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Ferial Psalter (Augustinian Use)

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Western Germany (Cologne), dated 1477

229 + ii (paper) folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, 1-230, lacking nine leaves (collation i⁸ ii⁶ [-6, one leaf missing after f. 13, with loss of text] iii-iv⁸ v⁸ [-2, one leaf missing after f. 30, with loss of text] vi-xx⁸ xxi⁸ [-2, one leaf missing after f. 157, with loss of text] xxii⁸ xxiii¹⁰ [-3, -9, one leaf missing after f. 173, another after f. 178, both with loss of text] xxiv¹⁰ xxv⁸ [-6, one leaf missing after f. 194, with loss of text] xxvi-xxviii⁸ xxix⁶ xxx⁶ [-4, -5, -6, three leaves missing after f. 229, of which at least the first with loss of text]), no catchwords or signatures, ruled in gray ink (justification c. 85 x 60 mm.), written in brown ink in a skilled cursive bookhand without loops (*hybrida*) on 18 lines, 1- to 2-line initials alternating in red and blue, several 3- to 4-line initials in blue with red pen flourishes and in red with purple pen flourishes, SEVEN LARGE INITIALS IN BURNISHED GOLD, 5- to 6-line, with pen flourishes in red and blue, the opening initial on f. 14 infilled with an especially fine flower, some stains and signs of use, tears on ff. 73, 122, 188, otherwise in very good condition. Bound in sixteenth- or seventeenth-century dark brown morocco over wooden boards, blind-tooled with a panel design with a three-line fillet and floral roll border, brass clasps and catches, sewing and flyleaves added later, headband loose, leather very worn, hinges brittle and glued over, front cover broken. Dimensions 128 x 92 mm.

Dated and securely localized manuscripts provide important evidence for fixing chronology and origin of works lacking such clues. This Psalter was surely written for a canon at Cologne Cathedral – perhaps Hermann IV of Hesse, Archbishop of Cologne – in 1477, the year that marked the decisive victory for Cologne of the Burgundian Wars. Fine goldleaf initials, a computational wheel for determining the dates of moveable feasts, and an early binding further distinguish this attractive Psalter.

PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript is dated 1477 (the year 1477 is given twice on f. 1: “Mcccclxxvii”), and liturgical evidence provides proof that it was made in Cologne, specifically for the cathedral there. Cologne feasts in the calendar include in red the duplex feasts of St. Renaud de Montauban (7 Jan), St. Gereon of Cologne (10 Oct), St. Ursula and the 11,000 virgins (21 Oct), and St. Severin of Cologne (23 Oct), in addition to a number of other local feasts. The six suffrages at the end of the manuscript, with St. Peter, the Three Kings, and St. Reinold (or St. Renaud de Montauban), also link this manuscript specifically to the cathedral. The cathedral is dedicated to St. Peter, St. Reinold, who is venerated only in Cologne, where he was martyred, and the relics of the Three Kings were acquired by Archbishop Rainald of Dassel for the cathedral in 1164. The cathedral was then rebuilt and enlarged to accommodate the pilgrims who came in numbers to see the relics.

The calendar is graded, indicating that the manuscript was used within a community rather than as a private devotional book, specifically an Augustinian community. We can conclude therefore that it was made for a canon of the Cathedral of Cologne,

possibly even Hermann IV of Hesse, Archbishop of Cologne (1480-1508). The date of this manuscript was a particularly significant one in the life of this prelate, who was known for his piety (see discussion below).

2. Modern booksellers's markings inside the front and back boards.

TEXT

f. 1, [Calculation diagram, centered below the date "Mccccclxxvii," and above the explanation], incipit, "Numera annos domini a loco et numero superposito scilicet. Mccccclxxvij quousque omnes compleveris et super quam litteram finitur numerus annorum dominum illa est littera dominicalis per annum ...";

ff. 1v-13, Calendar, graded; including Saints proper to Cologne (see Provenance above), and for Augustinian Use (see discussion below);

f. 13v, incipit, "Venite exultemus domino jubilemus deo salutari nostro ...";

Psalm 94: 1-10, ending imperfectly, lacking the last verse (missing a leaf).

ff. 14-221v, Ferial Psalter with rubrics, organized as follows: ff. 14-163v, psalms for Matins and Lauds for each day during the week, followed by canticles for each office; ff. 164-179, psalms for Prime during the week, followed by the Athanasian Creed (ff. 173v-175v), antiphons, capitula, collects, prayers and hymns (ff. 175v-179); ff. 179-183v, psalms for Terce, followed by antiphons, capitula, versicles, responsories, prayers, and hymns; ff. 183v-186v, psalms for Sext, followed by antiphons, capitula, versicles, responsories and hymns; ff. 186v-189v, psalms for None, followed by antiphons, capitula, versicles and responsories; ff. 190-215v, psalms for Vespers during the week, followed by hymns and antiphons for each office; ff. 215v-221v, psalms for Compline, followed by antiphons, capitula, collects, prayers, hymns and canticles;

ff. 221v-229v, Suffrages of the Holy Cross, the Virgin Mary, St. Peter, the Three Kings, St. Augustine, and St. Reinold, followed by antiphons for the liturgical year.

