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Hymnal (Cistercian use?)

In Latin, manuscript on parchment and paper with musical notation

Southern Netherlands (Eastern Flanders), c. 1475-1500, 1564

i + 113 folios on parchment + 4 folios on paper, watermark unidentified due to tight binding, modern foliation in pencil at upper recto corners, no catchwords or quire signatures, complete (part 1: i-xii⁸ xiii⁶; part 2: xiv² xv⁸; part 3: xvi⁴ [singleton]; part 4: xv⁴); part 1, ff. 1-102v, ruled with 6 red ink 4-line staves per folio with square musical notation, each stave line ruled separately, each stave followed by a text line ruled in light brown ink (justification 122 x 84 mm.) and written by a single scribe in a formal Gothic hand in dark brown ink with occasional later overwriting in black ink; part 2, ff. 103-112v, with 17 long lines ruled in light brown ink (justification 115 x 85 mm.) and written by a single scribe (perhaps that of part 1) in a formal Gothic hand in dark brown ink, with a contemporary or slightly later addition on f. 112v written by another scribe in a hybrida hand; part 3, f. 113 with 25 long lines ruled in graphite (justification 130 x ±85 mm.) and written by a single scribe in a simple Gothic hand in brown ink; part 4, ff. 113v-114v blank, ff. 115-117 ruled with 5 maroon ink 4-line staves with square musical notation separated by lines of text ruled faintly in ink (justification 130 x 90 mm.), written by a single sixteenth-century scribe in a formal Gothic hand in dark brown ink; red rubrics throughout, alternating red and blue 1- and 2-line initials through most, banderole with red text and green border on f. 117, 6-line red initial with brown penwork on f. 1 and ±10-line red initial on f. 115 with foliate infilling and penwork in brown ink with green wash, some 20 original holes and defects in parchment of parts 1 and 2, once with original needlework repairs (now removed) including an extant crocheted repair (20 x 15mm) in the lower margin of f. 50, small rust and green stains on fore-edge of ff. 1-3 suggests former binding with single clasp, staining on all folios primarily from use (concentrated at lower corners), occasional chipping of ink in parts 1 and 2 but all text still legible and sometimes overwritten, f. 113 text captured in binding at gutter thus rendered illegible, prior separation of f. 1 from spine now repaired, in good overall condition. SIXTEENTH-CENTURY BINDING, c. 1564, of double-beveled wood boards covered in light brown pig leather, decorated on front and back with concentric tooled rectangle frames enclosing roll stamps, including motifs of vines and flowers (two innermost), fountains(?) and beads in profile of men with winged helmets, close-fitting caps, and a woman with hair/a snood styled over her ear (middle), and beads in profile of men with contemporary hats/helmets enclosed in wreaths ('head-in-medallion') separated by flowers and vines (outermost), five brass bosses on both front and back (upper corner near spine on back is a replacement), two brass book clasps hinging from front with decorative circles (bottom book is replacement with original catchplate), bound with three cord supports and outer chainstitching, raised on spine and laced through exterior, quires threaded through slits, intact endbands of brown and undyed linen thread, secure original recycled parchment pastedowns with faint traces of medieval script and initials, cover shows wear, scuffs and discoloration, leather cracked at corners, binding slightly tight at back, overall in very good and stable condition. Dimensions 184 x c. 140 mm.

An attractive liturgical manuscript with musical notation almost certainly made by and for nuns, with a signed and dated addition (1564) by a female scribe or owner. Its beautiful roll-stamped pigskin binding is characteristic of the style, techniques, and iconography of the mid sixteenth-century at the border region of modern-day Belgium, the Netherlands, and Germany. Based on its openwork repairs completed at the parchment-making stage, it was probably made at a convent where women were involved in the entire bookmaking process.

