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The de Récourt Antiphonal for the Chapel of St. Jerome in the Church of Saint-Pierre and Saint-Paul

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Eastern France (Langres), 1517

i + 47 folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, 1-47, complete (collation i-v⁸ vi⁷), horizontal catchwords, ruled in brown ink (justification 240 x 159 mm.), written in black ink in Gothic bookhand (textualis) in two columns on 27 lines (except ff. 36-47 in one column, devoted almost exclusively to noted music), music on four-line staves in red ink with square musical notation, rastrum 14 mm., rubrics in red, capitals touched in yellow, 1-2-line initials alternating in red and blue, initials within noted music are either cadels on yellow grounds, some decorated with human profiles, or initials in liquid gold on dark pink and blue grounds decorated with white penwork, 9 very fine large initials in burnished gold on dark pink and blue grounds decorated with white penwork, eight floral borders (one in all four margins and the inter-columnar space, others in the outer margins) decorated with carnations, pansies, strawberries, pimpernels, daisies, swords, bows, shields, a grotesque, acanthus, six coats of arms, and four miniatures (84 x 33 mm.) in bright colors and with a generous use of liquid gold, very few small stains and signs of use, in overall excellent condition. In its original sixteenth-century binding in brown calf over wooden boards, covers richly blind-tooled with three different rolls with foliage and small flowers, spine with four raised bands, brass clasps and catches, careful and professional restoration of the spine, a few worm holes on the covers, in overall excellent condition. Dimensions 345 x 247 mm.

Large, illuminated Antiphonals from early sixteenth-century France are uncommon. The present example is further unusual in that its circumstances of production and use are so clearly specified: it was made for a local nobleman Prudent de Récourt for use in his chapel of Saint-Jérôme in the parish church of Saint-Pierre and Saint-Paul in Langres in 1517. In remarkably fresh condition, shimmering with burnished and liquid gold and adorned with lavish floral borders, panel miniatures, and a richly decorated original binding, the de Récourt Antiphonal survives as an important contribution to Renaissance art in Champagne and the patronage of the de Récourt family.

PROVENANCE

1. The contemporary dedication note, written in red ink on the rear pastedown, informs us that the nobleman Prudent de Récourt (d. 1540), of Langres, canon, official, archdeacon of Barrois, treasurer, and the first chaplain of the Saint-Jérôme chapel, had this manuscript made for use at the afore-mentioned chapel in 1517: "Nobilis Prudentius de Recourt Lingonensis juris utriusque licenciatus, Canonicus Cantor ac Officialis et postmodum archidiaconus Barrensis ac demum Thesaurarius Lingonensis, Divique Hieronymi primus Capellanus hunc librum ad honorem et cultum ipsius pii doctoris fieri fecit et eius cappelle dicavit. Anno 1517" (The noble Prudent de Récourt of Langres, jurist of both laws, canon, cantor, and official, and then archdeacon of Barrois, and finally treasurer of Langres and first chaplain of the chapel of St. Jerome, had this book made for the honor and worship of the most pious doctor and said chapel in the year of 1517). Below the inscription is a short note confirming the gift: "Teste ut est mihi

Ledo' (Leonardo?) Sacellano predicator," with an authenticating signature of "B. Druiot" and the mention "Pro Testimonio", also dated "1517"; the same person also signed on the front pastedown. (The dedication note was likely copied by Prudent himself; see discussion below).

The coat of arms of the de Récourt family, and the motto "Recte vivendo neminem timeas", were painted on ff. 1, 15v and 38v: *de gueules au chevron diminué d'argent, accompagné de trois étoiles d'or, 2 et 1, et soutenant une fasce en divise aussi d'or, surmonté de trois étoiles du même rangées en chef*. The second coat of arms on f. 1 is that of Prudent's mother, Bonne de Brouille: *d'azur à trois croissants d'argent surmontés de trois étoiles d'or*. They occur again on f. 32 with the mention "CAPELLAE FUNDATRIX". The coat of arms of the city (and diocese) of Langres is found on f. 3v (*d'azur semé de fleurs de lis d'or, au sautoir cousu de gueules*).

2. The third chaplain of the chapel, Foret, wrote his ownership inscription on the front pastedown in 1575: "In domino confido non in hominibus. Foret huius capellaniae tertius capellanus / 1575 / de Laménria natus /" (the place name has not been identified).
3. The de Récourt *seigneurie* was acquired in the seventeenth-century by the Delecey family, associated by marriage in the eighteenth century with the Pistollet family of Saint-Ferjeux. At the end of the nineteenth century, the *seigneurie* and the Antiphonal came into the possession of Comte de Montangon de Chatoillenot, of the diocese of Langres, by inheritance from his grandfather, Gaston Pistollet of Saint-Ferjeux (see Marcel, 1912, vol. 3, pp. 32-34, who describes our manuscript under the title "Officia capellae S. Hieronymi in ecclesia SS. Petri et Pauli Lingonensis").
4. London, Christie's, 2006, lot 53, p. 100 (unidentified sale at Christie's in the summer or autumn 2006, cf. Lauga, 2007, volume II:1, notice 14, p. 429-431).
5. At the Parisian bookseller Hugues de Latude in 2007: *Livres variés*, 2007, n° 2 (no pagination).

