century. Thirty-one Poissy Processionals have been identified in published sources (over half of which are later than this manuscript). This example is unrecorded, and is a valuable addition to the corpus of extant manuscripts from this community, as well as a witness to the daily interaction of women with the written word in the Middle Ages.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in the fifteenth century for use by a Dominican nun of the celebrated royal abbey of St.-Louis at Poissy, founded by King Philip IV of France (known as Philip the Fair, or "Le Bel") in 1304 in honour of his grandfather, St. Louis of France, who was perhaps born at Poissy and was certainly baptised there. From its inception the abbey had close ties to the monarchy and nobility. Its foundation charter stipulated that it could only accept women of noble blood, and it maintained intimate relationships with the royal family for several centuries.

There is no doubt that this manuscript was made for use at Poissy; the rubric for the cleansing of the altars on Holy Thursday on f. 114 mentions the church dedicated to St. Louis at Poissy (*pissiac*), and the high altar of the Church, also dedicated to St. Louis, *Ordo altarium abluendorum in cena dominum in ecclesiam beati ludouici de pissiaco ad maius altare de beato*

ludouice ipsius ecclesie, followed by those for fourteen of the twenty-one altars of the abbey (ff. 115-123v; as recorded by Moreau-Rendu, 1968, p. 56; the manuscript is missing at least three folios at the end, and this text is therefore incomplete). It also includes the processions for the patron saint of the community, "de beato ludovico in processione," on ff. 103v-107v, and those for the feasts of John the Baptist (ff. 96v-100v) and the Nativity of the Virgin (ff. 107v-111v); these three processional offices were unique to Poissy among Dominican Houses, the last two added to their liturgy in the fifteenth century. For the history of the house see Moreau-Rendu, 1968. The house was suppressed after the French Revolution in 1793, and its books appear to have been carried away by the last members of the community and widely dispersed.

The text is in Latin, with occasional rubrics in French (cf. f. 102 in the Office for Dominic). Traces of glue on f. 9v suggest that a miniature or print may have been once glued there facing the opening procession for Palm Sunday.

There are two physically distinct sections to the manuscript, copied by at least two different scribes, but both very similar in appearance, and certainly contemporary. The first section consists of ff. 1-56, with f. 56 being a smaller folio tipped in at the end of the quire, blank on the verso, that provides the conclusion to the prayer on f. 55v (it has glue marks on the verso, which are difficult to account for); and then a second section, ff. 57-end. It is possible that these two sections were even from independent, but contemporary manuscripts, but it seems most likely that the manuscript was copied in two sections (by two different scribes), perhaps working at the same time, and then joined together a bit awkwardly, explaining the necessity of completing the first section on an inserted folio, and erasing the first two lines at the beginning of the next section on the following folio.

2. Belonged to the abbé Jules Bonhomme, curé de Saint-Jean Baptiste de Grenelles, Paris, and chaplain to the Fort de l'Est, Paris, musicologist and author of numerous liturgical studies including *Principes d'une véritable restauration du chant grégorien* (Paris, 1857) and the introduction to *Les principaux chants liturgiques conformes au chant publié par Pierre Valfray en 1669 traduits en notation musicale* (Paris, 1875). His monogram and pencil notes in French on first endleaf, recording that a nineteenth-century pen inscription there, "processional a l'usage des dominicaines du couvent de St-Louis de Pissiac" was that of the seller he purchased it from. Pen inscription on last endleaf, "milieu du 15e," most probably in same hand, accompanied by other booksellers' marks, "no 1222 14" and "Li 24990."

TEXT

ff. 1-7v, *Benedictio candelarium. In die purificationis. Oratio*, incipit, "Omnipotens sempiterne deus qui hodierna die vnigenitum tuum ..."; f. 1v, *Benedictus candelis cantor incipiat*, incipit, "Lumen ad reuelationem ..."; ... *In egressu processionis*, incipit, "Ave gratia plena ..."; incipit, "Adorna thalamum ..."; *Antiphona tertia in quatuor parte claustris*, incipit, "Responsum accepit simeon ..."; "Hodie beata virgo ..."; [concludes with a prayer], incipit, "Erudi quesumus domine plebem ...";

Procession for the Purification; begins and ends with texts without notation (the blessing of the candles and a final prayer).

ff. 7v-21, *Dominica in ramis palmarum ad benedicendum ramos*, incipit, "Omnipotens sempiterne redemptor qui de celis ad terram ..."; f. 9, *Benedictis ramis incipiat* [rubric at the bottom of the

page; f. 9v, blank], f. 10, *Antiphona*, incipit, "Pueri hebreorum ..."; ... "Collegerunt pontifices ..."; "Aue rex noster fili dei ..."; "Gloria laus et honor ..."; *Ingressu ecclesie*, incipit, "Ingrediente domino ...";

Procession for Palm Sunday.

ff. 21- 34v, *Feria quinta in cena domini in ablucione altarium primum responsorium*, incipit, "In monte oliueti ..."; "Tristus est anima ..."; ... R. "Amicus meus osculi ..."; ... R. "Unus ex vobis ..."; ... R. "Eram quasi agnum ..."; ... R. "Una hora ..."; ... R. "Seniores populi ..."; R. "Revelabant celi ..."; ... R. "Circumdederunt me ...";

