

**Necrology of the Convent of the Cordeliers in Beauvais
In Latin and French, decorated manuscript on parchment
Northern France, Beauvais, c. 1502-1694**

i + 61 folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, 1-60 (including 42bis), complete (collation i-vi⁸ vii⁷ [irregular quire: ternion + singleton, with no loss of text] viii⁶), alphanumeric quire signatures (mostly cropped after "d1"), no catchwords, ruled in brown ink with two vertical lines and three horizontal lines and, less consistently, with the horizontal line at the bottom of the third compartment in gray ink, alongside lines for writing the entries on some pages (see description of the mise-en-page below) (justification c. 166 x 100 mm), headings and rubrics written in large hybrida script in red and brown inks, individual entries by several different scribes in cursive scripts, in single column on varying number of lines, KL-initials in red ink, large tear in the inner margins of ff. 38 and 39, several stains and signs of use, in overall good condition. In its original sixteenth-century binding of dark brown calf over wooden boards, both covers blind-tooled identically in panel style: the center panel and the corners of the outer frame stamped with an oval motif combining flames and stylized foliage, the inner frame made with a decorative roll alternating portcullis, arabesques and busts in roundels (worn and difficult to decipher), spine with four raised bands, signs of old restoration on the leather (well executed), original clasps and catches lacking, decoration on the leather worn, in overall good condition. Dimensions 204 x 145 mm.

This Beauvais Franciscan necrology (1502-1694) provides rare insight into provincial religious life in Beauvais, especially how local elites linked their memory to mendicant spirituality. Compared to necrologies from the Parisian Cordeliers, for instance, which are largely focused on friars, this Beauvais necrology is unusually rich in lay detail. It bridges conventual record-keeping, liturgical commemoration, and urban history.

PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript was made at the Convent of the Cordeliers in Beauvais (Oise, Picardy) around 1502, and entries were added until at least 1694, the last dated entry (f. 2).
2. Private collection.

TEXT

(front pastedown), inscribed at the top of the leaf in contemporary script and black ink identifying the book with the Franciscans of Beauvais and the date, "anno domini 1574 Junii 20 tempore anni" (20 June, 1574), followed by a list of the deceased brothers of the convent of Beauvais from the year of the Franciscan reform, 1502, presented in three columns (masters, priors, and friars), beginning with Edmondus de Bordeau, Bernardinus Florence, Marcellius Fabri, Bonavenura Paris, and so forth;

ff. 1-60v, Necrology of the Convent of the Cordeliers in Beauvais, incipit, "KL Januarius ... Nicolas le fevvre et sa mere Ilene vanderhoven le fevvre" (explicit on f. 60v; cf. Nicolas Le Febvre in the list of brothers on the front pastedown).

This is a necrology recording the deceased friars from the convent of Cordeliers in Beauvais (Bellvacensis conventus, now destroyed), starting from its reformation in 1502 until 1694 (the latest dated entry on f. 2). The Cordeliers of Beauvais, Franciscan friars also known as Observants, established their convent around 1225 in the *quartier des lavoirs* (the washhouse district) of Beauvais. As a Franciscan house, it served as a place of mendicant preaching and pastoral care, as well as a site of burial and memorialization for both friars and tertiaries and notable lay benefactors. Furthermore, the necrology's references, like the meeting of the provincial chapter in 1575 ("capitulum provinciale ... generalis minister ... anno domini 1574...", on the front pastedown), indicate that Beauvais was also a hub of provincial Franciscan governance.

The Cordeliers were the French branch of the Franciscan Observants, founded in 1210 and known for their attachment to urban life, poverty, and pastoral work. Beauvais, a bishopric and thriving cathedral town, had several mendicant houses. The convent of the Cordeliers, like others, depended on ties to local elites for endowments, burials, and memorial masses.

Necrologies - obituary calendars – were liturgical and commemorative tools, in which are listed for each day of the year the names of deceased brothers, patrons, and benefactors to be remembered in prayer. The names were read at daily chapter or during the Office of the Dead. Necrologies ensured the community's collective memory, linking past patrons to present liturgical observance. They also served as an economic record, preserving the convent's claims to gifts and privileges by recording donors and their offerings, such as the fine chasuble and silver chalice donated by Philippe Camus, buried at the convent in 1599 ("Philippus Camus doctor Rhemensis ac huius conventus bis gardianus qui dedit casulam pulcherimam et calicem argenteum...sepultus est autem in choro ante imaginem divi mauritii anno 1599," [Philippe Camus, PhD, Rheims, gave a lovely chasuble and silver chalice to the convent ... his tomb is in the choir before the image of St. Maurice, 1599]f. 4), or the gilded silver chalice and two cruets offered by Firmin de Marcelle ("Firminus de Marcelle doctor Rhemensis...Le couvent a reçu de luy un calice d'argent dorée et deux petites burette," [Firmin de Marcelle, PhD, Rheims, the convent received a silver gilt chalice and two small cruets] f. 14), or the devotional images of the Virgin Mary given by the priest Toussaint La Gache for the dormitory and cloister ("Toussanus La Gache sacerdos qui dedit ymagine virgine marie de dormitorio et claustro," [Toussaint La Gache, priest, gave images of the Virgin Mary for use in the dormitory and cloister] f. 29).

Each page is laid out in one column, divided into three compartments, with each page corresponding to three calendar days, organized sequentially through the months. Each day is introduced with a rubric "Hac die mortuus est frater," "Ista die defunctus est frater," or "Hac die obiit frater." The KL letters (*Kalendae*) and the month names (*Januarius*...) are written in red ink at the head of each page. In the margins, the days of the month are entered in brown ink, alongside the Dominical 'a-g' in red, calendrical device that enabled friars to align the necrology with the liturgical calendar and determine the weekday on which an anniversary fell. Names and obits are entered in smaller, cursive scripts, at different moments in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Most of the entries are in Latin, some in French, reflecting the bilingual reality of religious culture in late medieval and early modern France. Many days are left blank, awaiting entries; the necrology was conceived as a working memorial book.

This necrology not only lists friars, but also records prominent lay benefactors, like the Loysel family, lords of Quévremont, Flambermont, Exonviller and other places. Key figures of this important Beauvais family were Jean Loysel (d. 1558), first physician to kings Louis XII and François I, and Claude Loysel (d. 1568), esquire and royal counselor, buried in the Cordeliers' church. The family's integration of civic, professional, and noble roles in medicine, law, and office holding shows how Franciscans were deeply embedded in the social fabric of Beauvais and Senlis. For further research on Beauvais, see especially the Bucquet-Aux-Cousteaux collection of 65,000 pages of historical resources from Beauvais from the twelfth to the eighteenth century, fully digitized (see Online Resources). A good comparison for a nearby Cordeliers house with local elite burials is provided by some extracts from a seventeenth-century necrology of the Cordeliers de Senlis copied in the eighteenth century in Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS nouv. acq. lat. 1687.

LITERATURE

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Lemaître, J.-L. *Répertoire des documents nécrologiques français*, 2 vols, Paris, 1980.

Ubalde d'Alençon, P. *L'obituaire et le nécrologe des Cordeliers d'Angers (1216-1790)*, Angers, 1902. (example of an edition of a Cordeliers necrology)

ONLINE RESOURCES

Collection Bucquet-Aux-Cousteaux:

<https://bucquet.beauvaisis.fr/>

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