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Passional

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment with musical notation
South-Central France, 1518

i (parchment) + 72 + i (parchment) folios on parchment (even but somewhat stiff), modern foliation in pencil top outer corner recto, including last flyleaf as f. 73 which is not part of the final quire, complete (collation i-ix⁸), a few quire and leaf signatures with a letter designating the quire and roman numerals the leaf, ruled in reddish ink with widely spaced pairs of horizontal rules for the lines of text, single full-length vertical bounding lines, prickings upper and lower margins (justification 207-203 x 128-130 mm.), written in one column in an attractive and decorative gothic bookhand with eight lines of text and eight four-line red staves, music in square notation, majuscules within text touched in yellow, red rubrics, occasional red or blue initials equivalent to one line of text and music, three large blue initials, equivalent to 2 lines of text and music, one with red penwork, overall in very good condition, original holes and parchment repairs, occasional dirt and other signs of use (wax, f. 8), minor rodent damage in outer margin ff. 58-64. Bound in CONTEMPORARY, likely ORIGINAL early 16th-century brown calf over wooden boards, tooled in blind, in the style known as "gril de S. Laurent" with two sets of triple fillets framing a narrow outer border, and a large rectangular center panel sub-divided into six vertical panels, all infilled with scrolling floral roll-stamps, in very good condition, spine expertly restored and rebaked with four raised bands, head- and tailbands, four metal corner pieces and central metal boss (missing on the back, but preserved in box), once closed with two strap and pin fastenings, one from front to back, and the other from back to front, straps missing, modern fitted box. Dimensions 265 x 185 mm.

Handsome manuscript in its original binding, the volume contains the Passion narratives from the Four Gospels with musical notation. Chanted during Holy Week, the Passion set to music in this way occurs in very few manuscripts outside the Iberian Peninsula. Our volume is accompanied by a detailed colophon, documenting its use by the prior and member of The Confraternity of the Five Wounds of Christ at the church of Saint-Pierre-la-Tour in Le Puy-en-Velay in France, which gives it more than usual historical importance.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in France for Master François Veyrier, also known as Martelet, prior and member of the confraternity of the Five Wounds at the church of Saint-Pierre-la-Tour in Le Puy-en-Velay in south central France (Haute-Loire), and completed on May 27, 1518 (see colophon f. 70v, transcribed below).

In the early sixteenth century there were links between the book trade in Lyons and Le Puy-en-Velay (Hulvey, 2020), and it is not impossible that this book was copied and bound in Lyon, but an origin elsewhere, perhaps in Le Puy-en-Velay itself, or in Avignon, is also possible. A previous cataloguer noted that the style of the binding suggests it may have been made in Lyon. However, blind-tooled bindings with vertical strips, a style known as the "gril de Saint Laurent," were common in France generally from the second half of the fifteenth century into the early sixteenth century, and not exclusively found in Lyon (Macchi, 2002, p. 215; Database of Bookbindings, Online Resources).

Saint-Pierre-la-Tour in Le Puy-en-Velay was a collegiate chapter of secular canons, rather than monks; located near the tower of the chancery, their church, dedicated to St. Peter, was also one of the parish churches in the city. Cubizolles (2005, p. 215), dates its foundation to the ninth century, before 876. Chopin (Online Resources) more cautiously states that the chapter is attested from the thirteenth century, but the existence of an abbey on the site since the ninth century suggests its foundation may be earlier. It was destroyed in 1790. Documents relative to the collegiate church are preserved in the Archives départementales de la Haute-Loire.

Although the colophon specifies that the manuscript was acquired by Martelet, since he is described as the prior (perhaps of Saint-Pierre-la-Tour?) and member of the confraternity of the Five Wounds, it seems logical to conclude that it was intended for use of the confraternity. He is not mentioned in the sources that were available to us (Cubizolles, 2005; Chopin, Online Resources), and his identity and the existence of this confraternity add to our knowledge of these two institutions in Le Puy-en-Velay.

2. Speakers within the Passion narrative are identified by letters in red above the lines of text, contemporary with the manuscript; crosses have been added in brown ink (for example f. 1v, 9v, 17) by an early hand; a verse that was accidentally omitted in the text (Matthew 27:35) with musical notation was added in the margin of f. 16v in the seventeenth century.
3. An unusually large number of notes of ownership have survived, thanks to the preservation of the original binding and flyleaves. The earliest, dated 1634, on the back flyleaf, records ownership by the brothers of Saint-Pierre-la-Tour du puy (back flyleaf, numbered f. 73: "Ce liure apartien a <expunged> des p[ier]re la tour du puy dapuril 1634"); on the same leaf, another note records continued ownership by this collegiate church in 1650: "Est aux presbyteres de saint pierres la tour 1650."