Holy Thursday washing of the altars.

ff. 35-46v, *Finita ablucione pedum diaconus cantent euangelium secundum Iohannem*, incipit, "In illo tempore. Ante diem festum pasche ... Vt dilectio qua dilexisti me in ipsis sit et ego in ipsis";

Gospel reading following the Mandatum (foot washing) on Holy Thursday, John 13:1-17:26; f. 45v, ends "ut omnes unum sunt sicut in/" (John 17:21), followed by three stubs. However, the text continues correctly on f. 46, "pater in me ...," with no interruption.

ff. 46v-56v, *Oratio deuota ante communionem*, incipit, "Summe sacerdos et vere pontifex qui te obulisti ... pro nobis miseris peccatoribus ... Doce me indigna famulam tuam ..."; f. 51v, incipit, "Ecce Ihesum benigne quod cupivi iam video ..."; f. 52v, incipit, "Gratias tibi ago domine deus meus qui me peccatricem ... per pietatem defende qui tollis peccata mundi"; *Totum dicite*, incipit, "Aue verum christi corpus ... O dulcis O pie O fili marie" [f. 56, smaller leaf tipped in with the end of the prayer; blank on verso];

Prayers before the Mass (note use of feminine forms).

ff. 57-67, [Two lines mostly scraped away at the top of f. 57] *Feria quinta in cena domini dicta oratione Actiones nostras ... statim a cantore incipitur antiphona*, incipit, "Dominus ihesus postquam cenauit ...," V. Deus miseratur ..., Ant., "Postquam surrexit ..., V., Audite hec ..., Ant., Si ego dominus ...," V., Exemplum enim ..., Ant. Si ego vocatis ..., V., Dixit ihesus discipulis ..., Ant., Vos vocatis me ..., Ant., Mandatum novum ..., V., Beati immaculati ..., Ant., Mandatum ..., Ant., "In hoc cognoscent ..., V., Pacem meam ..., Ant. In diebus illis ..., V., Maria optima .., Ant., In diebus illis ..., Ant., Maria ergo vivit ..., V. Dimissa sunt ..., Ant., Maria ..., Ant., Domine tu michi ..., V., Domine non tantum ..., Ant., Domine ligamus ..., V., Ex hoc mandatum ..., Ant., Ubi est caritas ..., V., Congregavit nos ..., V., Ecce quam .., Ant., Congregavit ..., Ant., Manent in nobis ..., V., Nunc autem manent ...,"; *Finita abluciones ... orationem*, incipit, "Adesto domine nostre officio ...";

Holy Thursday Mandatum, or foot-washing; the text here agrees, with only very small discrepancies, with the text of the Dominican Processional, Huglo, 1999, tableau vii, p. *52.

ff. 67-70v, *Feria sexta in die parasceves sacerdotes*, incipit, "Popule meus ..., *Diaconi*, incipit, "Agyos otheos ...," *Chorus*, incipit, "Leyson ymas ...";

Adoration of the Cross on Good Friday (parts marked for the priest, deacons and chorus).

ff. 70v-74, *In die pasche et duobus diebus sequentibus ad processionem R.*, incipit, "Christus resurgens ...";

Procession for Easter and the two following days.

ff. 74-79, *In die ascentionis*, R., incipit, "Viri galilei ..., V. Cumque intuerentur ..., R., Omnis pulchritudo ..., R. Non conturbentur ...," *Post hunc R. qui facit officium incipiat*, incipit, "O rex glorie ...";

Procession for the Ascension.

ff. 79-80v, *In sacratissimo sacramento*, R., incipit, "Respexit helyas ad caput suum ...";

Procession for Corpus Christi.

ff. 81v-82v, *De beato dominico secundum responsorium in ordine processionis*, R., incipit, "Granum excussum ...";

Procession for the feast of St. Dominic.

ff. 82v-87, *In festo assumptionis beate virginis*, R., incipit, "Felix namque ...";

Procession for the Assumption.

ff. 87v-90v, *In receptione legatorum responsorium*, incipit, "Ciues apostolorum ...";

Procession for the reception of legates.

ff. 90v-91v, *In receptione secularium principum*, R., incipit, "Tua est potencia ...";

Procession for the reception of a secular prince.

ff. 92-96, [Rubric lacking], incipit, "Panis oblatus celitus in altari proponitur ...";

Procession for the feast of Corpus Christi; this is the early Office for the feast, composed in 1318 by Hervé de Nédellec.

ff. 96v-100v, *In festo beati Iohannis baptiste*, incipit, "Hic precursor directus ...";

Procession for the feast of St. John the Baptist.

ff. 100v-103v, *In festo beati dominici patris nostri*, incipit, "Panis oblatus celitus fratrum supplet in opiam ...";

Procession for the feast of St. Dominic.

ff. 103v-107v, *De beato ludovico in processione*, incipit, "Felix regnum cuius rex ...";

Procession for the feast of St. Louis.