PROVENANCE

1. Written primarily by a single skilled scribe likely in eastern Flanders (the modern provinces of Flemish Limburg or Liège) as indicated by the script, penwork initial on f. 1, and binding. Liturgical evidence suggests that this was very likely intended for Cistercian use. There are a number of hymns included that are found almost exclusively in Cistercian sources, and the Sanctoral begins with St. Stephen (December 26), also a Cistercian characteristic.
2. Artful needlework repairs such as the one in our manuscript are found most often in manuscripts made in or commissioned by nuns, with some examples tied to double-houses or, less commonly, monasteries with close ties to convents (Sciacca, 2010, p. 84). This could place it at a number of houses (for example, the convents of Amay, Herkenrode, Hocht, Robermont, Sinnich, Solières, or Val-Benoît), as the region had many Cistercian nunneries. The repairs appear to have been made when the skin was still pliable on the stretching frame, indicating that whoever made them participated in the parchment-making process; further research into the activities and techniques of regional convents may lead to closer attribution.
3. The manuscript's last section (ff. 113-117v) is signed "V. / Loyse /1564/ Fromen / R." in a banderole at the text's end. This female scribe or, perhaps, owner, is otherwise unidentified, but the name is consistent with the eastern Flemish region: 'Loyse' (anglified as 'Louise') was common in the Low Countries, and the surname 'Fromen' (Middle Dutch and German meaning 'devout') was not uncommon; it could also be a variation on the French surname 'Froment.' The "V" and "R" are perhaps a reference to the Virgin Mary, "virgo regina." This signed addition, contemporary with the binding, tells us that our manuscript very likely remained where it was made and was actively used well into the sixteenth century. Another sixteenth-century addition is found in the margin of f. 51v.
4. Owned by Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872), an English antiquary and self-described "vello-maniac" (cit. Basbanes, 1999, p. 121), as indicated by his stencilled ex libris on the opening flyleaf. Below it in pencil, "1248" indicates its shelfmark (see Phillipps, 1837, p. 15). Phillipps collected some 60,000 manuscripts and 40,000 printed books, which is thought to be the largest library ever amassed by an individual. An arrangement to sell his collection to the British Museum after his death fell through, and dispersion of his collection took over a century (Basbanes, 1999, p. 122; see also Munby, 1951-1960).
5. Owned by sugar manufacturer, geologist, and bibliophile Roger Laloy (1851-1909) of Houplines, as indicated by his bookplate signed by artist Emile Théodore attached to the front pastedown. No detailed information on either figure has been located.

TEXT

ff. 1-12v, *Singulis diebus ad nocturnos exceptus quibus proprii ympni deputati sunt*, incipit, "Eterne rerum conditor noctem deum ... [f. 12v] adesto nobis domine. Presta pater";

Hymns for the Office during Ordinary time on non-feast days, including Chevalier, 1892-1897 (hereafter 'Chevalier'), 646, 19349, 9272, 12586, 17061, 4426, 20138, and 2934.

ff. 12v-22, *Ad completorium per totum aduentum exceptis festis sanctorum*, incipit, "Quem terra pontus ethera colunt adorant ... *Ad nocturnos*, Intende qui regis. Veni redemptor. Non ex virili. Aluus tumescit. Gloria tibi domine";

Hymns for the Office during Advent (beginning of the Temporal) up to the octave of Epiphany, including Chevalier 16347, 373, 8989, 15525, 5491, 26, and 8390. Chevalier 8989, 21234, and 22899 are cued but not added in full, as is another hymn ("Non ex virili") which is not listed in Chevalier and appears to be uncommon. It is found for use in Advent in eight manuscripts listed in the *Cantus* database (ID 008408b), two of which are from the Low Countries and another from nearby Aachen.

ff. 22-29v, *In quadragesima ad iii usque ad tempore passionis pro tempore festa sanctorum*, incipit, "Audi benigne conditor ... saluas rege per secula";

Hymns for the Office during Lent, including Chevalier 1449, 19716, 8266, 4351, 4018, and 21471.

ff. 29v-40v, *In ramis palmarum ad vespere*s, incipit, "Magnum salutis gaudium ... [f. 35] *In pascha usque ad vigiliam ascensionis preter festa sanctorum*, Hic est dies verus dei ... filio et spiritu paraclito";

Hymns for the Office during Holy Week up to Ascension, including Chevalier 11028, 17005, 9400, 7793, 11831 (f. 36, uncommon and associated with the Cistercians), 110, and 2824.

ff. 41-51v, *In ascensione (sic) domini usque ad vigiliam penthecostes ad vespere*s, incipit, "Optatus votis omnium ... [f. 46] *In penthecostem usque in sabbato ad vespere*s, Iam christus astra ascenderat ... Sit laux (sic) pater cum [in the margin] filio sancto simul paraclito ... sancti spiritus Amen";

Hymns for the Office from Ascension through Pentecost, including Chevalier 14177, 13071 (f. 42, uncommon and associated with the Cistercians) 9582, 654, 9216, 8505, 2340, and 21204. The hymn "Veni creator spiritus" (Chevalier 21204) ends abruptly on f. 51v, followed immediately by the Sanctoral; a later user added the remaining noted verses to the outer margin.

