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**Breviary, (use of Arras)**

**In Latin, some rubrics in French, decorated manuscript on paper**

**Northern France, Diocese of Arras, c. 1475-1500**

*i + 241 + i folios on paper, three watermarks: "soleil dans un écu couronné" (similar to Briquet 13977, Fleurus (Belgium) 1487), "main aux quatre doigts serrés, le pouce seul écarté, sommée d'un trèfle à quatre feuilles" (unidentified, for similar hand series, see Briquet 11076-11340), and "lettre p gothique à long jambage bifurqué" (the watermark is found throughout northern Europe in 1450-1530), modern foliation in pencil, 1-241, lacking one leaf, irregular quires (collation i<sup>10</sup> ii<sup>8</sup> iii<sup>14</sup> iv<sup>12</sup> v<sup>13</sup> [quire of 12 and a singleton in the beginning, stub after f. 57] vi<sup>10</sup> vii<sup>16</sup> [-4, lacking one leaf after f. 67, with loss of text] viii<sup>8</sup> ix<sup>4</sup> x<sup>8</sup> xi<sup>16</sup> xii<sup>8</sup> xiii<sup>16</sup> xiv<sup>8</sup> xv<sup>2</sup> xvi<sup>12</sup> xvii<sup>14</sup> [quire of 10 and a singleton] xviii<sup>12</sup> xix<sup>8</sup> xx<sup>12</sup> xxi<sup>8</sup> xxii<sup>12</sup> xxiii<sup>14</sup>), horizontal catchwords (mainly cropped, visible on ff. 164v, 197v), no signatures, ruled in very pale gray ink (barely visible) (justification c. 100 x 77 mm), written in brown ink in very small cursive hybrida script in single column on c. 25-35 lines, rubrics (and certain passages of text) underlined in red, capitals touched in red, 1-2-line initials in red, several stains and signs of use, including a burn stain on f. 234, some small worm holes (e.g. in the upper inner corner from f. 1 through to f. 64), edges of the leaves dirty and frayed, in overall good condition. Bound in the eighteenth (?) century in vellum over pasteboards, flat spine, shelfmark label stamped "21" pasted on the spine, another round shelfmark label inscribed "4" in black ink pasted on the front cover, covers and spine stained, otherwise in good condition. Dimensions 137 x 97 mm.*

This fascinating Breviary contains the text for celebrating the liturgical year in the diocese of Arras, a rare manuscript of its kind. The 241 leaves are packed with text in a small but clear and legible handwriting. Made in Picardy by a Picard scribe, it is an important new discovery from this less-explored region in northernmost France.

## PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript was made for use in the diocese of Arras, as is indicated by the calendar and prayers. In the calendar, feasts marked as "duplex" include those of St. Vaast, bishop of Arras, the patron saint of the diocese (on 6 February and translation on 1 October; and ordinary Mass ("Missa") for the octave on 13 February) and the duplex feast of the Dedication of the church of Arras (Attrebatensis) on 7 July. Furthermore, the rare feast of St. Vindicianus, bishop of Cambrai-Arras, on 11 March, is marked as important, celebrated with a Mass of 9 lessons. There are also prayers to St. Vaast on f. 60r-v, and St. Vaast begins the litany of the confessors. Further evidence for the diocese of Arras is provided by the suffrage prayer to St. Austrebertha, abbess of Pavilly, on f. 184v. She is also included in the litanies on f. 57v. The Picard accent of the scribe is evident in the orthography of certain words, such as "Marchi" instead of "Marci" for Mark on 18 June in the Calendar (f. 3v), showing the Picard "chi" pronunciation. There is a red rubric "l'evesque" (bishop) written in a relatively large writing in various places (e.g. ff. 92v, 180v, 183), which probably indicates that these texts were read by the bishop.

2. The manuscript belonged in the eighteenth century to vicomte Maximilien-François-Joseph Luytens de Bossut (Tournai 1733 - Lille 1801), lord of Bossut-sur-l'Escaut, Espagneux, Escournay, etc. His engraved armorial bookplate is pasted inside the front cover (signed "derond f."). The library of the Conservatoire royal de Liège, founded in 1887, preserves remnants of the library of vicomte Luytens de Bossut.

## TEXT

ff. 1-6v, Calendar; the saints whose feasts are marked as "duplex" are saints Anthony (17 Jan), Agnes (21 Jan), Vincent (22 Jan), Blaise (3 Feb), Agatha (5 Feb), Vaast, bishop of Arras (6 Feb), Matthias the Apostle (24 Feb), Gregory the Great (12 Mar), Ambrosius (4 Apr), Mary of Egypt (9 Apr), Philip and James (1 May), John at the Latin Gate (6 May), Apparition of Michael the Archangel on Mount Gargano (8 May), Translation of Nicholas (9 May), Barnabas (11 Jun), Nativity of John the Baptist (24 Jun), Peter and Paul (29 Jun), Translation of Martin (4 Jul), Octave of Peter and Paul (6 Jul), Dedication of the church of Arras (Attrebatensis) (7 Jul), Mary Magdalene (22 Jul), Anne (26 Jul), Germain of Auxerre (31 Jul), Laurent (10 Aug), Louis IX of France (25 Aug), Lambert (17 Sep), Matthew the Evangelist (21 Sep), Cosmas and Damian (27 Sep), Michael the archangel (29 Sep), Jerome (30 Sep), Leodegar, bishop of Autun (2 Oct), Denis (9 Oct), Luke the Evangelist (18 Oct), Amatus, bishop and confessor is probably St. Amatus of Sens, or St. Amatus of Sion whose relics were translated to Douai (19 Oct), Simon and Jude (28 Oct), Martin (11 Nov), Catherine (25 Nov), Andrew (30 Nov), Eligius of Noyon (1 Dec), Nicholas (6 Dec), Thomas the Apostle (21 Dec), Stephen (26 Dec), John the Evangelist (27 Dec), and Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury (29 Dec);

