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## Diurnal (Cistercian Use)

In Latin, some rubrics in Middle Low German, illuminated manuscript on paper  
East-central Germany (Magdeburg?) or Northwestern Germany, Westphalia, c.1490-1520  
(after 1476, and probably after 1508)

*i + 234 + i folios on paper, watermark similar to Briquet 4233 "cœur surmonté d'une croix," Utrecht, 1494, Worms 1495, Cologne, 1495, modern foliation in pencil, 1-234, lacking c. 3 leaves (collation i-ii<sup>6</sup> iii<sup>8</sup> iv<sup>8</sup> [-7, -8, lacking two leaves after f. 26, with loss of text] v-xxx<sup>8</sup> [ending imperfectly, probably lacking one final leaf which was added to the regular quire of 8 to complete the final Office]), quire signatures in Roman numerals in the middle of the lower margin on the verso of the final leaf in each quire, ruled in lead point (justification 93 x 63 mm.), written in brown ink in Gothic bookhand (hybrida) in single column on 19 lines, rubrics in red, 1- to 2-line initials alternating in red and blue, 3- to 5-line initials in blue, red or gold, some with reserve decoration, a few also with pink penwork and green dotting, three 7- to 8-line parti-colored initials in blue and burnished gold, with penwork decoration and delicate branches extending into the margins with leaves, flowers and a bird, burnished gold added for highlighting details, forming full borders on ff. 27 and 107, and a u-shaped border on f. 85, some small stains and signs of use, but in overall excellent condition. No binding, in a temporary early modern paper wrapper, spine with four raised bands, inscribed in brown ink "Diurnale / Mss. Saec. XV. / ...init deau (?)," wrapper with tears. Dimensions 133 x 93 mm.*

Made for Cistercian nuns at a convent dedicated to St. Agnes, this manuscript with its delicate marginal decoration is an excellent example of female monastic art. Noteworthy also is its calendar, which includes a versified health-care regimen, giving advice on therapies and nutrition throughout the year, and contemporary obits of people associated with the convent. The Cistercians are famous for their innovative reference systems. Here, prayers in the text are linked to the calendar with a system of letters.

## PROVENANCE

1. Evidence of the watermarks, and the style of the script and decoration, all suggest a date at the end of the fifteenth century or early in the sixteenth century, c. 1490-1520. The inclusion of the feast of the Visitation (with 12 lessons) in the calendar (2 July) places this manuscript after 1476, when this feast was added to the Cistercian liturgy (Leroquais, 1934, vol. 1, p. xcix). If our suggested identification of the Margareta von Plettenberch in the calendar (see below) as Margaretha van Plettenberg (1435-1508), daughter of Engelbert van Plettenberg (1405-1488) is correct, this must date after her death in 1508.

Cistercian use of the manuscript is clearly attested by the calendar, which includes the feasts of St. Bernard of Clairvaux included in red, "Bernardi patris nostri" (19 August; Octave 26 August), St. Robert of Molesme, founder and first abbot of Cîteaux Abbey (29 April), St. Hugh of Cluny (29 April), St. Malachy, who died and was buried at Clairvaux Abbey (5 November), and St. Edmund of Abingdon, buried at Pontigny Abbey (16 November).

The manuscript was made for use at a convent dedicated to St. Agnes, as is indicated by the feast of St. Agnes, "the patron of this monastery," written in red in the calendar: "Agnētis virgīna. Patrona hujus clau[stri]" (12 lessons; 17 January). Given this evidence, it seems quite possible that this manuscript was made by the Cistercian nuns of the Agnetenkloster in Magdeburg, which was founded in 1230, and secularized in 1810 (Online resources). Magdeburg also has churches dedicated to St. Martin, Martinikirche, and St. Laurence, Sankt-Laurentius-Kirche, and both saints are included in red in the calendar of our manuscript (Translation of St. Martin, 4 July, and feast, 11 November; feast of St. Laurence, 10 August). The Cistercian house of nuns in Augsburg, also dedicated to St. Agnes, seems less likely as a place of origin for our manuscript.

The manuscript is in Latin, but includes two rubrics in Middle Low German, see f. 36v, *Dusse antifona salmen per ordinem op (...) syngen*, and f. 38, *Op sunte Thomas dach salmen dussen . . .*

In addition to the feasts of saints and other liturgical occasions, the calendar in this manuscript was used to record the deaths of several people. Included in the calendar in red by the original scribe, we find: "Obiit Clara Brechten mater nostra prechara" (10 March, f. 3), "Obiit Margareta van Plettenberch" (30 April, f. 4v), "Obiit Rotcherus Brechten pater noster dilectus" (5 June, f. 6), and "Obiit Aleff unde Leye pater meus (5 July, f. 6v). Overall, the evidence certainly suggest that our Diurnal was made for the Cistercian Agnetenkloster in Magdeburg. The people named in these obits seem to be from families from Westphalia (discussed in detail below). They may have been important to the nuns in Magdeburg, but perhaps this was made at Agnetenkloster in Magdeburg as a gift for a Cistercian foundation in Westphalia.

