

Psalter, with Later Additions Converting it into a Liturgical Psalter, with Hymns and Other Texts for the Divine Office

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Southern Netherlands (Bruges?), c. 1430-1450; Northern France, c. 1460-1500

i (paper) + ii (parchment) + 171 + iii (parchment) + i (paper) folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, as follows: i-ii (parchment flyleaves), iii-xii (ten parchment leaves with later texts), 1-161, 162-164 (parchment flyleaves), 165 (paper flyleaf), complete (collation i^s [ff. v-xii] ii-ix^s x¹⁰ [3, f. 67, single, 8, following f. 71, cancelled with no loss of text] xi-xiv^s xv⁶ [ff. 106-111] xvi-xxi^s xxii²), catchwords, many trimmed, lower middle margin, no signatures, copied in two stages, (i), ruled in red ink with the top and bottom rules full across and with full-length vertical bounding lines (justification 112-110 x 70-68 mm.), written below the top line in a formal gothic bookhand in twenty-two long lines by two scribes, the second beginning on f. 68, 1- to 2-line alternately red or blue initials, ONE ILLUMINATED INITIAL AND BORDER, white-patterned blue initial infilled with rinceaux with blue and orange leaves on gold on a notched gold ground extending into an a pink and gold bar border in the inner margin and panel borders in the top and bottom with flowers and acanthus leaves set in a trellis on spiraling black ink sprays with numerous hairlines and small gold balls; (ii), additions in later hands, ff. iii verso-xii verso, f. 67v, ff. 157v (beginning mid page)-161, and in the margins (justification c. 132-110 x 90-68 mm.), written in a cursive gothic bookhand by at least two hands in twenty-six to twenty-two long lines, 1- to 3-line red initials, seven 4- to 5-line line parted red and blue initials, ff. 22v, 35v, 48, 61v, 79, 97, 112, added in spaces originally left blank; outer and lower margin (with border) of f. 1 worn, ff. 22, 34, 35, with short slits at the fore-edge extending into text, which is still legible, lower margin f. 65 torn, most of f. 161 missing, some stains, thumbing, and slight cockling, overall in good condition. Bound in mottled brown 18th-century leather over pasteboard, spine with five raised bands, with the title, "Psalterium" and the shelfmark "188" in gilt, re-backed and repaired in Oxford, November, 1936 (see note f. 165), in very good condition. Dimensions 170 x 112 mm.

A Psalter copied before the middle of the fifteenth century became a liturgical Psalter used for the services of the Divine Office by the end of the century when texts were carefully added, probably in Northern France. A century later, the manuscript was in England, where it was still in active use. Catholic manuscripts used in post-Reformation England (called "recusant") are always of interest. This is a dynamic manuscript, crowded with evidence of its transformation by generations of users, making it particularly suited for use today in the modern classroom.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied and illuminated in the second quarter of the fifteenth century in the Southern Netherlands, possibly in Bruges, judging from the style of the initial and border on f. 1; the scribes left spaces for initials within the Psalter, but they were never completed at this point in the manuscript's life.
2. Transformed in the second half of the fifteenth century, c. 1460-1500, by owners in Northern France, into a Psalter for liturgical use with the addition of numerous texts in the margins and on leaves at the beginning and end of the volume; initials were added within the Psalter marking readings for Matins according to secular use, evidence that the volume at this time was used a member of the secular clergy, a Franciscan or Dominican, or perhaps an Augustinian Canon. F. iii, copied in a cursive Gothic bookhand, is almost certainly a recycled document, and was once the front pastedown (on f. iii verso the beginning of the added text is copied over erased text).

3. By the later part of the sixteenth century our manuscript appears to have been brought to England, "Richard Harpincis?" entered his name on f. ii verso in red ink; the psalms are numbered throughout, sometimes in red ink, likely at this time. Prayers were added on the f. i, probably slightly later. The question of how this Psalter and the accompanying texts for the (Catholic) Divine Office were used in England is an interesting one.
4. In pencil (partially erased), "Robert Benson," 18th-century(?)," ff. 163v and 164v; Robert may have added the biblical citation in English on f. ii; there is a note that was vigorously expunged (and un-read by us) on f. 164.
5. Contents described on f. 165 in ink in the twentieth century, noting that the binding was repaired in 1936; this same hand added a title and brief note on the front flyleaf f. i. On f. 165 the writer is identified in pencil as D. Justin McCann. Father Justin McCann described other manuscripts owned by the Abbey in the *Ampleforth Journal* 51 (1946), pp. 112-116.
6. Ampleforth Abbey, with their ink stamp front flyleaf f. i, and shelfmark label 'M/188/S.S,' inside front cover; above which is written "M. S. 60a"; cataloguing card laid in (M.S. 188 (60a)). Described while at Ampelforth in Ker, 1977, vol. 1, pp. 32-22. Ampleforth Abbey is a community of English Benedictine monks in North Yorkshire, which was founded in 1802, although they trace their history back to the last monk of Westminster Abbey, who was exiled to France in 1607 and established a monastic community there.

TEXT

(i) In the fifteenth century the manuscript included:

ff. 1-143, Psalms 1-150 in biblical order; initials mark the psalms for each day of the week said at Matins (psalms 1, 26, 38, 52, 68, 80, 97), and Sundays at Vespers (psalm 109).

