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Gradual, Temporale, Winter Part (Dominican Use) In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment Northern Spain (possibly Castile or León), c. 1500

236 leaves (plus 2 contemporary endleaves at beginning and end), contemporary red foliation in upper outer corners of rectos of leaves in Roman numerals, and remains of contemporary quire signatures at foot of rectos, complete, collation: i-xxiv⁸, xxv-xxvi¹⁰, xxviii-xxix⁸, single column, 5 lines of monumental Iberian bookhand with music formed of square notation on a 5-line red stave (as common for such books from Spain and Portugal in this period), rubrics in same script in iridescent red, written space 410 x 240 mm, capitals in ornate pen flourishes and touched in yellow, numerous initials the entire height of the text-line and stave either (a) in fine and ornate calligraphic penstrokes partly enclosed within line drawn scrolls and heightened with yellow wash or (b) in red or blue tightly encased within detailed purple or red penwork, picking out foliate flourishes in blank parchment (the first of these in the volume more intricate than the rest, occasionally variegated and with florid penwork scrolls in the margins or with red and black geometric panels within the body of the initial), 2 larger initials in variegated red and blue (ff. 1v and 52v), encased within intricate penwork in same, the first initial enclosing geometric blue tessellated penwork similar to a medieval glass window and with a fine decorated panel in rectangles of the same penwork with intricate bosses at its head and foot (also reminiscent of medieval windows), leaves arranged hairside to hairside and fleshside to fleshside (as per usual), with characteristically Spanish yellowed or ivory parchment (sheepskin?), some stains and small tears to edges, gutters of some leaves reinforced by parchment strips, top border of f. 45 now wanting, f. 110r with small textual correction made by seventeenth- or eighteenth-century paper scrap pasted to bas-de-page, traces of red fore-edge painting, endleaves formed from bifolia reused from smaller near-contemporary Choir Book evidently written in same center (with similarly ornate penwork initials), pastedowns also taken from other near-contemporary manuscript but pasted down to boards with blank side upwards, large section once containing an initial now cut from one of these endleaves, leather or green-silk book marks attached at head of volume, overall in good and presentable condition. Likely original binding of sixteenth-century blind-tooled leather with roll stamps of flower heads, over massive wooden boards made up from interlocking panels, with remnants of original title piece at head of front board in parchment under a horn window held down by metalwork edges (now mostly torn away and replaced by a heavily erased paper label of seventeenth- or eighteenth-century; similar paper remnants on back board), sewn on 6 vast double thongs, traces of later plain leather covering trapped underneath seventeenth- or eighteenth-century metalwork bosses and metal fore-edge guards, remnants of 3 clasps (1 leather; 1 compressed leather sheets; 1 scraps recovered from other manuscripts, cut into shape and compressed together to form pasteboard-like material), all scuffed and torn in places, but solid in binding. Dimensions 580 x 410 mm.

This gigantic volume, weighing more than forty pounds (!) and in near-contemporary condition, is a stunning example of Choir Book production from the Iberian Peninsula at the beginning of the Renaissance. Bound in its original wood boards, with most of its metalwork intact (and even its blue silk ribbons as bookmarks), it preserves the text of the Dominican liturgy illustrated with fanciful filigree penwork and cadell initials throughout. Its probable association with a sister volume of the Sanctoreale gives added interest.

PROVENANCE

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1. Script, decoration, and binding all place this volume in the Iberian Peninsula at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Its decoration and binding, as well as its imposing size bear many similarities to what may be a sister volume, the Sanctorale of a Dominican Gradual in Syracuse, New York (Syracuse University Library, MS 11) known as the Weiss Gradual (see Catalano 1992, 1992, and Harden 1990). The Syracuse volume contains the chants for the masses for the apostles, martyrs, confessors and virgins, and votive masses. Although generic, the script is nearly identical, and the filigree initials, and the geometric border panel are quite close. The elaborate binding of the present manuscript with its horn title placement (now removed and replaced by a paper title, illegible) utilizes almost identical metalwork. It is interesting to note that the corner bosses in both manuscripts – of different but similar compositions – repeat the corner medallions of the opening border decoration, thus strengthening further the hypothesis that the two volumes once went together. The original foliation in lower case Roman numbers in red ink in the upper margins is also similar (by the same hand?). The Weiss Gradual is slightly smaller, having been noticeably trimmed at its margins and measures 550 x 395 mm., and it has six rather than five 5-line staves per page. Further direct physical comparison between the two volumes would be required to confirm their common origin.

