

**Breviary (use of the Benedictine Congregation of St. Justina of Padua)
In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Northern Italy (Padua?), c. 1425-1450**

629 folios on parchment (fine, soft parchment), modern foliation in pencil, 1-629, pre-modern foliation in brown ink, with errors, lacking 1 leaf (collation i¹² ii⁹ iii¹⁰ iv¹⁰ [+one leaf, f. 36, with text] v¹⁰ vi¹⁰ [+one leaf, f. 57, with text] vii-xix¹⁰ xx¹¹ xxi-xlii¹⁰ xliii¹⁰ [-4, one leaf after f. 427] xliiv-liv¹⁰ lv⁸ lvi-lix¹⁰ lx¹² lxi⁰ lxii¹⁰ lxiii⁷), catchwords, ruled in gray ink (justification 58 x 38 mm.), written in gray ink in a southern Gothic bookhand on 30 lines, except for two contemporary inserted leaves (ff. 36 and 57) written on 21 lines and the contemporary inserted quires ten, sixty-two and sixty-three (ff. 94-103, 613-629) written on 25 lines, elaborate penwork decorating catchwords as well as the first and last lines of writing, 3- to 7-line initials in blue or red with penwork in the opposite color (occasionally violet) throughout, sixty-eight initials of 4- to 7-lines in blue or pink (or in green on f. 312) with white highlighting on burnished gold grounds with hairline tendrils extending to the margins terminating in gold and colored leaves, TWO HISTORIATED INITIALS 9-lines on gold grounds with portrait busts, water damage at the beginning and end and around f. 200, some worming in the beginning, gray ink occasionally faded, small tears on ff. 123, 173, 628, otherwise in excellent condition. Quarter bound in nineteenth-century brown calf with marbled paper boards, spine gold-tooled between the three raised bands, gilt edges, some worming and the leather slightly detached below the lowest band. Dimensions 75 x 55 mm.

Remarkable for its format and provenance, this is an exceptionally small Breviary from the Congregation of St. Justina of Padua, a leader of monastic reform in the fifteenth century. Written in a minute, accomplished script, this volume with over 600 folios is as thick as it is high, allowed a monk to follow the Office throughout the entire liturgical year while holding it in the palm of his hand. Includes extensive decoration and images of Jeremiah and the Resurrected Christ, executed in bright colors and burnished gold.

PROVENANCE

1. Written and illuminated in Northern Italy, likely in Padua, in the second quarter of the fifteenth century, as indicated by the liturgical contents (before 1456, Transfiguration added at the end in a later hand, and possibly before 1450, St. Bernardino of Siena, canonized 1450, added to the calendar), and the style of the illumination. The year 14<0?>2 or 14<6?>2 is mentioned in the instructions below the diagram for calculating Easter on f. 1, and it seems most likely that the diagram and its accompanying text were copied from an earlier manuscript completed in 1402 or that the diagram was added to the first leaf in c. 1462.

Made for use at a monastery belonging to the Benedictine Congregation of St. Justina of Padua, perhaps in Padua at the abbey of St. Justina: contemporary ownership inscription on f. 8, bottom margin, "Iste est liber monachorum congregationis s. iustine ordinis s.//" (This is a book of the monks of the congregation of St. Justina of the order//), the remainder of the inscription which would have named the specific monastery was cut off when the leaves were trimmed for a later binding. The incipit also mentions the congregation of St. Justina ("Incipit rubrica generalis breviarum congregationis sancte Justine de padua"); the textual contents confirm this provenance and lend support to an origin at the monastery of St. Justina in Padua.

The basilica housing the remains of St. Justina in Padua was built in the 520s, and the monastic community attached to it was placed under the Rule of St. Benedict in the tenth century. The abbey was reformed in the fifteenth century by Ludovico Barbo and became the center of the Congregation of Santa Giustina. It was suppressed in 1797, and its library and other property were sold. In the twentieth century monastic life was re-established at the abbey.

2. At the end of the nineteenth century the manuscript belonged to the Canon Cesare de Rosa from Ravenna whose ownership inscription is found on the end pastedown: "Cesare Canonico de Rosa di Ravenna"; Cesare was appointed Canon in 1883 (see "Repertori delle posizioni...", p. 157).

TEXT

f. 1, Circular diagram with instructions for finding the dominical letter and golden number to calculate the date of Easter, "Hec rota fac fiant ad inveniendum..." (This rota was made for finding...);

f. 1v, Table listing all the possible dates of Septuagesima, Easter, and Pentecost;

ff. 2-7v, Calendar, including St. Justina of Padua in red (7 Oct) and St. Anthony of Padua in black (13 Jun). Bernardino of Siena was added later (20 May; canonized in 1450), but not Nicholas of Tolentino (10 Sept; canonized in 1446), Vincent Ferrer (5 Apr; canonized in 1455), Catherine of Siena (29 Apr; canonized in 1461), nor the feast of the Transfiguration (6 Aug; established in 1456; the office of the Transfiguration was, however, added to the end of the book);

ff. 8-68, *In nomine domini nostri ihesu. Incipit rubrica generalis breviarum congregationis sancte Justine de padua, ...;*

Liturgical instructions, followed by the Ferial Psalter beginning on f. 24 with psalm 20 for the first nocturn of Matins on Sunday, "Domine in virtute tua"; all the psalms are written out in full, except psalms 46 and 47 on f. 35v, where they are only indicated by the opening words: "Omnes gentes plaudit" and "Magnus dominus; " these psalms are fully transcribed on a roughly contemporary inserted leaf, f. 36. The second contemporary inserted leaf, f. 57, contains, for Friday Matins, psalms 98 and 100 transcribed in full and the cue for psalm 99.

