

LES ENLUMINURES

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Breviary (Dominican use)

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Germany, (Freiburg im Breisgau?), dated 1494

i (modern parchment) + 300 + i (modern parchment) folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, complete (collation i¹² ii⁹ [last a singleton] iii⁹ [last a singleton] iv-vii⁸ viii¹⁰ ix-xxvi⁸ xxvii¹⁰ xxviii-xxxiv⁸ xxxv¹⁰ xxxvi⁸), catchwords (many cropped off), ruled in brown ink (justification 59 x 42 mm.), written in brown and red inks in gothic textualis bookhand in a single column on 18 lines, rubrics in red or underlined in red, ascenders and descenders on first and last lines of text frequently decorated with leaf motifs, capitals touched in red, 1- to 2-line initials alternating in red or blue throughout, thirteen 6- to 7-line initials in burnished gold on painted grounds (ff. 22, 87, 115, 120, 140v, 145v, 171v, 179v, 187, 203, 206, 218) or vice versa (f. 124), of which ten have acanthus leaves in red, green and yellow in the margins and four also have bezants in burnished gold, line-drawn lamb in bas-de-page on fol. 152v (feast of the Cross), some slight water damage to leaves at each end of the book, slight cockling throughout, lightly trimmed at top and bottom, dark spots on last few leaves caused by clasp attachment on back board, overall good condition. EARLY PINK VELVET BINDING, sixteenth century (?) of pink velvet over pasteboards, working brass clasp and catch, surfaces very rubbed and worn, but in overall good condition, restored with new endleaves and pastedowns. Dimensions 89 x 62 mm.

Houses of the Observant Dominicans became centers of the writing, illustrating, and copying of books by and for nuns in the fifteenth century, and the present example is likely a product of one such foundation in Germany. A small gem of a book (89 mm. or 3 ½ inches high) with tidy script, lovely decoration sparkling with gold, and an early velvet binding, it joins an ever-growing group of “convent books,” often the property of wealthy widows who sought refuge in cloisters. Here we see signs of female ownership over five centuries.

PROVENANCE

1. Written and illuminated for a Dominican in 1494 in Germany, possibly for a nun at the convent of St. Maria Magdalena in Freiburg im Breisgau. The manuscript was dated by the scribe at the end of the text on f. 297v, “Anno domini 1494.” The liturgical evidence for a Dominican origin is quite clear; the calendar includes numerous Dominican saints (for example, Thomas Aquinas (7 Mar, *totum duplex*), Vincent Ferrer (5 Apr, *totum duplex*), Dominic (as “patris nostri”, 5 August, *totum duplex*; octave 12 August, 9 lessons; translation 24 May, *totum duplex*), and others, see calendar, below), and Dominic is repeated twice in the litanies; in the Sanctorale, the feasts of Peter of Verona, Vincent, and Dominic are all emphasized.

The calendar includes numerous saints generally popular in Germany. The presence of Wenceslas, patron of Bohemia (28 September), Adalbert, bishop of Prague (24 April), and Procopius of Sázava, canon and hermit venerated throughout Bohemia (11 July), all with three lessons, does not however, support an origin in Bohemia, since they were all included in the Dominican calendar (they are also found in numerous German calendars,

and were venerated in the diocese of Bamberg (Calendoscope, Online Resources; Zimmermann, 1964). Although the litanies include Wolfgang of Regensburg and Cunigunde, wife of Emperor Henry II and the cofounder of Bamberg Cathedral, where she was buried, an origin in Bamberg or Regensburg seems unlikely, since neither saint is included in the calendar (feasts on 3 March and 31 October respectively).

In the litanies the double entry of St. Mary Magdalene suggests the manuscript was intended for use at a house dedicated to the Magdalene. The book also demonstrates special veneration of St. Agnes. The calendar includes both her feast (21 January) and octave (29 January); the latter is rare and apparently a late fifteenth-century addition to the Dominican calendar (only six examples are recorded in the Calendoscope by Denis Muzerelle, all Dominican; Online Resources). In the Sanctorale, St. Agnes was highlighted with a blue initial in-filled with burnished gold, acanthus leaves in colors and burnished gold bezants; apart from her office, bezants are found only on those pages beginning the Sanctorale and containing the offices of Easter and St. Dominic. Furthermore, the lamb drawn on f. 152v is not only a symbol of Christ, but also of St. Agnes, whose name is the Latin word for lamb, *agnus*. There were four convents for Dominican nuns in Freiburg, all founded in the thirteenth century: Adelhausen, St. Agnes, St. Maria Magdalena and St. Katharina von Siena (dedicated to St. Catherine of Siena only after her canonization in 1461).