The Syracuse volume offers much evidence of date and place. The saints in that volume identify the date as between 1484, when St. Leonard de Noblac's was approved by the Dominican order, and 1524, when St. Antoninus was canonized. Coats-of-arms within the decorative borders and the characteristic penwork decoration indicate an origin in the region of Castile or Leon. Further securing a Dominican use, among the Dominican saints in the volume are Dominic and his translation, Thomas Aquinas (his translation added), Peter Martyr, Vincent Ferrer, and Catherine of Siena.

2. Private collection, Sweden.

TEXT

This vast volume contains the Winter part of Temporale of the Gradual, with Masses from the first Sunday in Advent to the Feast of Corpus Christi (on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday, 60 days after Easter; this rubric for this feast occurs on the last leaf). The text follows closely that of the Dominican Gradual printed by Suarez (1950). It includes all the chants for the Proper and the Ordinary of the Mass (set of texts that are generally invariable, although the chants varied). One finds here the Introit ("Officium" here), Tractus, Alleluia, Versicles, Offertory, and Communion. The use of the rubric "Officium" in place of "Introitus" appears to be a preference of the Dominican Order.

f. 1, rubric, *Dominica prima in adventu domini. Officium.*

f. 2, incipit, "Ad te levavi";

f. 6, rubric, *Dominica ii. In adventum domini. Officium*; incipit, "Populus sion ecce";

f. 11, rubric, *Dominica iii. In adventum domini. Officium*, incipit, "Gaude te in domino";

- f. 16, rubric, *Feria iiii. Officium*; incipit, "Rorate";
- f. 21, rubric, *Feria sexta. Officium*; incipit, "Prope es tu Domine" ;
- f. 24, rubric, *Sabbato. Officium*; incipit, "Veni, et ostende";
- f. 39, rubric, *In vigilia nativitatis Domini*; incipit, "Hodie scietis qui";
- f. 44, rubric, *In nocte nativitatis Domini*; incipit, "Dominus dixit ad me";
- f. 48, rubric, *In aurora ad Missam*; incipit, "Lux fulge";
- f. 53v, rubric, *In die nativatis Domini. Ad Missam maiorem. Officium*; incipit, "Puer natus est";
- f. 59, rubric, *Dominica infra octavam Nativitatis*; incipit, "Dum medium silentium";
- f. 63, rubric, *In circumcissione Domini*; incipit, "Allelulia. Multifarie olim Deus";
- f. 64, rubric, *In epiphania Domine*; incipit, "Ecce advenit Dominator";
- f. 69, rubric, *Dominica in feria octavas epiphanie. Officium.*; incipit, "In excelso throno" [Mass of the Sunday within the Octave of the Epiphany];
- f. 75, rubric, *In octavo epiphanie*; incipit, "Omnis terra adoret te";
- f. 86, rubric, *Dominica tertia, quarta et quinta. Officium*; incipit, "Adorate deum"; rubric, *Dom. in Septuagesima. Officium*; incipit, "Circumdederunt me";
- f. 94v, rubric, *Dominica in lx. [Sexagesima]. Ad Missam. Officium.*; incipit, "Exsurge quare";
- f. 101v, rubric, *Dominica in quinquagesima. Ad Missam. Officium*; incipit, "Esto mihi in Deum";
- f. 109, rubric, *Feria quarta in capite jejeune*; incipit, "Exaudi nos Domini";
- f. 120, rubric, *Feria v. Ad missam. Officium*; incipit, "Dum clamarem";
- f. 127v, rubric, *Dominica in xl [Quadragesima]. Officium*; incipit, "Invocabit me";
- f. 135, rubric, *Feria a secunda. Officium*; incipit, "Sicut oculi servorum";
- f. 141, rubric, *Feria iiii. Officium*; incipit, "Domine refugium factus";
- f. 144, rubric, *Feria iiii. Officium*; incipit, "Reminiscere, ut in Dom";
- f. 151v, rubric, *Feria quinta. Officium*; incipit, "Confessio";
- 156v, rubric, *Feria vi. Officium*; incipit, "De necessitatibus";