ff. 7-8v, Prayers: "Stabat mater dolorosa...", "Interveniat pro nobis quesumus domine, ihesu christe, nunc et in hora mortis...", "Gaude flore virginali, que honore speciali...", "Domine ihesu christe qui gloriosissimi...", "Ave cuius conceptio...", "Deus qui nos conceptionis, nativitatis, annunciationis, purificationis et assumptionis beate marie virginis gaudia recolendo...", "Salve mater (copied "marter", sic) salvatoris vas electum vas honoris..." (copied in two columns), and "Omnipotens sempiterne deus, ihesu christe domine, esto propicius peccatis meis..." (the last for the Mass, as specified in the rubric);

ff. 9-51v, Ferial Psalter, complete with Psalms 1-150, hymns, antiphons, capitula, versicles;

ff. 51v-53, Canticles *Te Deum*, *Benedicite omnia opera*, *Benedictus*, *Magnificat*, *Nunc dimittis*;

ff. 53-55v, Penitential Psalms;

ff. 55v-59v, Litanies, with the litany of the confessors beginning with St. Vaast of Arras; St. Austrebertha is in the penultimate position in the litanies of the virgins; the litanies are followed by prayers;

ff. 59v-67, hymns for the Virgin at Vespers, prayers to Saints Peter and Paul (f. 60), and to St. Vaast of Arras (f. 60r-v);

ff. 60v-67v, Office of the Virgin;

ff. 67v-72, Short Office of the Dead;

ff. 72-92v, Common of Saints;

ff. 93-175, Temporale, feasts from the first Saturday in Advent until the 25th Sunday after Octave of Corpus Christi; f. 175v, blank;

ff. 176-179, Offices for the days of the week;

ff. 179v-180, Short Hours of the Cross;

ff. 180r-v, Short Hours of the Holy Spirit;

ff. 180v-185, Suffrages to the Holy Trinity, God the Father, Christ, the Holy Spirit, *Salve sancte facies*, the Seven Prayers of St. Gregory (rubric in French, "Les sept orisons sante gregore"), to saints Michael, John the Baptist, John the Evangelist, Peter and Paul, to all Apostles, Stephen, Laurent, Christopher, Sebastian, Denis, to several martyrs, Nicholas, Claude, Anthony, to several confessors, Mary Magdalen, Catherine, Margaret, Barbara, Apollonia, Austrebertha, abbess of Pavilly, to all virgins, to Bernard of Clairvaux, followed by the prayer "Omnipotens sempiterne Deus qui ezechie regi Jude..." (composed for a male suppliant); f. 185v, blank;

ff. 186-241v, Sanctorale, feasts from the Vigil of St. Andrew (29 Nov) to St. Maximus (27 Nov, f. 240), ending with the feast of the dedication of the church, "in dedicatione ecclesie ad vesperam" (ff. 240-241v).

Breviaries, which are among the most important liturgical manuscripts surviving from the late Middle Ages, gather between their covers the Divine Office for the entire liturgical year, with each Office composed of hymns, psalms, readings (lessons), capitula and prayers. This manuscript records information about the celebration of liturgical feasts in the diocese of Arras. It is just possible that the emphasis given throughout the manuscript to St. Austrebertha, abbess of Pavilly, may even suggest that the manuscript was used in Montreuil-sur-Mer, where the Church of Sainte-Austreberthe preserves the relics of the abbess.

The Sanctorale includes offices for some less common saints, which might be interesting to explore in further research. One such example is St. Fursey (Furseus), an Irish monk who founded the Abbey of Lagny (east of Paris) and who was venerated especially in Picardy (f. 192v). His feast is also included in the calendar with nine lessons (16 January), indicating his importance to the original owner. Texts relating to this saint can be found in other Arras manuscripts and in manuscripts made locally around Lagny Abbey, such as in a contemporary breviary made in the diocese of Meaux, which includes a hymn to St. Fursey (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 1054).

The remarkably rich text of the present manuscript was clearly made for a learned user. The volume is especially valuable for research, as it provides a wealth of unexplored material. Moreover, the manuscript is important, because Arras Breviaries are rare. Leroquais includes in his fundamental study only seven Arras Breviaries, none of which are for the complete year, including Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. nouv. acq. 622 (summer) (cf. Leroquais 1934, I, pp. 45-46, 62-63, 68-70, III, pp. 396-397).

## LITERATURE

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Leroquais, V. *Les bréviaires manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France*, 5 vols, Paris, 1934.

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

Lebigue, J.-B. "Initiation to Liturgical Manuscripts":  
<https://cel.archives-ouvertes.fr/cel-00194063/document>

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