

# LES ENLUMINURES

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## Prayer Book

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
Eastern France (Alsace, Colmar), c. 1475-1500

*i* (paper) + *i* (parchment) + 147 + *vi* (parchment) + *i* (paper) folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, 1-147, complete (collation *i*<sup>6</sup> *ii*<sup>10</sup> *iii*<sup>6</sup> *iv*<sup>10</sup> *v*<sup>6</sup> *vi-viii*<sup>10</sup> *ix*<sup>6</sup> *x*<sup>14</sup> *xi*<sup>6</sup> *xii*<sup>10</sup> *xiii*<sup>6</sup> *xiv*<sup>10</sup> *xv*<sup>6</sup> *xvi*<sup>10</sup> *xvii*<sup>6</sup> *xviii*<sup>8</sup> [the last three leaves of this quire are unfoliated endleaves]), no catchwords or signatures, frame ruled with double lines in pink ink, lines ruled in faint brown ink (the six blank end leaves on parchment are frame ruled, but not ruled for lines) (justification 97 x 65 mm.), written in dark brown ink in gothic bookhand (textualis) in single column on 22-23 lines, rubrics in red, capitals and punctuation touched in red, 1- to 5-line initials alternating in red or blue throughout, several 5- to 6-line puzzle initials and monochrome (red or blue) initials with penwork in pale rose-violet, one 5-line initial in liquid gold infilled in blue and decorated with penwork in pale red (f. 120), three 7- to 8-line initials in liquid gold on painted grounds with illusionistic frames suggesting perspective (ff. 1, 35, 106), TWO MINIATURES: an angel holding the Shroud with the Holy Face (65 x 48 mm., pasted on f. 145v) and a 11-line miniature of the Crucifixion against a liquid gold ground and within illusionistic frames (46 x 32 mm., f. 129), a small hole in the upper inner margin through the first 19 leaves, minor stains and signs of wear, otherwise in overall good condition. Bound in the nineteenth century in dark brown calf, spine blind-tooled with fillets and geometric shapes, leather rubbed and worn, hinges very worn but boards intact, in overall good condition. Dimensions 122 x 85 mm.

Noteworthy for its careful script and illuminated miniatures and initials, this securely localized Prayer Book contains a rich collection of texts that illustrate personal devotion at the end of the Middle Ages, and evidence of active use for a century. It is equally interesting for what is not here. The miniature of the Holy Face of Jesus is an example of miniature on a separate sheet of parchment, pasted into the manuscripts; blanks throughout suggest the volume was designed to allow for extensive customization by its owners, a well-documented practice in late medieval devotional books. This is an interesting example where the spaces have remained empty.

## PROVENANCE

1. The general style of the script, initials and miniatures suggests that the manuscript was made in a Germanic region in the fourth quarter of the fifteenth century. A closer study of the painting allows localizing the manuscript more precisely: the initials and miniatures may have been painted by the same artist who decorated a manuscript made for the Augustinians of Colmar in Alsace, Bibliothèque municipale de Colmar, MS 284 (see below).

This localization is also supported by the text. St. Otilia, or Odile, the patron saint of Alsace, is included in the litanies. Also St. Gall, who is included in the litanies, was allegedly born and raised in Alsace. The origin of some of the prayers in this collection further supports localizing the book in Alsace (see below).

Alsace is a Germanic region on the west bank of the upper Rhine that was part of the Holy Roman Empire until the seventeenth century when it became French territory.

The rubric of the prayer on f. 71 suggests that the original owner had a brother who was known by two names, Amand and Heinrich, one his spiritual name and the other his common name.