ff. 107v-111v, *In festo natiuitatis beate uirginis*, incipit, "Natiuitatis tua dei genitrix uirgo ...";

Procession for the Nativity of the Virgin.

ff. 111v-113, *Dum religiosa profitetur incipit sequens R.*, incipit, "Amo cristum in cuius thalamum introivi ...";

Chants accompanying the profession of a religious (that is when a nun was received into the convent).

ff. 113-114, *Dum ingreditur aliqua religionem fimitur capitulo canitur sequens hymnus*, incipit, "Veni creator spiritus mentes tuorum ...";

Hymn sung when someone enters religious life; first strophe only notated.

ff. 114-123v, *Ordo altarium abluendorum in cena dominum in ecclesiam beati ludouici de pissiaco ad maius altare de beato ludouice ipsius ecclesie patrono antiphona*, incipit, "Ludouicus deus regnantium ...; *De sancta trinitate ...*, *De assumptione beate marie ...*, *De sanctis augustino et thoma de aquino ...*, *De sanctis mauro et anthonio ...*, *Ad altare beati martini ...*; *De sancto stephano ...*, *De angelis ...*, *De sancto dyonisio ...*, *De apostolis petro et paulo ...*, *De sancto blasio ...*, *De sancti lupi et eligio episcoporum ...*, *De sanctis dominico et petro matire ...*, *De annunciatione dominica ...*, *De beato iohanne baptista ...*, ending, ... V. Fuit homo missus a deo cui//"

The washing (or cleansing) of the altars on Maundy Thursday for the church of St. Louis in Poissy, "before the main altar of St. Louis, the patron of this church"; fourteen of the twenty-one altars of the abbey (as recorded by Moreau-Rendu, 1968, p. 56) are included; the text now ends abruptly.

This is a charming example of a Poissy Processional. Books of Hours from the abbey are extremely uncommon, and it is clear that the nuns of Poissy used Processionals as their main personal devotional book, guiding them through the liturgical processions and offices they collectively sung in the nun's choir in the central nave of the church there. Many of the surviving Poissy processionals have been well studied and recorded by scholars, but new examples, such as the present manuscript, continue to come to light. In her studies of Poissy Processionals from the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, J. Naughton (1998 and 1999/2000) identified 27 processionals; M. Huglo's catalogue of Processionals (1999 and 2004) added four additional manuscripts. Huglo knew of eighty manuscripts from Poissy, with the thirty-one Processionals making up the largest group. Two others have recently been catalogued here as TM 524 (c. 1330-1340) and TM 636 (c. 1500), and another of c. 1510 was sold by Christies, 19 November 2003, lot 27, now Reed College Library, M2149 .C38 1510* (full digitisation, Online Resources).

The Poissy group merits a new study as the known manuscripts continue to grow, especially since each Processional is quite distinct one from another. The present manuscript with its many unique features would figure in such a study.

The royal abbey of Poissy was founded by Philip IV in 1304 in honor of his grandfather, St. Louis, King of France on the Seine outside of Paris. It was a prestigious house, restricted by its foundation charter to women of noble blood, and it maintained close relationships to the royal family. Numerous manuscripts associated with the monastery survive, dating from the fourteenth through the sixteenth century, sometimes illuminated. Many of these were small, portable Processionals, appropriate for the use of a particular nun, and they would have accompanied each nun in the liturgical processions central to monastic life at Poissy. As

Naughton has observed, Books of Hours from Poissy are uncommon. Thus in many cases the small Processionals from the Abbey seem to have been the functional equivalent of Books of Hours for the nuns: personal books that included not only the texts necessary for liturgical Processions, but also at times the Rites associated with death and burial, and texts for personal devotion and the Mass.

They are almost all in the small and portable format of the present manuscript, and were clearly made for use by individual members of the community. The present manuscript is in the older and unillustrated format seen in the earliest surviving examples, in which there is a focus on functional liturgical worship, rather than illustrations or large amounts of decoration. These early books were, as Naughton states, for the "daily duties to be performed in the choir, namely to sing correctly, loudly and clearly the Dominican liturgy" (Naughton, 1998, p. 89).

However, this manuscript is important not only as a record of the day-to-day services at Poissy in the fifteenth century, but also as important, and rare, tangible evidence of the interaction of women with the written word, and perhaps also the production of books by women. Many of the later manuscripts of Poissy were most probably produced as deluxe commissions in the workshops of Paris, but the simpler volumes such as the present example may well have been written within the community itself, perhaps even by the nuns who were to use them.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

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

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

General Introduction to liturgical processions (New Catholic Encyclopedia, "Processions")

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12446b>

Joan Naughton. "The Poissy Antiphony in its Royal Monastic Milieu," *La Trobe Library Journal* 51 and 52 (1993)

<http://nishi.slv.vic.gov.au/latrobejournal/issue/latrobe-51-52/t1-g-t6.html>

The Reed Library's digitisation of their Poissy Processional

<http://cdm.reed.edu/cdm4/browse.php?CISOROOT=%2Fpoissy&CISOSTART=1,21&CISOSORT=subject%7Cf>

TM 649