Psalm 72:1-10 is copied on f. 67 by the first scribe, who left f. 67v blank (now used for a later text, see below); the second scribe continued psalm 72, with no break in the text on f. 68. On ff. 12v-14, Psalm 17 is divided into two sections, with verses 1-25 on ff. 12v-14; and verses 26-51, on ff. 14v-15. This appears to be a simple error on the part of the scribe, although it certainly disturbed the later owner who was numbering the psalms (see below) (the psalms are numbered differently according different textual traditions, but this discrepancy is not one found in other manuscripts. Therefore, it was almost certainly a scribal error). Psalm 96 is followed by the canticle, "Domini audivi," on f. 94 (as noted by the later owner, see below; the only canticle copied within the psalms).

Tabs made by cutting a section of the outer margin, and then knotting the parchment, at psalm 41 (f. 38v), f. 67 (added texts), and psalm 90 (f. 87) (with margin cut away but lacking a knot).

ff. 143-157v, "Confitebor tibi" [Isaiah 12]; "Ego dixi" [Isaiah 38:10]; "Exultavit cor meum" [1 Kings 2:1]; "Cantemus domino" [Exodus 15:1]; "Domine audivi" [Habakkuk 3]; and "Audite celi" [Deut. 32:1]; "Te deum"; "Benedicite omnia" [Daniel 3:57]; Benedictus dominus" [Luke 1:68]; "Magnificat" [Luke 1:46]; "Nunc dimittis" [Luke 2:29]; "Quicumque vult";

Gallican Canticles concluding with the Creed (Mearns, 1914, pp. 80-81).

(ii). Texts for the Divine Office added on ten leaves at the beginning, four leaves at the end, and on one, f. 67, left blank by the original scribe, with antiphons and other texts also carefully added in the margins of the manuscript, with cross references to another volume for texts not included in full here; rubrics indicating the occasions the Psalms were read agree with secular use, and clearly rule out use in a monastic order:

ff. iii verso- xii verso, Prayers of the Litany; [f. iv], *Benedictiones lectionum*; [f. v], twenty-nine hymns for Lauds of the Temporale from Advent to Pentecost;

ff. 157v-161, Prayer to Mary; [f. 158], eight hymns for the Common of Saints; [f. 159v], Antiphons for the days of the week; [f. 160v], *Sequuntur preces et oraciones xxv psalmorum tempore xl^{mi}*, ...//; [the bottom two-thirds of f. 161 has been excised, so this text ends imperfectly; f. 161v, appears to have been blank, and may have once been a pastedown].

(iii). The Psalms were numbered in Arabic numerals by a later owner, perhaps the sixteenth-century owner who added his name on f. ii verso in red ink. The numbering was not simply rote. It begins in a straightforward fashion until ff. 12v-15v, when the manuscript (probably due to a simple error on the part of the scribe, see above), copies psalm 17 as two psalms (with the second psalm beginning at psalm 17:26). The first section of this psalm is numbered 17 and 18, as is the second, thereafter many of the psalms are given dual numbers (or are numbered with slightly different numbers than those of the Vulgate). There are indeed different systems in numbering the psalms, and it is interesting to speculate whether these different systems influenced this owner, or whether he was simply counting the psalms in this manuscript and was confused by the scribal error. He was astute enough, however, to recognize that the canticle on f. 94 was not part of the psalms ("Non est in Textu"); he also commented on the texts in the canticles following the psalms.

The psalms have always played an important role in both personal and liturgical prayer in the Christian tradition. This manuscript originally included the text of the 150 psalms, copied in biblical order, followed by the Canticles (texts from different parts of the Bible that were also read and chanted as prayers). The original owner could have been a lay person reading the psalms for private prayer. The weekly recital of the 150 psalms was also the heart of the Divine Office, the daily cycle of liturgical prayers sung in by the professed religious (monks and nuns, as well as members of other religious orders and the secular clergy). The extensive liturgical texts added in the margins of this Psalter, and in blank pages at the beginning and end, transformed the manuscript into a liturgical volume for use in the Divine Office. Details of the liturgy here identify the text as "secular" use, that is used by member of the secular clergy including priests, as well as by religious orders including the Franciscans, Dominicans, and Augustinian canons, but not by monks and nuns (the Office was observed slightly differently in Benedictine monasteries and in other monasteries following in this tradition).

The adventures of this manuscript continued, since in the next century it was certainly in England (where its owner tried to number the psalms and made comments on the text). Perhaps it was then used for personal spiritual reading, either by a Protestant owner, or by a

recusant Catholic owner (there is no direct evidence within the manuscript to determine which is true).

LITERATURE

Harper, John. *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy from the Tenth to the Eighteenth Century*, Oxford, 1991.

Ker, N. R. *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, vol. 1, Oxford, 1977.

Mearns, James. *The Canticles of the Christian Church, Eastern and Western, in Early and Medieval Times*, Cambridge, 1914.

Solopova, Elizabeth. "The Liturgical Psalter in Medieval Europe," in *Jewish and Christian Approaches to the Psalms: Conflict and Convergence*, ed. Susan Gillingham, Oxford, 2013, pp. 89-104.

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Van Deusen, Nancy, ed. *The Place of the Psalms in the Intellectual Culture of the Middle Ages*, Albany, 1999.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Ampleforth Abbey Website

<https://www.ampleforth.org.uk/abbey/>

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

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

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