

**Benedictional [Blessing of the Baptismal Font] (Use of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris)  
In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
France, Paris, c. 1500**

10 ff., complete (collation: i1 (bifolium composed of upper pastedown and first leaf), i18, i1 (bifolium composed of lower pastedown and last leaf)), written in a gothic liturgical bookhand (with addition in later italic scripts), parchment ruled in light red ink (text justification: 290 x 215 mm), prickings still visible, four-line musical staves traced in red, square musical notation, rubrics in bright red, paragraph marks and line-fillers in liquid gold on blue or green grounds, initials or cross symbols in liquid gold on blue and dark red grounds, 2 large opening initials in blue with white tracery on gold grounds, with infill of flowers (2-line high and one stave and text line high). Bound in contemporary early 16<sup>th</sup>-century light brown calf over pasteboard, covers blind-stamped with a double frame traced with multiple filets, central saltire motif, brass cornerpieces and central fixtures, remnants of clasps and ties (now wanting) (binding worn, upper board detached, small sections of the liquid gold grounds of initial "P" on f. 2 have been cut out, leaving two holes in the parchment, else in good condition). Dimensions 390 x 280 mm.

The present manuscript remains a rare example of a Benedictional commissioned by a canon of the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, Jehan Fournier (canon 1468), who personalized the liturgical book with a written record of a foundation made for the feast of the Annunciation. The foundation extends to after the death of the owner. The core of the manuscript contains the Blessing of the Baptismal Font, with the liturgical music associated with the famous boys' choir of the chapel. Any document directly tied to the Sainte-Chapelle is of great historic, liturgical and musical interest.

## PROVENANCE

1. Liturgical manuscript made for use in the Sainte-Chapelle of Paris as indicated in the preliminary account of the foundation made by Jehan Fournier (ff. 1-1v), and as per the inscription on the upper pastedown: "Pro sacrosancta capella regalis palatii parisiensis" [For use in the Holy Saint Chapel of Paris].

This manuscript and liturgical prescriptions were ordered by Jean Fournier, canon of the Sainte-Chapelle as per the textual indications found on f. 1: "[F]undatio domini Iohannis Fournier canonici sacro sancta capelle regalis palatii parisiensis facta per dictum Fournier in dicta capella..." [Foundation of Jean Fournier, canon of the holy royal chapel of the Palace in Paris...].

Jehan Fournier was a canon of the Sainte-Chapelle as listed by Morand (1790) in his pioneering study of the Sainte-Chapelle: "Jehan Fournier, reçu chanoine le 15 de janvier de l'an 1468 [...] Par son testament du 10 juillet 1503, il se qualifie Chanoine de l'Eglise de Paris et chapelain de de la chapelle Sainte-Anne... Il donna tous ses biens à la Sainte-Chapelle" (Sauveur-Jérôme Morand, 1790, p. 279 ; *nota bene*, Morand was the last historiographer of the Sainte-Chapelle before the Revolution and was himself, like Jehan Fournier, a former canon of the Sainte-Chapelle).

2. There is a dated seventeenth century ownership inscription on f. 10 verso: "Hugues (?) Mehul...1614" (?).
3. Number "999 k" in ink in the upper lefthand corner of upper pastedown.
4. European Continental Collection.

## TEXT

ff. 1-1v, Foundation of masses for the feast of the Annunciation (vigil, feast-day, day-after) and for the funerary mass of Jean Fournier, canon of the Sainte-Chapelle, in Paris, incipit, "[F]undatio domini Iohannis Fournier canonici sacro sancta capelle regalis palatii parisiensis facta per dictum Fournier in dicta capella videlicet responsorium Gaude Maria pro dicta fundatione cantabitur hora pulsationis...in vigilia annunciationis dominice quod responsorium incipietur et reincipietur ante altare a quatuor pueris chori gentibus flexis..."; "Et post mortem dicti Fournier descendent cum cruce et cereis presbiter, diaconus et subdiaconus totumque collegium in inferiori capella...Et pro huiusmodi fundatione facienda dictus dominus Iohannes Fournier tradidit realiter et manualiter thesaurio et canonicis dicte sacro sancte capelle sommam quatuor centum et quadraginta libri turonensi"; explicit (rubric), "[...] Postea hauriat sacerdos de aqua benedicta fontis et ponat in alio vase et dividat et aspergat"; Fournier endowed his foundation and paid 480 livres tournois to the treasurer and other canons of the Sainte-Chapelle.

