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## Psalter

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Western Germany, Rhineland-Palatinate (Speyer), c. 1468-1480

*ii + 111 folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, 1-111, complete (collation i<sup>6</sup> ii-xiv<sup>8</sup> xv<sup>4</sup>), horizontal catchwords (visible on ff. 46v, 70v, 78v, 86v, 102v, otherwise cropped), no signatures, ruled in brown ink (justification 175 x 123 mm.), written in black ink in gothic textualis bookhand on 21 long lines, 1-line and 3-line initials in red throughout, 10 large (7-13 lines) initials painted in violet, red, blue, green, orange, and brown, and modeled with a camaieu foliage pattern, on grounds decorated with tightly curling berry vines in red or brown penwork, the large 13-line opening initial on f. 7 is framed in brown and its terminals consist of looped acanthus leaves in pink and green, some small stains and signs of use, but in overall very good condition. Bound c. 1470-1525 at the "Christus frei III Nachfolger" workshop in Baden-Baden, Germany, in brown vellum over wooden boards, the front cover blind-tooled with stamps of lilies in a lozenge, acorns and small rosettes, a foliage roll, a roll with animals (deer, lion?), and triple fillets forming frames, the back cover blind-tooled with stamps of rosettes (three sizes), acorns and lozenges with fleurs-de-lis, a roll with animals (deer, lion?), and triple fillets forming lozenges and frames, two thongs in leather with brass clasps and eyelets for attaching to brass pins on the front cover (restored), spine with three raised bands, one of the small brass plates attaching the leather thong to the back cover is detached (but is kept with the manuscript and can be restored), worm holes on the front board, otherwise in very good condition. Dimensions 254 x 185 mm.*

This attractive Psalter, notable for its large format and wide margins, was made for a cleric in the city of Speyer (one of only ca. thirty manuscripts surviving from Speyer). Copied in a handsome regular script, it is adorned with ten large, decorated initials painted in an unusual palette. The fine contemporary binding, blind-tooled with animals and flowers, was supplied by a workshop near Speyer that also bound volumes for the Cistercian nuns at Lichtenthal Abbey in Baden-Baden.

## PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript was made locally for use in Speyer, perhaps for a canon of the Speyer Cathedral; the calendar includes the dedication feast of the cathedral in red on November 9: "Dedicatio ecclesie Spirensis." Alternatively, this may have been made for a cleric at the Abbey of Saint-Germanus-and-Saint-Maurice in Speyer; the calendar includes the feast of St. Germanus of Auxerre (July 31) in red and the feast of St. Maurice (Sept 22) (although this feast is in brown), the two saints to whom this church was consecrated after 1468, when the Abbey of St. Germanus was relocated to the parish church of St. Moritz. The name "Stoll," added to the front flyleaf, may refer to Raban Stoll, perpetual vicar (with an endowment), dean and canon at this monastery.

The calendar in our manuscript is an example of a composite or martyrological (Wormald) calendar, with feasts recorded for (almost) every day of the year. The script closely resembles the script in a Missal made in Speyer in the 1430s for local use, now Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 282, and the two calendars are also similar. The calendar in the Missal, however, does not include saints for every day and is

fragmentary, with two months extant (Online Resources). Only about thirty manuscripts survive from Speyer, conserved in about ten public collections (cf. Krämer 1989, pp. 732-734).

2. Antiphons and other liturgical texts were added in the margins at several places in brown ink in a late fifteenth-century cursive script, evidence of the use of this Psalter by a member of the clergy.
3. The name "Stoll" was written in pencil, likely in the twentieth century, at the top of the first front flyleaf,
4. Belonged to Jacques and Monique Delamotte until 2002: their ex libris is pasted on the front pastedown, and below is pasted a ticket recording the sale of the manuscript at Drouot in Paris, June 5, 2002.

## TEXT

ff. 1-6v, Calendar;

ff. 7-102v, Ferial Psalter; text complete with the 150 psalms;

ff. 102v-112, Liturgical canticles, hymns and Athanasian Creed: Confitebor (Isaiah 12), Ego dixi (Isaiah 38:10-21), Exultavit (1 Kings 2:1-11), Cantemus (Exodus 15:1-20), Domine audi (Habakkuk 3), Audite celi (Deut. 32:1-44), Quicumque Vult, Benedicte omnia (Dan. 3:57-89), Benedictus dominus (Luke 1:68-80), Te Deum, and Laudate nomen Domini; [f. 112v, blank].