ff. 51v-102v, *In natali sancti stephani in utroque festo*, incipit, "Stephani primi martiris ... [f. 58v] *In omnibus solemnitatibus sancte marie et per octabas (sic) assumptionis*, Misterium ecclesie ... [f. 66v] *In nativitate sancti Johannis baptiste et in decollatione*, Almi prophete progenies pia ... [f. 80v] *Omnium sanctorum ad vespere*s et ad laudes, Christum rogemus et patrem christi ... [f. 97v] *Diversus virginis*, Ihesu corona virginum ... [f. 99] *Christe cunctorum dominator alme* ... [f. 102v] *moduletur hymphno omne per eum Amen*";

Sanctoral from Stephen through Andrew, followed by the Common of Saints, and concluding with the Dedication of a Church. The selection of hymns is not identical with the *Breviarium cisterciense*, Basel, 1484 (GW 5198; Online resources), although there is considerable commonality. The Sanctoral includes the same saints and most of the same hymns, although

our manuscript includes a fuller set, with two hymns for many feasts. The feasts of St. Bernard and St. Edmund, however, are not included in our manuscript, which does include 11,000 Virgins, not found in the printed Breviary.

Feasts as follows: ff. 51v-53v, St. Stephen [Chevalier 19483 and 13430]; ff. 53v-56, John the Evangelist [Chevalier 1010 and 8736, the latter rare and only used by the Cistercians for this feast]; ff. 56-58v, St. Agnes [Chevalier 735 and 126, the latter likewise rare and Cistercian]; ff. 58v-63v, the Virgin Mary and her Assumption [Chevalier 11828, 21408, 1889, and 13516]; ff. 63v-65v, St. Agatha [Chevalier 716 and 19038]; ff. 65v-66v, Invention of the Cross [Chevalier 8266 – although not witnessed for this feast – plus two hymns which are cued but not added in full: Chevalier 4018 and “Vexilla regis,” which could be Chevalier 21477, 21480 or 21481]; ff. 66v-70, John the Baptist [Chevalier 915 and 1361]; ff. 70-72, Peter and Paul [Chevalier 1231]; ff. 72rv, Mary Magdalene [Chevalier 11015]; ff. 72v-75, St. Laurence [Chevalier 1237 and 15185]; ff. 75-77, St. Michael [Chevalier 11826 and 1349]; f. 77, Luke the Evangelist [“Ihesu corona” cued but not added in full, could be a number of hymns included in Chevalier]; ff. 77-80v, 11,000 Virgin Martyrs [Chevalier 9444]; ff. 80v-86v, All Saints [Chevalier 320, uncommon and exclusively Cistercian, plus Chevalier 601(?), cued but not added in full, 9677, and 18607]; ff. 86v-88v, St. Martin [Chevalier 2414 and 15549, the latter uncommon, otherwise witnessed in Tours and Vienna]; ff. 88v-91, St. Andrew [Chevalier 15179 and 5951]; ff. 91-93, Common of the Apostles except Martyrs [Chevalier 600]; ff. 93-95v, Common of one Martyr [Chevalier 4535 and 15118]; ff. 95v-97v, Common of several Confessors [Chevalier 9492 and 20043]; ff. 97v-102v, Common of several Virgins [Chevalier 9507 and 2854, the latter usually used to dedicate a church].

ff. 103-112v, *In nativitate domini nostri ihesu christi cantica*, incipit, “Populus qui ambulabat in tenebris ... ; ... [f. 110], *In invencione et exaltatione sancte crucis cantica*, incipit, “Domine audivi ... ; *Michaelis archangeli. Aliud*, Audite qui longe ... [f. 112] *Aliud*, Miserere domine plebi tue ... quia tu es deus conspexeris seculorum”;

Monastic Canticles for the Temporal (beginning with Christmas) and the Common of Saints, concluding with the dedication of a church, the Invention of the Cross, and St. Michael; with slight differences in the order, these agree with the Canticles in *Breviarium Cisterciense*, Basel, 1484, GW 5198, except our manuscript lacks the Crown of Thorns.

f. 112v, [Contemporary addition], incipit, “Exultet aula celica letetur ... Amen” [Chevalier 5807];

f. 113, [right side caught in binding], incipit, “// in predicatorum, *Subiecta sunt prophetis gloria spiritus ... quippe intrinsecus [=extrinsecus]//”*; [f. 113v, blank];

One leaf of William of St-Amour, *Contra pseudo-praedicatores*, Distinction IV (Rome, 1632, pp. 397-398), an extract on the arrogance of false preachers, probably recycled here as a flyleaf to the hymnal in its original binding and retained in the current binding. William of St-Amour (c. 1200-1272) was a master at the University of Paris; he is best known for his active and vitriolic campaign against the mendicant friars (the ‘false preachers’ in this work) who were encroaching on the previously uncontested teaching privileges of the secular clergy, thereby earning the name the “Hammer of Friars” (Geltner, 2009, p. 127). This text appears to be rare: it appears

in the Schoenberg Database (as variations of *Collectio catholica et canonica Scripturæ ad defensionem ecclesiasticæ hierarchiæ contra pseudo-predicadores*) in only fourteen manuscripts, only one of which is in the United States (Yale University, Beinecke, MS 199; Faye and Bond, 1962, p. 39).