This Ferial Psalter was made for someone who followed the Augustinian rule. The Augustinian use is indicated by the duplex feasts of St. Augustine in the calendar (*dies natalis* in red, 28 Aug; translation, 11 Oct), and the suffrages to St. Augustine at the end of the manuscript. Augustinian houses in the diocese of Cologne at the time were the Abbey of St. Andrew, the Abbey of St. Gereon (founded in the eleventh century as a Benedictine abbey, then Augustinian from 1216), the Abbey of St. Maria im Kapitol (founded around 689 as a Benedictine abbey, later given to secular canonesses), the monastery of St. Mary Magdalen, and the Abbey of St. Ursula (founded around 922 as a Benedictine abbey, later given to secular canonesses). However, the suffrages to St. Peter, the Three Kings, and St. Reinold provide strong evidence that our Psalter was used in the Cathedral of Cologne by canons following the rule of St. Augustine, and we suggest that it was quite likely made for Hermann IV of Hesse (1442-1508), canon of Cologne Cathedral from 1461, diocesan administrator of the Archdiocese of Cologne from 1473, and Archbishop of Cologne from 1480 until his death. Contemporary chroniclers describe Hermann of Hesse as a particularly pious prelate who celebrated mass personally and read his Breviary regularly.

A further clue that the manuscript may have been made for Hermann of Hesse is given in the diagram on f. 1. Let us see first how it works. It is a calculation wheel used for determining the date of Easter and other feasts with the help of dominical letters. Each day of the week has a letter from A-G, commencing on January 1. The dominical letter marks the Sundays. Each year is assigned a dominical letter, indicating which dates are Sundays in that particular year. In 1477 the dominical letter was E, as emphasized by the capital letter at the top of the diagram, immediately below the date. Leap years had two dominical letters. The first was applied until February 24, the feast of St. Matthias, the Apostle, and the second one (in the inner circle of the diagram), was applied for the rest of the leap year. This is explained in the text below the diagram. The dates of moveable feasts, notably Easter, can now be calculated. Easter falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after March 21.

1477 was a significant year for Hermann of Hesse and the diocese of Cologne. The first Sunday in 1477, as the diagram indicates, was January 5, the date of the Battle of Nancy, the final and decisive battle of the Burgundian Wars, when Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy was killed by the forces of René II of Lorraine. The outcome of the battle was notably important for Cologne and Hermann of Hesse. The Cologne Diocesan Feud had begun four years earlier, when Ruprecht of the Palatinate, the archbishop of Cologne, who was hostile to Hermann, repressed the towns of his archdiocese to the point of an open revolt. Most of the archdiocese and the city of Cologne supported Hermann, whom they proclaimed administrator of the archdiocese in Ruprecht's place. Ruprecht sought help from Charles the Bold, and the conflict sparked the Burgundian Wars. Charles's defeat at Nancy brought victory for the city of Cologne and for Hermann, who had Ruprecht imprisoned the following year. This memorable day in Hermann's life marks the starting point for calculating liturgical feasts in our Ferial Psalter, and we suggest that it is quite possible that our Psalter was made for Hermann.

A Ferial Psalter is arranged for daily use. The psalms are not arranged in their numerical order but according to the order of their occurrence in the Divine Office. The liturgical hour and weekday on which a specific group of psalms is sung is given in the preceding rubric. The very first psalm on f. 13v is Ps. 94, the invitatory to all Matins. Then come psalms 1-20 for Sunday Matins (followed by canticles), then psalms 92, 99, and 62 for Sunday Lauds (followed by canticles), psalms 26-37 for Monday Matins (followed by canticles, prayers and incipit for Ps. 50 for Lauds on Monday-Saturday), and so on (cf. secular use of the Ferial Psalter in Harper, 1991, pp. 242-250). The psalms for Matins on each weekday are marked by the seven large initials in burnished gold: on Sunday (f. 14, Ps. 1), Monday (f. 42v, Ps. 26), Tuesday (f. 62v, Ps. 38), Wednesday (f. 80, Ps. 52), Thursday (f. 98, Ps. 68), Friday (f. 120v, Ps. 80), and Saturday (f. 141, Ps. 97). The leaf now missing before f. 14 may have contained a miniature on the verso to mark the beginning of the Ferial Psalter. The other missing leaves do not coincide with any textual divisions and would not have been illustrated.

LITERATURE

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