TEXT

ff. 1-47, Antiphonal for use in the chapel of Saint-Jérôme in Langres, restricted to the following chants:

ff. 1-15v, [Psalms for Vespers on each day of the week], *Dominicis diebus ad vesperum antiphona*, incipit, "Dixit Dominus ..." [Ps. 109]; antiphons with musical notation;

ff. 15v-35, [Office of the Dead, use of Langres], *Officium defunctorum ad vespas antiphona*, incipit, "Placebo ..."; antiphons, responses and versicles with musical notation;

ff. 36-38v, [Chants for the vigil of the feast of St. Jerome], incipit, "Clarus doctor et lux fidelium ...";

ff. 38v-43, [Mass of St. Jerome], *Ad Missam introitus*, incipit, "In medio ecclesiae aperuit Dominus os eius ...";

ff. 43-44, Chants for Matins and Vespers on the feast of St. Jerome;

ff. 44-47, [Mass for the Dead], incipit, "Requiem eternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis ... Lux perpetua luceat eis Domine, cum sanctis tuis in eternum, quia pius es"; [f. 47v, blank.]

ILLUSTRATION

Four of the eight floral margins (ff. 1, 3v, 6v, 12v, 22v, 28v, 30v, 38v) include miniatures of the following subjects:

f. 6v, King David in prayer;

f. 12v, St. Christopher carrying the Christ Child;

f. 22v, Annunciation to the Virgin;

f. 38v, St. Jerome kneeling before the Crucifix.

The Saint-Jérôme chapel was founded in the church of Saint-Pierre in Langres in 1510 by Anceau de Récourt, *bourgeois* of Langres, and his wife, Bonne de Brouille (cf. Roussel, 1873, p. 257). Their son, Prudent de Récourt, canon and treasurer of the Saint-Mammès Cathedral in Langres, became its first chaplain (cf. Roussel, 1873, p. 257). The chapel backed onto the sacristy of the church of Saint-Pierre. The coat of arms of the de Récourt family was painted in the stained-glass windows (Société historique ..., 1880, p. 392). This church was founded in the eighth or the early ninth century as a Benedictine abbey dedicated to St. Pierre, before it was established as a parish church in 1169 when the monks were transferred to Vauxbons (Online Resources). In 1231 and 1245, the neighboring parishes of Saint-Michel and Sainte-Croix were suppressed and united to the parish of Saint-Pierre, making it the most important parish of the diocese. The new church building was completed in 1245 as Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul, Sainte-Catherine et Sainte-Croix, although it continued to be referred to only as Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul. The church was destroyed in 1799.

Prudent de Récourt, descending from the Lords of Récourt, became canon at Saint-Mammès of Langres in 1494, archdeacon at Barrois (the *archidiaconé* of Barrois comprised of Bar-sur-Aube and Chaumont) in 1511, official at Langres and prior at Saint-Gilles (Roussel, 1873, p. 168). He was a priest distinguished for his knowledge and virtues, and when he died in 1540, he was buried in the abbey of Clairvaux (Roussel, 1873, p. 168). In addition to the St. Jerome chapel, his mother, Bonne de Brouille, founded a chapel dedicated to St. Thibaut in Langres Cathedral in 1520. The Obituary of Langres Cathedral (Obituarium ecclesie Lingonensis), which Prudent de Récourt compiled with Thomas de Bleigny (d. 1520) between 1505 and 1536, survives as Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS lat. 5191 (Online resources). At the beginning of the manuscript is an inscription by Récourt dated 1517, where he identifies himself as compiler and includes his offices as canon, archdeacon and official. It is comparable to the inscription on the end pastedown in our manuscript; the handwriting is the same, indicating that the inscription in our manuscript was written by Prudent de Récourt himself. He also owned a copy of the *Acta*

concili Constantiensis, acts of the Council of Constance (1414-1418), printed in the fifteenth century (see Pellechet, 1886).

This Antiphonal (the liturgical manuscript with the musical texts for the Divine Office), was composed specifically for worship at the Chapel Saint-Jérôme, and thus its contents are restricted to Vespers throughout the week, together with the Offices of St. Jerome and the Dead. In addition to its textual and musical interest, the manuscript provides an important addition to our understanding of the patrons and artists active in Langres at the end of the Middle Ages, hitherto studied most comprehensively by Jacques Lauga (2007; see also Caumont, 2018, which does not include any close comparisons with our manuscript, suggesting the need for further research).

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Parish of Saint-Pierre-et-Saint-Paul, Langres
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Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS latin 5191the
<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b100344817>

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