2. In the eighteenth or nineteenth century the number "18/1" was copied in brown ink on the first flyleaf.

## TEXT

ff. 1-13v, Penitential prayers, beginning with the *Confiteor*, to be said when rising from bed, *Quando surgis de lecto, dic confessionem generalem sic orando*, incipit, "Confiteor omnipotenti deo, omnia peccata mea ...," followed by prayers to angels and saints Michael (f. 5-), Andrew (f. 6-), Peter (f. 6v-), John the Evangelist (f. 7-), Christopher (f. 7v-), Sebastian (f. 9v-), the Three Kings (f. 10-), Cosmas and Damian (f. 10v-), Anne (f. 11-), All Saints (f. 13r-v); [f. 14rv, blank];

ff. 15-21v, Seven Penitential Psalms, followed by the prayer "Libera me domine de omni peccato pie cogitato ...";

ff. 21v-34, Litanies, followed by prayers. The litanies include St. Kilian of Wurzburg among the martyrs, St. Gall among the monastic saints, and St. Odile placed immediately after St. Mary Magdalen and St. Agatha among the virgin saints; [f. 34v, blank];

ff. 35-70, Prayers to be said on different days of the week: ff. 35-42, prayers on Sunday to the Holy Trinity; f. 42v, blank; ff. 43-48, prayers on Monday to the angels; f. 48v, blank; ff. 49-50v, prayers on Tuesday to Holy Patriarchs and Prophets; f. 51r-v, blank; ff. 52-56v, prayers on Wednesday to apostles; f. 57r-v, blank; ff. 58-61v, prayers on Thursday to martyrs (the Three Kings, saints Cosmas and Damian, Sebastian, and all martyrs); f. 62rv, blank; ff. 63-66v, prayers on Friday to confessors (Saints Jerome, Dominic, Francis, Anthony, Roch); f. 67rv, blank; ff. 68-70, prayers on Saturday to the Virgin Mary (*Ave stella matutina*), Saints Catherine, Barbara and all virgin saints; [f. 70v, blank];

ff. 71-79v, Prayers to the Blessed Sacrament, the first of which is dedicated to a brother named both Amand or Heinrich, *Primo. Oratio devoti fratris Amandi, heinrici susque apellitati*, incipit, "Ave sanctissimum corpus Dominum ...," followed by eleven further prayers to the Blessed Sacrament to be said at different moments when celebrating the Holy Communion;

ff. 80-86, Prayers to be said before and after Holy Communion; [f. 86v, blank];

ff. 87-94, Prayers to the Virgin, incipit, "Ad sanctitatis tue pedes pulcherissima virgo Maria..."; "Domina mea sancta Maria perpetua virgo virginum, mater summe benignitatis et misericordie..."; "Ave regina celorum, mater regis angelorum..."; [f. 94v, blank];

ff. 95-98, Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary;

ff. 98-105, Prayers to the Virgin, incipit, "O intemerata ..."; "Commendo tibi domina clementissima virgo Maria..."; "Offero tibi mater misericordie, hec quinque verba gaudii, vite et honore..."; "O sanctissima et gloriosissima et piissima Dei genitrix virgo Maria..."; "O virgo

virginum, et tu pia Domina sancta Maria, fac mecum..."; *Regina caeli*; the Angelus; [f. 105v, blank];

ff. 106-108v, Hours of the Compassion of the Virgin, *Cursus de Compassione beate Marie virginis. Ad Matutinas*, incipit, "Domine labia mea aperies ...";

ff. 108v-113, Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, incipit, "Ave dulcis mater Christi, Que dolebas corde tristi...", followed by other prayers to the Virgin, "O Maria virgo virginum, conservatrix et consolatrix miserorum..."; "Memento, obsecro, dulcissima mater..."; "Interveniat pro nobis que sumus Domine Iesu Christe..."; *Obsecro te* (variation: "Obsecro te Domina mea sancta maria. Mater Domini, pietate plenissima..."); "Ave mater dei pregnaris sancta Maria virgo virginum..."; "Deprecor te beatissima Dei genitrix Maria ..."; [f. 113v, blank];

ff. 114-116, Seven Joys of the Virgin, followed by three collects and the Marian antiphon, *Alma Redemptoris Mater*;

ff. 116-119, Seven Joys of the Virgin revealed to Thomas Becket of Canterbury in a vision, followed by three prayers, "O beatissima virgo Maria..."; "Deus qui de beate Marie virginis utero..."; "Sancta Maria, Dei genitrix semper virgo beata benedicta..."; [f. 119v, blank];

ff. 120-127, Hours of the Cross, *Sequitur Cursus de Sancta cruce cum orationibus de passione Domini ad omnes horas*, incipit, "Domine labia mea aperies..."; [f. 127v, blank];