- f. 160, rubric, *Sabbato*. *Officium*; incipit, "Intret oratio mea" ;
- f. 167v, rubric, *Dominica ii in xl.*; incipit, "Reminiscere"; rubric, *tractus ii*, incipit, "Confitemini";
- f. 170, rubric, *Feria ii*. *Officium*; incipit, "Redime me Domine";
- f. 175, rubric, *Feria tertia*. *Officium*; incipit, "Tibi dixit cor meum";
- f. 177, rubric, *Feria quarta*. *Officium*; incipit, "Ne derelinquas me";
- f. 181, rubric, *Feria quinta*. *Officium*; incipit, "Deus in adiutorium";
- f. 185, rubric, *Feria sexta*. *Officiusm*; incipit, "Ego autem";
- f. 189, rubric, *Sabbato*. *Officium*; incipit, "Lex Domini irreprehensibilis";
- f. 192v, rubric, *Dominica tertia in quadragesima*. *Ad missam*. *Officium*; incipit, "Oculi mei";
- f. 200v, rubric, *Feria ii*. *Officium*; incipit, "In Deo laudabo";
- f. 205v, rubric, *Feria teria*. *Officium*; incipt, "Ego clamavi";
- f. 207v, rubric, *Feria quarta*. *Ad missam*. *Officium*; incipit, "Ego autem";
- f. 213v, rubric, *Feria quinta*. *Ad missam*. *Officium*; incipit, "Salus";
- f. 218v, rubric *Feria quinto*. *Officium*; incipit, "Fac meum Domine";
- f. 223, rubric, *Sabbato*. *Officium*; incipit, "Verba mea duribus";
- f. 227, *Domina iiii. In quadragesima*. *Officium*, incipit, "Letare Ierusalem";
- f. 234, rubric, *Feria secunda*. *Ad missam*; incipit, Deus in nomine tuo.

According to the musicologist Catalano (1992), the Weiss Gradual (Sanctorale) contains a combination of the Mozarabic rite, the Roman use, and the Dominican tradition, thus representing a transitional stage from the standard liturgy regularized by Humbert de Romans (d. 1277). It is not clear whether the same holds true for the companion Temporale.

The large size of such books was dictated by their function: they were placed open on a stand before a large number of monks or nuns, who could stand together in a group and sing the liturgy together from a single book. However, increasing growth in size of such books and their fine and monumental script was a feature of the later Middle Ages especially in the Iberian Peninsula, producing truly enormous volumes such as this, which was evidently once part of a series of monolithic volumes.

ILLUSTRATION

The manuscript consists of two large filigree initials in blue and red (ff. 1v and 53v), one large geometric bar border also composed of blue and red filigree (f. 1v), multiple smaller filigree initials in blue and red, and multiple cadel initials touched with yellow. The large initials 'A' for *Ad te levavi*, and 'P' for *Puer natus est* introduce the major feasts. The 'P' is infilled with curvilinear S-shaped pattern within initials in blue and red, whereas the 'A' is inset with a filigree tiled pattern (much like the tile pattern in Syracuse MS 11). The geometric border with rosette-like decoration at the upper and lower points and a diamond interlace in the center is also remarkably similar to the patterning found in Syracuse MS 11. All initials introducing the "Officium" in the present Gradual are composed of similar filigree ornament in blue and red.

The ordinary chants in the Gradual follow a hierarchy of decoration: all versicles are introduced by cadel initials, whereas responses, tractus, and communions are introduced by smaller (one stave height) filigree initials of the same type that introduces the "Officium." The latter type alternates through the text – blue with red infill, red with blue infill. One of the most intriguing (and unique features) of its decorative cycle is the repetition of the pattern of the painted rosettes in the geometric borders for the metal bosses on its covers.

Although many large-format Choir Books, both Graduals and Antiphonals, survive from the late fifteenth century onwards, most are in compromised condition, their bindings in poor shape, their pages or initials missing, signs of use obscuring their contemporary features. This one – with its contemporary binding in extraordinary condition, including the metal bosses that imitate its painted decoration, its blue ribbon bookmarks, its contemporary foliation, its hierarchy of decoration, its probable association with a sister volume, and its truly massive size and weight – emerges as one of the most significant examples of Renaissance Europe.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

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Syracuse, MS. 11, fol. 3v



Syracuse MS. 11, fol. 55r: note corner-boss in upper left-hand corner here, near-identical to those on fol. 1v of present volume.



Syracuse MS. 11, fol. 81v: unfinished page lacking penwork decoration; note similarity of initials in present manuscript to angular penwork initial in lowest line