Inside front cover, there is a note dated 1657, when the manuscript was still at Saint-Pierre-la-Tour, "<C ...?> Cure de saint Pierre La Tour Lannee 1657"; with another ownership note below, "<?> sacerdotis."

Inside back cover, two staff lines with square notation; and above in red, "Martelet" (perhaps seventeenth century). Front flyleaf, "passions notes"; "Ce sont liure de Passions appartient a leglize Saint Pierre la Tour du puy <qui?> la trouuida"; and below "Passions in cantu"; and, " 1631."

4. The manuscript, no longer in the possession of Saint-Pierre-la-Tour, was purchased in 1757: back flyleaf (numbered as f. 73), "<?> 1754"; front flyleaf, "J'ai achete le present liure deux liures cinq sols a librairie de feu <expunged> M. Vital Saluc en 1757."
5. It was then found in the library of the seminary in Le Puy: front fly leaf, f. i, library stamp of the Bibliothèque Seminaire de Notre Dame de Puy.
6. Private ownership, central France until 2017.

TEXT

ff. 1-20, [Passion according to Matthew, Mt. 26:1-27:66], *Passio domini nostri ihesu christi secundum matheum*, ...;

ff. 20-38, [Passion according to Mark, Mc 14:1-15:46], *Passio domini nostri ihesu christi secundum marcum*, ...;

ff. 38-56, [Passion according to Luke, Luc 22:1-23:53], *Feria quarta. Passio domini nostri ihesu christi secundum lucam*, ...;

ff. 56-70v, [Passion according to John, John 18:1-19:42], *Passio domini nostri ihesu christi secundum iohannem*, ..., *Lan mille v' et xviii et le xxvii^e de mars a este achave ce present livre des passions au prouchas et aumonnes de bonnes gens. Que a amasse le bon preudhomme Maistre Francoys Veyrier alias Martelet Prieur et confrere de la sancte confreyrie de Quinque plagis. Pries dieu pour luy. de Lesglise de sanct pierre Latour* (This book of the Passions was finished on the 27th March 1518 by the prayers [*au prouchas?*] and alms of good men, and acquired by the good and wise man Master François Veyrier, also known as Martelet, prior and brother of holy confraternity of the Five Wounds. Pray to God for him. Of the church of Saint Peter la Tour); [ff. 71-72v, blank, but ruled].

This volume contains the chants for the Passion readings from the Gospels for Holy Week recalling the Passion, death, and burial of Jesus. The Passion of St. Matthew was chanted during Mass on Palm Sunday, that of St. Mark on Holy Tuesday, St. Luke on Holy Wednesday, and that of St. John on Good Friday. Passionals, as liturgical volumes with these contents are called, were never common liturgical volumes except in the Iberian Peninsula where they circulated in manuscript and print (Hardie, 1991, 2007). Those copied elsewhere in Europe therefore are of special interest. This example of a Passional with links to this confraternity of the Five Wounds in France is particularly interesting. Note that a Passional (or Passionarium) of this sort, should not be confused with the book called a Passionary or Legendary which is a liturgical service-book that contains lives of the Saints ordered according to their feast days.

Confraternities were (and still are) associations of laypeople centered around religious observances and charitable works, which through their performance and associated indulgences prepared members for a favorable afterlife. With roots in antiquity, confraternities were central to city life in the late Middle Ages, continued well into the Early Modern period, and still exist in Christian communities today. Members were bound through a shared sense of brotherhood and ritual, and by rules which promoted positive social behavior (Rubin, 1993). Although there have been studies of many local confraternities in France (see e.g. Chevalier, 1975, Leguay, 1975, Louis, 2009, Schwindt, 2004, Vincent, 1988), to our knowledge there has not yet been a modern study of this confraternity in Le Puy-en-Velay. Moreover, most studies of confraternities are based on surviving statutes and archival sources. Liturgical manuscripts from confraternities, like the manuscript described here, are of particular interest. Long's study of confraternity manuscripts from Paris and Tournai has demonstrated that they can include unique liturgical compositions, and are valuable historical evidence related to "late medieval devotional practices and religiosity" (Long, 2021, p. 3).

The Five Wounds of Christ – the four nail wounds on his hands and feet, and the lance piercing in his side – were especially venerated in the late Middle Ages (Williams, 2004). Confraternities

dedicated to the Five Wounds of Christ spread across central Europe from the late middle ages. Members gathered for prayer, particularly venerating the wounds of Christ that he received through crucifixion. The Passional described here is evidence that the Passion narratives were of particular importance to the liturgical observances of the Confraternity of the Five Wounds of Christ at the church of Saint-Pierre-la-Tour.

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