ff. 68v-71, Litanies and prayers. Litanies include St. Justina, at the beginning of the virgins, immediately after Anne and Mary Magdalene;

ff. 71-76, Monastic canticles;

ff. 76-93v, Hymns for the year, including "Phebus astris cum omnibus" for the feast of St. Justina (f. 89);

ff. 94-103v, Contemporary inserted quire, copied by a different hand, with psalms 2 and 6 (second and third psalms sang at Prime on Monday), psalm 7 (first psalm at Tuesday Prime), psalm 10 (second psalm at Wednesday Prime), psalm 13 (second psalm at Thursday Prime), psalm 15 (first psalm at Friday Prime), psalm 19 (third psalm at Saturday Prime), psalm 42 (third

psalm at Tuesday Lauds), psalm 69 (ninth psalm at Wednesday Matins), psalm 63 (third psalm at Wednesday Lauds), psalms 114 and 115 (second and third psalms at Monday Vespers), psalm 138 (first psalm at Thursday Vespers), followed by the lessons for the Octaves of Ascension and of Corpus Christi;

ff. 104-122v, Lessons in the Temporale for Advent, Epiphany, Septuagesima, the Sunday before Lent (Quinquagesima), and November; f. 123rv, ruled, but blank;

ff. 124-367v, Temporale from the Saturday before the first Sunday in Advent to the twenty-fourth Sunday following Pentecost, *In nomine domini nostri ihesu christi. Sabbato ante primam dominicam de adventu... Capitulum. "Ecce dies veniunt dicit dominus et suscitabo david ..."*; [f. 368rv, ruled, but blank];

ff. 369-539, Sanctorale, from St. Saturninus (November 29) to St. Catherine (November 25), including *In festo sancte Justine* and *Passio sancte Justine* (ff. 513-515), and concluding with the dedication of a church; [f. 539v, blank];

ff. 540-585v, Common of Saints;

ff. 586-589v, Office of the Virgin;

ff. 589v-605, Office of the Dead, including litanies on f. 596;

ff. 605-609, Lessons for the feasts of Sts. Thomas, Sylvester, Fabian and Sebastian, Vincent and Anastasia;

ff. 609-612v, Office of St. Scholastica (the sister of St. Benedict), *In festo sancte Scolastice virginis sororis sancti patris nostri Benedicti*;

ff. 613-621v, Contemporary inserted quire, including saints' lives, sermons, and passions, beginning with the life of St. Basil; [f. 622rv, blank, but ruled (off-set of ink from f. 621v)];

ff. 623-629, Contemporary inserted quire, with the office of the Transfiguration, *In transfiguratione domini*.

ILLUSTRATION

Two 9-line initials on gold grounds with portrait busts:

f. 124, Jeremiah holding a scroll;

f. 266v, the Resurrected Christ, holding a globe and a flag bearing St. George's cross, illustrating the Office of the Easter Sunday.

The marginal tendrils that extend from these initials have small pear-shaped leaves with spiny contours which are French in origin and appear only rarely in northern Italian manuscripts. The kidney-shaped leaves and the trefoils, found in Lombardy in the 1420s and 1430s, suggest a dating of this manuscript to the second quarter of the fifteenth century. Two different artists

painted the foliate initials, and the artist of the initial on f. 8 and ff. 369 and following, draws more fluid floral forms and introduces a gold ball with pen stroke reverberations, again a form introduced in the 1430s in Lombardy. The initial with the Resurrected Christ is comparable to contemporary Lombard work of a painter in the circle of the Master of the *Vitae Imperatorum*; in particular, the arrangement of the flag flowing behind Christ's halo is very similar in the Breviary of Mary of Savoy, painted c. 1434 in Milan (Chambery, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 4, f. 189v).

The major penwork initials are quite accomplished and varied, displaying intricate floral reserve work, playful looping and exuberant antennae. Equally amazing is the penwork of the scribe whose creativity with letters on the top line occasionally takes off, as with the word "Fratribus" on f. 333v, or the seemingly endless minute inventions for framing catchwords, especially in the Sanctoriale (f. 369 and following). The finesse of the tiny hairline strokes defies imagination.

The Divine Office (today known as the *Liturgy of the Hours*) is the daily prayer of the Church, recited (or chanted) by priests, and other religious, including monks and nuns, beginning with Matins, said during the night, and continuing through the day, with Lauds at dawn, followed by Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and concluding with Compline. The prayers and readings for the Office are included in Breviaries. The regular observance of the Office was particularly important to monastic life, and this is a monastic Breviary, which includes twelve lessons at Matins for major feasts.

The abbey of St. Justina in Padua was reformed in 1409 by Ludovico Barbo (1381-1443) and became the center of a congregation of abbeys organized around the central authority of a chapter-general. Influenced by the religious ideas of the *Devotio moderna*, as well as by the Franciscans, and humanist scholarship, the Congregation encouraged learning and manual labor, including the copying of books. Establishing a regular, devout observance of the Divine Office was a key goal for this movement. The general chapter included numerous provisions to encourage liturgical observance and to mandate uniformity. The minutes of 1446 make clear that the proper form of worship was the responsibility of each monk in the Congregation, and as such all those capable of copying their own Breviaries for personal use were permitted to do so with the permission of their abbot, and these books accompanied them from house to house as the Congregation dictated (Overty, 2014, pp. 68-69; Leccisotti, 1939, vol. 1, p. 96).

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