We would suggest that our manuscript was made for a nun from a well-born family either at the Dominican convent of St. Maria Magdalena in Freiburg im Breisgau, or possibly at the convent dedicated to St. Agnes. The convent of St. Maria Magdalena originated as a community of the Penitential Order of Mary Magdalene (also known as the Reuerinnen) and was placed under the supervision of the Dominicans in 1289 by a Papal directive. It was reformed in the fifteenth century in 1465. Numerous manuscripts survive from their library (Krämer, 1989, 1:257-258, and the Monastic Matrix, listing twenty-four manuscripts). Freiburg im Breisgau is located in southwestern Germany near the French border, and this proximity to France could perhaps explain the inclusion in the calendar of the feast of St. Denis and his companions, *totum duplex*, on 9 October.

2. Early, perhaps sixteenth-century, changes to the liturgy, are noted in the margins, such as the replacement of the antiphon "Ego enim ex Deo processi et veni..." with "O mulier, magna est fides tua; fiat tibi sicut petisti" on f. 56.
3. Prioress ("priorin") Maria Catharina Constia(?) in a lengthy note in German, written in a scrawling hand on f. 21, records her gifting of the book in 1705: "Dise liebe buchlein hat mir mein herz liebste Fraw Mueter Priorin Maria Catharina Conscia ... den 3 tag dezember 1705." She also copied prayers on blank leaves throughout the book. She can almost certainly be identified with "S[chwester] Mariaa Catharina Custerin" who gave a late thirteenth-century Psalter, to which she had added a rosary prayer, to the Dominican convent of St. Katharina von Siena in Freiburg im Breisgau in the seventeenth century: Freiburg im Breisgau, Augustinermuseum, Codex St. Katharina A (Hagenmaier, 1988, pp. 389-391), and who, as prioress of St. Maria Magdalena, added her initials to another Psalter (Hamburger, 2002, p. 21). Of the four Dominican

convents in Freiburg, St. Agnes and Adelhausen were amalgamated to form a double house in 1647, and St. Maria Magdalena and St. Katharina in 1651; finally the two double houses formed Neukloster at Adelhausen in 1694, which itself was dissolved in 1867 (cf. Hagenmaier 1988, p. XXXIX). At least eighty-two manuscripts from these convents are conserved today in Universitätsbibliothek, Stadtarchiv, Augustinermuseum and Erzbischöflichen Archiv in Freiburg im Breisgau.

4. A nineteenth-century printed image of St. Catherine of Siena, hand-painted with red, pink and gold, was pasted on f. 299, suggesting that the manuscript remained in Dominican ownership until that date.

5. Les Enluminures, 1995, Cat. 4, no. 20.

TEXT

ff. 1-12v, Calendar, including the following Dominican feasts in blue, the highest grade of color, Thomas Aquinas (7 Mar, *totum duplex*), Vincent Ferrer (5 April, *totum duplex*), Dominic (as "patris nostri", 5 Aug, *totum duplex*; octave 12 Aug, 9 lessons; translation 24 May, *totum duplex*) and the eleven thousand virgin martyrs (21 October, *totum duplex*; the feast was added in the Dominican calendar with 9 lessons in 1243 and raised to *totum duplex* in 1410), in red, Catherine of Siena (30 April, *totum duplex*), and in brown, the anniversary of the deceased benefactors of the order (5 September), the anniversary of the deceased brothers and sisters of the order (10 October; a feast added to the Dominican calendar in 1355), and Edward the Confessor (13 Oct, transferred to that date in the Dominican calendar in 1270). German saints in the calendar include Dorothea in red (6 February), Gertrude of Nivelles (17 March), Ulrich, bishop of Augsburg (4 July, 9 lessons), and Gall (16 October, 9 lessons)

ff. 13-14, Astrological tables with signs of the zodiac and favorable days for blood-letting and other medical procedures;

ff. 14v-21v, Blank, with a prayer added in the eighteenth century on f. 15rv, and an inscription on f. 21 (see Provenance above);