ff. 128-130v, Litany of the Passion, followed by the antiphon, "Tuam crucem adoramus Domine, tuam gloriosam recolimus passionem, miserere nostri qui passus es pro nobis" (Hesbert nr. 5227), and four short prayers to the Holy Cross;

ff. 131-137, Five Psalms announcing the Passion of Christ, followed by prayers; [f. 137v, blank];

ff. 138-145, Thirteen prayers for the dead, beginning "Ave te anime omnium fidelium...";

f. 145v, originally only included a miniature of the Holy Face of Jesus on the upper half of the leaf (see below), and in the seventeenth century, below it was copied a prayer by Martin Mylius (1542-1611), *Oratio Martini Myllii ad Faciem Christi*, incipit, "O Christi facies rutilans ut sidus Eoi Salve ...";

ff. 146-147v, Three prayers to the Holy Face of Jesus, "Domine Iesu Christe qui pulcherissima facie tua omnia aspicias..."; "Salve sancta facies nostri redemptoris..."; "Deus qui nobis signatis lumine vultus tui ...".

## ILLUSTRATION

Two miniatures:

f. 129, Crucifixion;

f. 145v, Angel holding the Shroud with the Holy Face.

Both miniatures are painted by the same artist, who enclosed his pictures within illusionistic frames suggesting the idea of panel paintings. The miniature of Veronica's veil on f. 145v was painted on a separate parchment leaf and was then cut and pasted to this space available facing the opening of the prayers to the Holy Face (on devotion to images of the Veronica's veil, see Rudy, 2017; Rudy, 2015, 183-184; Hamburger, 1998, 317-82).

A very close comparison for the painting style can be made with a contemporary fifteenth-century manuscript with the Common of Saints and Hymnary for use of the Augustinians in Colmar, south of Strasbourg in Alsace, now MS 284, Bibliothèque municipale de Colmar (see Online resources). The style of the alternating red and blue initials is very similar, as is that of the larger initials in gold within illusionistic frames painted in colors. Moreover, the figure style in the miniatures and the manner of painting the three-dimensional frames that enclose them suggest that our manuscript may have been decorated by the same person or in the circle of the artist; compare, for instance, St. Stephen on f. 13 in the Colmar manuscript.

The number of blank folios throughout the manuscript is striking. Each of these folios are ruled with a frame in red ink, as are the text pages. The blanks occur on the verso facing the beginning of almost every new section of the text, and it seems very likely that they were intended for images, either miniatures on separate parchment sheets (remember the image of the Holy Face on 145v is painted on a parchment sheet glued into the manuscript), or perhaps printed images. The practice of customizing devotional manuscripts by adding images has been extensively studied in the recent works by Kathryn Rudy (2015, 2017, 2019).

The "Ad sanctitatis tue pedes pulcherissima (typically: dulcissima) virgo Maria..." prayer (ff. 87-89v) is a long prayer found in fifteenth-century manuscripts and, from the last quarter of the fifteenth century onwards, in several printed books and manuscripts, including the *Hortulus Animae*, a prayer book in German first printed in Strasbourg in Alsace in 1498 that became very popular in the early sixteenth century (see Martin in Online resources). Even before its appearance in the *Hortulus animae* the prayer was printed in the collection of prayers compiled by Nicolas Salicetus, Cistercian abbot at Baumgarten near Strasbourg; the manual of devotional prayers was called *Antidotarius animae* and was the first of its kind to be published, in 1490 in Antwerp, in 1491 in Strasbourg and in 1494 in Hagenau (near Strasbourg) (Wilmart, 1944, pp. 126-127).

A prayer to the Holy Face by Martin Mylius (1542-1611) was added on f. 145v of our prayer book in the seventeenth century. Historian and philosopher, Martin Mylius was rector of the gymnasium in Görlitz. Among his writings are an edition of the letters of Martin Luther and a chronology of the writings of Philip Menancton (Dietze, Online Resources).

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### ONLINE RESOURCES

Bibliothèque municipale de Colmar, MS 284, fully digitized in BVMM, IRHT-CNRS

[https://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?REPRODUCTION\\_ID=1963](https://bvmm.irht.cnrs.fr/consult/consult.php?REPRODUCTION_ID=1963)

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