ff. 2-10, *Benedictio fontis* [Blessing of Baptismal Water or Baptismal Font], rubric, *Sequitur benedictio fontis ab episcopo vel sacerdote submissa voce*; incipit, "Omnipotens sempiterne deus adesto magne pietatis tu misteriis adesto sacramentis..."; following rubrics, *Hic faciat sacerdos crucem in aqua*, *Hic proiciat aquam extra fonts in modum crucis*, *Hic mutet vocem et dicat anhelendo vel aspirando in modum crucis*, *Hic ponat ter cereum in aquam et dicat ter "Descendat in hanc" usque "Totamque huius aque..."*; *Hic retrahatur cereus de aqua et de cerei cera parumper in aquam deguttetur in modum crucis dicendo...*; *Postea hauriat sacerdos de aqua benedicta fontis et ponat in alio vase et dividat et aspergat* ;

f. 10, Later additions, liturgical prescriptions relative to the sacrament of baptism: "Sed prius sacerdos in parrochiis, ponat oleum et chrisma in modum crucis..."; ending, "Coniunctio chrismatis sanctificationis et olei unctionis et aque baptismatis fiat. In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti ; Amen" ;

f. 10v, blank.

This manuscript is a (partial) *Benedictional*, a book of ceremonial blessings ensured by a bishop or priest. A complete and proper *Benedictional* contains a selection of blessings usually said by the bishop during Mass in particular services. It is often appended to another liturgical book, such as a *Pontifical*, a *Sacramentary* or a *Missal*. In the present case, the codex here described contains only the prayers for the blessing of the baptismal font and water, associated with the accompanying liturgical music.

The Sainte-Chapelle [Holy Chapel] remains one of the jewels of Parisian religious architecture (although considerably modified in the nineteenth century). It is a royal Gothic palatine chapel, built adjacent to the Palais de la Cité, where Philip Augustus had installed in the Chancellerie, the Parlement, the Chambre des Comptes and the Trésor des chartes (royal library and archives). Begun sometime after 1239 (in 1241?) and consecrated on 26 April 1248, the Sainte-Chapelle is considered one of the highest achievements of Gothic architecture. Its erection was

commissioned by King Louis IX of France to house his collection of Passion relics, including the Holy Crown of Thorns, one of the most important relic in medieval Christendom. As well as serving as a place of worship, the Sainte-Chapelle played an important role in the political and cultural ambitions of Louis IX and his successors, fitting in a long tradition of prestigious palace chapels (*capellae regis*).

In addition to the actual building, the appellation "Sainte-Chapelle" was also the name for the "chapelle," that is the men of the clerical and musical institution which attended the building in Paris. The establishment of the Sainte-Chapelle royale consisted of a treasurer, canons, and college – the members of which may have overlapped with the choir and instrumentalists. The musical establishment was dissolved in 1803. The distinction between the men and the building come from the original meaning of "capella" to mean "choral establishment." There were Masters of the Sainte-Chapelle who was responsible for music for services and the care of the "enfants de la chapelle" (the boys choir). Saint Louis had instituted a clergy to supervise the cult of the relics: this clergy was made up of chosen dignitaries known as "maitres chapelains" and chaplains (known as canons), sub-chaplains and clerics. Under the authority of the treasurer and precentor, the canons and chaplains took an oath to keep residence and to faithfully keep the relics and to respect the laws of the Sainte-Chapelle.