ff. 22-111, Temporale, from the first Sunday in Advent to the twenty-fifth after Pentecost;

ff. 111-113v, Office of the Dedication of a Church; [ff. 114rv, blank];

ff. 115-216v, Sanctorale, from St. Andrew the Apostle (30 Nov) to St. Saturnin of Toulouse (29 Nov), ending with a rubric for the Common of Saints (one or more apostles), which actually begins on f. 218 (no text is missing; instead, the scribe appears to have changed his mind and decided to leave one blank leaf between the Sanctorale and the Common of Saints, as he did with the other sections of the Breviary); the feasts of St. John the Evangelist (f. 120) and the Dominican St. Peter of Verona (f. 145v) are emphasized with initials in burnished gold. Seven others are singled out with burnished gold initials and acanthus leaves decorating the margins: St. Agnes (f. 124), St. Vincent (f. 140v), St. Mary Magdalene (f. 171v), St. Dominic (f. 179v), the Assumption of the Virgin (f. 187), the eleven thousand virgin martyrs (f. 203), and All Saints (f. 206); [f. 217rv, blank];

ff. 218-231, Common of Saints (apostles, martyrs, confessor pontiffs or non pontiffs, virgin martyrs or non martyrs), followed on f. 229v by an office of the Virgin Mary for Saturdays in Advent;

ff. 231-273v, Ferial Psalter from the second psalm on Sunday Matins (Ps. 21, apparently leaving out the first psalm, Ps. 20) until the end of Sunday Prime (Ps. 118:32), followed by the Athanasian creed *Quicumque Vult* on ff. 238v-240v, then proceeding from Sunday Terce (Ps. 118:33) until the end of Saturday Vespers (Ps. 147); [ff. 274-275v, blank, with antiphons and responses added in the eighteenth century on f. 274rv];

ff. 276-293v, Psalms sung at Lauds on each day of the week, each followed by a monastic canticle: Ps. 5 and "Confitebor tibi Domine" (Monday), Ps. 42 and "Ego dixi" (Tuesday), Ps. 64 and "Exultavit cor meum" (Wednesday), Ps. 89 and "Cantemus Domino" (Thursday), Ps. 142 and "Domine audivi" (psalm for Saturday, canticle for Friday), Ps. 91 and "Audite celi que loquor" (Psalm for Friday, canticle for Saturday according to secular use; see Harper 1991, p. 257), followed by antiphons for psalms sung at Lauds.

ff. 293v- 297v, Litanies and prayers; litanies include Dominic (twice), Wolfgang of Regensburg, Mary Magdalene (twice), and Cunigunde, wife of Emperor Henry II; concludes, in red, *Anno domini 1494*;

ff. 298-300v, Blank, with a prayer added in the sixteenth century on f. 298 and a nineteenth-century printed image of St. Catherine of Siena was pasted on f. 299.

The astrological tables copied on ff. 13-14 were to be read together with the calendar and are a noteworthy feature of this Breviary. In the Middle Ages, physicians would consult such charts to calculate when there was a favorable alignment in the heavens for the procedure they were required to do. The position of the moon in relation to the signs of the zodiac informed the physician where to cut, because the moon and the planets drew the "humors" to different parts of the body.

Breviaries contain the psalms, lessons and prayers for the Divine Office, celebrated by the clergy and members of the religious orders throughout the day and night. This tiny Breviary, very likely from one of the most important Dominican foundations in Freiburg, links us directly to the daily life of religious of the nuns. Women played an important role in the Dominican Order from its very earliest years. St. Dominic himself founded the first Dominican convent for Nuns at Prouille in 1206, and the number of convents grew rapidly. In 1267 a papal decree secured the place of women within the order. Throughout the medieval period the number of convents was especially notable in Germany; in 1277 there were fifty-three convents in Germany; by 1303 the number had grown to seventy-four, compared with only forty-eight Houses for men.

In the fifteenth century, the Observant Reform movement was accompanied by a remarkable increase in the production of books in female convents, including many Dominican convents. (Observant Reform originated first in Italy and spread throughout Europe in the fifteenth century; aiming at broad religious changes, it was especially concerned with the reform of religious Orders.) The reform of the convent of St. Maria Magdalena in Freiburg in 1465 led to

a revitalization of their library and of the tradition of copying and illuminating manuscripts, as was often the case in reformed houses of nuns (Winston-Allen, 2016).

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