Calendar (Use of Cologne)
In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment
Germany, Cologne, c. 1350-1400

i + 6 + i leaves, ruled in ink, written in a tight gothic textualis with up to 33 lines per page in red and brown inks, decorated with one-line initials alternately red or blue, and two-line KL monograms alternately red with mauve flourishing or blue with red flourishing, additions in a later (partially cursive and unprofessional) hand often in the lower margins. Bound in 20th-century English half calf and grey paper over boards, the spine lettered in gilt capitals "14th. Century MS. Calendar." Dimensions c. 170 x 115 mm.

Without today's modern devices, calendars from the Middle Ages were how people saw what day it was and why it was important: the special feast days throughout the year. Medieval calendars also include tools for figuring out the days of the week, Easter, means of following the Kalends, Ides, and Nones of Roman calendars, ways of finding out when the moon rises and sets, and clues to dark or Egyptian days each month. Most surviving Calendar fragments come from paraliturgical Books of Hours, but this one is of special interest because it is from a liturgical manuscript, probably a Breviary, with many indications for liturgical use., as well as changes of use two centuries after its creation.

PROVENANCE

1. Undoubtedly written for use at Cologne, and later in the fifteenth century adapted for the use at Aachen. Among the major feasts in red are Saints Gereon and Severin (10 and 23 October), to whom two of the churches of Cologne are dedicated, a third is the 10,000 Virgins (21 October), who were believed to have been martyred at Cologne, and on whose supposed gravesite the Cologne church of St. Ursula was built. Feasts with 9 lessons include the Three Kings, whose relics are in Cologne Cathedral (23 July), and several archbishops of Cologne, including Heribert (16 March), Agilolphus (9 July), Maternus (13 September), Evergislus (24 August), Kunibert (12 November), and "Annonis archiepiscopi Colon" (4 December). Other 9-lesson feasts include the dedication of Cologne Cathedral, "Dedicacio ecclesie maioris" (27 September), and saints to whom other Cologne churches are dedicated, e.g. Columba (31 December).

2. Among the numerous fifteenth-century additions, testament to the manuscript's continued active use throughout the later Middle Ages, "Dedicacio Aquens(is)" for July presumably refers to the cathedral of Aachen, about 45 miles / 70 km west of Cologne. Other additions, included in the right, left, and lower margins merit further study.

3. London, Folio Society, price in pencil, "£12. 10. 0.," from whom purchased in 1968 (Folio Society Catalogue 54, item 262 (£12.10)) by

4. James S. Dearden (1931– 2021), MBE, eminent Ruskin scholar and bibliographer: with his printed "Ex Libris J. S. Dearden" book label inscribed in pencil "MS 33" (front

pastedown). James Dearden was Curator of the Whitehouse Collection at Bembridge School in the Lake District. His list of Ruskin publications is long and includes The Library of John Ruskin (2013). He himself collected widely, including items that belonged to Ruskin, but also "stray materials and ephemera – articles, advertisements, memorabilia and so on." It is tempting to imagine the present fragment as an ex-Ruskin manuscript, so well-known was Ruskin for his book dismemberment. Dearden's collection of Lake District books is in the Wordsworth Museum in Grasmere, labelled the Dearden Collection. See Clive Wilmer's obituary https://www.guildofstgeorge.org.uk/newseventsreviews/news/obituary-of-james-s-dearden-mbe-1931-2021

TEXT

(see PROVENANCE 1 and 2).

Medieval calendar pages look rather complicated to the modern eye. This one is a good example of a calendar from a liturgical manuscript. The text is written with one month per page, with an entry for almost every day of the year. Each month is headed by an alternating red or blue 'KL' monogram (for the kalends, the first day of each month); a note in red on the length of the calendar and lunar month (e.g. "Januarius habet dies xxxi, luna xxx"); and a line underneath concerning the unlucky, or 'Egyptian' days (e.g. "Iani prima dies et septima fine tenentur"), on which it was considered unwise to start a journey, undergo a medical operation, etc. Major feasts are in red. These are mostly commemorations of the day the saints were martyred (their "birthdays" into heaven). Other feasts commemorate important events in the lives of Christ and the Virgin. But no Calendars include the events of Christ's Passion (Resurrection, Ascension, or the Descent of the Holy Spirit): these were movable feasts whose dates depend upon that of Easter, the celebration of which changed from year to year. In the present calendar, secondary feasts have a notation to their right in red stating that the office of the relevant saint has nine lessons ('ix l.'). Also included is the ecclesiastical grading of the feast day: Duplex and Semiduplex are used in this calendar.

To the left are the usual columns of Golden Numbers, Dominical letters, and the date according to the Julian calendar (kalends, nones, and ides). The number of lessons observed for each particular feast is a feature of liturgical books not Books of Hour. The Dominical Letters help finding Sundays and all the other days of the week throughout the year (each year this Sunday Letter changed, moving backward); the Golden Numbers indicate the appearances of new moons and full moons throughout the year (the latter by counting ahead fourteen days). This esoteric information was extremely important to the medieval Christian, since it helped determine the date of Easter, the Church's most important feast, in any given year (for the most user-friendly explanation of Golden Numbers and Dominical Letters, see Wieck, 2018).

Calendars from the Middle Ages have the same function as they do today: they tell us what day it is. How much more important this was in the medieval era, before other modern time-telling devices existed such as computers, iPad, iPhone, watches, clocks, etc. Calendars prefaced different types of medieval manuscripts including Books of Hours, Psalters, and Breviaries, and tell the date by citing the feast that was celebrated on that day. This is the medieval way of telling time. Some local feasts help determine the Calendar's "use," the place where the manuscript was intended to be used. This was often, but not always, the place where the

manuscript was actually made.

Calendars, especially those from the thirteenth to the mid-fifteenth century, include the ancient Roman calendrical system. Each month had but three fixed points: Kalends (always the first day of the month and from which we derive our term "calendar"), Ides (the middle of the month, either the thirteenth or fifteenth), and Nones (the ninth day before the Ides, counting inclusively; it fell on the fifth or seventh of the month). All the days in between were counted backward from these three fixed points.

Independent calendars are collectible in their own right. They offer a valuable resource for information on the veneration of saints in different areas of Europe and are good study tools for the telling of time. Just when calendars began to be extracted from their source manuscripts is unknown, but some examples have early bindings, suggesting that the practice of extracting calendars from their larger host manuscript pre-dates modern times. Most extant calendrical fragments come from dismembered Books of Hours (see for example on this site TM 1298a and 345-2). This one presents unusual interest, because it is so full – with a saint's day for every day of the year – and because it includes liturgical details (the number of lessons, the grading of the feasts), including changes made to the calendar to alter its use in a different locale in the fifteenth century.

LITERATURE

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Perdrizet, Paul. *Le calendrier parisien à la fin du moyen âge d'après le bréviaire et les livres d'heures*, Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg, Fascicule 63, Paris 1933

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Wieck, Roger S. *The Medieval Calendar. Locating Time in the Middle Ages*, New York, 2018.

ONLINE RESOURCES

The Center for Handskriftstudier i Danmark, introduction and Tutorial on Books of Hours by Erik Drigsdahl
https://web.archive.org/web/20150327154053/http://www.chd.dk/cals/index.html

Calendoscope, IRHT (tool for studying liturgical calendars)
calendoscope.irht.cnrs.fr/accueil
Online Calendar of Saints Days
http://www.medievalist.net/calendar/home.htm

Medieval Calendars in British Library Manuscripts (Kathleen Doyle)
https://www.bl.uk/medieval-english-french-manuscripts/articles/medieval-calendars

TM 1454