## ILLUSTRATION

Ten large decorated initials at the eight liturgical divisions and the three-part division of the psalms: seven initials for the first psalm of Matins on each day of the week according to secular use (Psalms 1, 26, 38, 52, 68, 80, 97); an initial at the beginning of Psalm 109, the first psalm for Vespers; and initials for psalms 51 and 101, which mark the beginning of the second and third part of the tri-partite division of the 150 psalms. Initials as follows: f. 7, Ps. 1, "Beatus vir ..."; f. 21v, Ps. 26, "Dominus illuminatio mea ..."; f. 31, Ps. 38, "Dixi custodiam ..."; f. 39v, Ps. 51, "Quid gloriaris ..."; f. 40, Ps. 52, "Dixit insipiens ..."; f. 49v, Ps. 68, "Salvum me fac deus. ..."; f. 61v, Ps. 80, "Exultate deo ..."; f. 72, Ps. 97, "Cantate domino ..."; f. 73v, Ps. 101, "Domine exaudi ..."; f. 83v, Ps. 109, "Dixit dominus ... ."

The addition of the name "Stoll" on the front flyleaf, albeit in a modern hand, raises the possibility that this manuscript may have been made for Raban Stoll, who was a perpetual vicar (with an endowment), dean, and canon of the monastery church consecrated to St. Germanus and St. Maurice in Speyer (cf. Glaser and Mayerhofer, 1893, pp. 43, 50). As discussed above, evidence of the calendar also suggests a link to his church. The ancient Abbey of St. Germanus was located in Germansberg outside the city walls of Speyer until 1468, when it was relocated to the parish church of St. Moritz inside the city walls of Speyer. Consequently, the church was consecrated both to St. Germanus and St. Maurice. Stoll, who was a perpetual vicar of the church, became dean in 1470. Three years earlier, in 1467, a humanistic manuscript, with works by Dictys Cretensis, pseudo-Messala, Festus, Cornelius Nepos and Isocrates, was copied for

him ("pro Rabano Stoll spirensi") in Rome, where it is found today at the Vatican Library (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Reg. lat. 834).

The manuscript survives in a very fine contemporary binding. The acorn stamp (no. S020507 in Einbanddatenbank; see Online resources) used on the front and back covers is also found on the bindings of books from the "Christus frei III Nachfolger" workshop made for the Cistercian nuns at Lichenthal Abbey in Baden-Baden, some 70 kilometers south of Speyer, along the Rhine. This binding workshop was active between 1459 and 1525 and was located either at Lichenthal Abbey itself or somewhere in the neighborhood of the abbey (see Heinzer and Stamm, 1987). The wonderful lilies in a lozenge (lilienkreuz in a rhombus) pattern that decorates the front cover appear to be unique.

The psalms played an important role in the life of almost every Christian believer during the Middle Ages. Psalters were the primary book for private, lay devotion from early in the Middle Ages and well into the thirteenth century (and often much later). The psalms were the texts devout Christians prayed throughout their life, and they were the texts used to teach children how to read. The psalms were also central to the liturgy of the church. The weekly recital of the 150 psalms was the heart of the Divine Office, the daily cycle of prayers sung in common by monks and nuns, members of other religious orders, and the secular clergy. In this manuscript, the psalms are copied in the order of the Bible and are accompanied by a liturgical calendar and by the canticles; a slightly later hand added other texts for the Office in the margin in several places, evidence of that this Psalter was made for, and used by, a member of the clergy.

## LITERATURE

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

Einbanddatenbank

<https://www.hist-einband.de/>

Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ms. Laud Misc. 282:

<https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/4a5ecff9-fc8d-4315-a85f-8f21f8b96fac/>

Consuelo Dutschke and Susan Boynton, "Liturgical Books; Books of the Office"

<https://liturgical.columbia.edu/exhibits/booksoftheoffice/>

St. German (Speyer)

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_German\\_\(Speyer\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._German_(Speyer))

St. Moritz (Speyer)

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/St.\\_Moritz\\_\(Speyer\)](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Moritz_(Speyer))

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