[f. 114rv, blank]; ff. 115-117, [added in 1564], *De Sancto nicolao ad vesperas binnus*, incipit, "Exultet aula celica letetur mundi ... [f. 117] celi civibus Amen. Fiat cor meum immaculatum domine ut non confundar; V. / Loyse /1564/ Fromen / R." [f. 117v, blank].

A repetition of the hymn (Chevalier 5807) added to the end of the original hymnal text on f. 112v; here it is specified for the feast of St. Nicholas, for which it was commonly used throughout Europe. St. Nicholas was widely venerated but was particularly favored in the medieval Low Countries where he was the patron saint of many towns, churches, professions, and guilds.

BINDING

This beautiful binding, contemporary to the last section of the manuscript dated 1564, is an example of the region's sixteenth-century craftsmanship. It is decorated with roll stamps and blind tooling arranged in concentric rectangles, an attractive alternative style to the era's panel stamped bindings with which it shares aesthetic principles and techniques (Fogelmark, 1990). The use of pigskin, as for this manuscript, was more popular in Germany and its border regions (calfskin being the most common material used in the Low Countries and France), although considerable cross-regional influence among bookbinders in the sixteenth century can make these types of bindings difficult to locate precisely today (Cockx-Indestege and Storm van Leeuwen, 2005, pp. 101-102). Its primary subjects – foliate patterns and heads-in-medallions – were, alongside animals, the most common motifs on the era's stamped bindings (Fogelmark, 1990, p. 5; Cockx-Indestege and Storm van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 102). The replacement of biblical characters with contemporary figures in stamped bindings, as wonderfully demonstrated on this binding, reflects the era's broader artistic movement away from the biblical or fantastical iconography of the Middle Ages towards a new Renaissance style (Cockx-Indestege and Storm van Leeuwen, 2005, p. 85). Furthermore, its mostly intact brass furniture (with one boss and one clasp high-quality restorations) are appealing and retain the fine binding's original character. With its mix of Flemish and German influences, it is well-situated within eastern Flanders.

Hymnals (or Hymnaries) were the liturgical volumes that contained hymns, poetic texts that were a special feature of the Divine Office, the daily and nightly round of prayers said by monks, nuns, friars, and the secular clergy. This example is carefully arranged beginning with hymns for the daily Offices, followed by the Temporal, Sanctoral, and Common of Saints. It concludes with monastic canticles, biblical texts that were also sung during the Divine Office. Independent Hymnals such as this manuscript are much more common early in the Middle Ages. Beginning in the thirteenth century, hymns were more likely to be included within different types of liturgical books, such as Antiphonals, Breviaries, and Psalters.

This late fifteenth-century hymnal with its sixteenth-century addition and binding demonstrates several phases of late medieval and early modern book production and use, from parchment-making to re-use and customization by later readers. One of this manuscript's most charming and unique features is its repairs of original holes in the parchment, found most often in

manuscripts made or commissioned by nuns (Sciacca, 2010, p. 84). Sciacca explains: "just as our own human skin is subject to moles, pimples, scars, and insect bites, all of which weaken the epidermis, such minor blemishes on animal hide inevitably evolve into gaping holes when the skin is drawn tight on a parchment maker's stretching frame and scraped clean with a lunar knife" (2010, p. 57). Although the thread has been removed in most instances, openwork stitching – almost crocheting – of a hole with undyed thread remains on f. 50. It may be a replacement using needle holes from an earlier matching repair but is nonetheless pre-modern. Our manuscript's relatively abundant holes, generally attributed to a lack of skill in parchment-making, older animals used for skins, or a need to save costs by purchasing lower quality materials, were not necessarily considered a defect; rather, they provided opportunities for nuns to complete needlework as part of the manual labor required by their monastic rule (Marti, 2005, p. 505) and contributed to the volume's overall decoration (Sciacca 2010, p. 86).

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Breviarium Cisterciense, Basel, 1484 (ISTC ib01135000; GW 5198)

[ISTC \(Incunabula Shorttitle Catalogue\) \(cerl.org\)](https://www.istc.org/)

<https://digital.blb-karlsruhe.de/blbhs/Inkunabeln/content/pageview/1460515>

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