The Sainte-Chapelle housed an important and sacred Treasury. The objects kept in the Treasury began to be assembled by King Louis IX. In addition to the relics, the Treasury also preserved ivories, alterpieces, rich liturgical vestments, and of course books: treasure bindings and manuscripts, some liturgical, others given to the Sainte-Chapelle and not necessarily used for service and worship (see Exhibition. Paris, Musée du Louvre. 2001, "Les manuscrits répertoriés dans les inventaires du trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle, " pp. 144-146). Manuscripts for specific and confirmed use in the Sainte-Chapelle are not always easily identifiable or at least with certainty. There were up to 119 codices in the Treasury as listed in the inventory of 1480. Then, for an inexplicable reason the number drops and an inventory of 1573 only lists 9 codices in the Treasury (Laffitte, 2001, p. 53). Amongst the accepted manuscripts of the later fifteenth century and early sixteenth century that are associated with the Sainte-Chapelle, one can cite Paris, BnF, MS lat. 8890, Missal of the Sainte-Chapelle (after 1503; Exhibition. Paris, Musée du Louvre. 2001, no. 71); Paris, BnF, MS lat. 18013, Ritual for the deceased (Exhibition. Paris, Musée du Louvre. 2001, no. 64); Paris, BnF, MS lat. 17741, Obituary of the Sainte-Chapelle (Exhibition. Paris, Musée du Louvre. 2001, no. 62); Paris, Bibl. Mazarine, MS 3339, Obituary of the Sainte-Chapelle (mid 15<sup>th</sup> c., with additions until 1695; might one find an entry for Jehan Fournier, our canon? Exhibition. Paris, Musée du Louvre. 2001, no. 63); Paris, Bibl. de l'Arsenal, MS 114, Ordinary of the Sainte-Chapelle (Exhibition. Paris, Musée du Louvre. 2001, no. 66). The manuscripts copied in the sixteenth century for use in the Sainte-Chapelle appear to be less common or at least less studied.

It seems quite certain that although the present portion of a Benedictional was likely copied for or at least commissioned by Jehan Fournier, canon of the Sainte-Chapelle, it probably remained in his private library or passed on to a cantor. We know from Morand (1790) that Fournier bequeathed his belongings to the Sainte-Chapelle and this manuscript probably integrated the collection of books housed in the Sainte-Chapelle. But was it housed at one stage or another in the Treasury? Closer scrutiny of the extant inventories might yield some answers. The present manuscript remains a rare example of a book commissioned by a canon of the Sainte-Chapelle, who personalized a liturgical book with a written record of a foundation made for the feast of the Annunciation and to commemorate the death of the endower. Any document directly tied to the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris is of great historic, liturgical and musical interest.

## LITERATURE

[Exhibition. Paris, Musée du Louvre. 2001]. *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle*, Paris, Musée du Louvre, 31 mai-27 août 2001, catalogue ed. Jannic Durand and Marie-Pierre Laffitte], Paris, Réunion des musées nationaux, 2001.

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Léniaud, J.-M. and F. Perrot. *The Sainte Chapelle*, Paris, 2007.

Morand, S.-J. *Histoire de la Sainte Chapelle royale du Palais*, Paris, 1790.

Palazzo, E., "La liturgie de la Sainte-Chapelle: un modèle pour les chapelles royales françaises?" *La Sainte-Chapelle de Paris: Royaume de France ou Jérusalem céleste?*, ed. Christine Hediger, Turnhout, 2007, pp 101-111.

Vidier, A. *Notes et documents sur le personnel, les biens et l'administration de la Sainte-Chapelle du XIIIe au XVe siècle*, Nogent-le-Rotrou, Impr. de Daupeley-Gouverneur, 1902.

Vidier, A. *Le trésor de la Sainte-Chapelle : inventaires et documents*, Paris and Nogent-le-Rotrou, Impr. de Daupeley-Gouverneur, 1911 [Excerpts from "Mémoires de la Société de l'histoire de Paris et de l'Ile de France", tome XXXIV-XXXVII, 1907-1910].

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Mapping Gothic France – Paris, Sainte-Chapelle:

<http://mappinggothic.org/building/1168>

There are a number of manuscripts related to the Sainte-Chapelle. The better known ones are of course the earlier manuscripts. See however the Missal for the Sainte-Chapelle (Paris; BnF, lat. 8890), closer in date (c. 1500) to this manuscript containing the Blessing of the Baptismal water. <http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b9066101k.r=latin+8890.langFR>

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