2. A reference to the eighteenth-century owner and his catalogue written in brown ink on the front flyleaf: "Ex collect. Kindlingeriana p. 69. Lib. K kkk." Johannes Nicholas Kinglinger (1749-1819), a collector, archivist and historian, was a German Franciscan friar, who left the order with papal approval to work as an archivist, continuing the research of Justus Möser, who died in 1794, on the history of Germany and Westphalia (see Gockeln, 1970 and 1971). He worked as the last archivist of the Essen Abbey and of the Princely Abbey of Corvey, and later as the archivist of Wilhelm I of the Netherlands.
3. Ex libris written in brown ink on the front flyleaf: "Bibliotheca J. Nilsen (?) passt(?) in velin. 1814."
4. Private European Collection.

## TEXT

ff. 1-12v, Calendar, Cistercian use (see "Calendrier cistercien," Online Resources), including the verses, "Regimen sanitatis per circulum anni valde utile" (see below);

ff. 13-26v, *Incipiunt collecte de sanctis qui non habent proprias collectas, . . .*;

Collects of Saints who do not have a proper Office, followed by collects for the Proper of Saints, ending imperfectly, lacking two leaves at the end.

ff. 27-137v, Temporal;

ff. 137v-234v, Sanctoral, ending imperfectly, probably lacking one leaf at the end.

Breviaries contain the complete text of the Divine Office, encompassing a program of readings, prayers, hymns, canticles, and Psalms arranged according to the canonical hours of the Divine Office (Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and Compline). This manuscript does not include the night Office of Matins, and therefore is more properly a Diurnal. Two features of the text are of particular interest. Medieval Cistercians are known for the clever use of various systems of cross references in their manuscripts. In this manuscript, the collects (short prayers) on ff. 13-26v are marked with a letter from 'A' to 'Z', inserted in the margins. These letters are meant to be paired with the feast days of saints in the calendar. The same cross-reference system is found in a Cistercian Breviary from Herrenalb, dated 1472, now in Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Lichenthal 20 (Online Resources; Heinzer and Stamm, 1987, p. 103 onwards), and in another Herrenalb Breviary formerly on this site (TM 811, now in the collection of the Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek).

Also noteworthy are the four verses at the end of the calendar that give instructions on how to keep in good health throughout the year. The verses give counsel for bloodletting, bathing, nutrition, and treatments for different health problems. In January, for instance, one should eat hot meals, drink sufficiently, take healthy baths, and do some bloodletting (f. 1v): "In iano claris calidisque cibis potiaris/ Atque decens potus post fercula sit tibi notus/ Ledit enim medo tunc potatus ut bene credo/ Balnea tucius inities et venam fundere cures." February is a month of fevers, and the month when bloodletting from the thumb will cure the cold and honey will help against chest diseases (f. 2v): "Nascitur occulta febris Februario multa/ Potibus et escis si caute vivere velis/ Tunc cave frigora de pollice funde cruorem/ Suge mellis favum pectoris qui morbos curavit." These anonymous verses originate in fourteenth-century Germany, and were printed under the title *Regimen sanitatis per circulum anni valde utile* in Cologne, c. 1500, together with the work *Regimen contra pestilentiam sive Epidimiam*, by Johannes Jacobi (Jean Jasme or Jacme; d. 1384) (recorded in Thorndike and Kibre, 1937, col. 683; see Online Resources for a digitized copy).

The feasts included in the calendar suggest that our Diurnal was made for the Cistercian Agneskloster in Magdeburg. However, the obits, which were included in the calendar when the manuscript was made, point to people in Westphalia. The "Margareta van Plettenberch" on f. 4v is probably identifiable as Margaretha van Plettenberg (1435-1508), daughter of Engelbert van Plettenberg (1405-1488). The ancient Plettenberg family originated in Westphalia and the Netherlands; the town of Plettenberg is found in North Rhine-Westphalia. "Clara Brechten" (f. 3) and "Rotcherus Brechten" (f. 6) might relate to the town of Brechten near Dortmund, where there is the "Propsteikirche," a Dominican convent dedicated to St. John the Baptist. The van Plettenberg family influence in the area and support of monasteries included Rabolt II von Plettenberg and his wife Margaretha (they married in 1513), who were benefactors of Mariawald Abbey, a Trappist monastery (Cistercians of the Strict Observance), which was established between 1480 and 1486 by monks of Bottenbroich Abbey. There is also a panel painting dated 1540 of the Crucifixion with another Margaret of Plettenberg kneeling at the

cross, with the inscription "Blut got mir Margreith plettenberch..." (Bondefanten Museum, Maastricht; Online resources); the Dominican nun depicted here might be related to the Margareta van Plettenberch of our manuscript.

## ILLUSTRATION

The very charming marginal decoration with small leaves, flowers, and a bird provides a wonderful example of art in the context of female monasticism (for more on the subject, see especially Hamburger, 1997). The delicate borders on ff. 27 and 107, wind completely around the text, sprouting pale pink and green leaves, set with gold rayed besants. The partial border on f. 85 includes dark green leaves and realistic blue flowers, each with polished gold centers, and a delightful small blue bird, sprinkled with white dots and with gold wings. This bird calls to mind the famous manuscripts made by the nuns of the Cistercian Abbey of Medingen in Lower Saxony (about 150 km north and slightly west of Magdeburg). See for example, the Easter Orationale from Medingen copied c. 1515-1520, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS germ. oct. 48, where a similar small bird appears at the bottom of several pages. Similar birds in winding (in this case rather crude) foliage are also found in an earlier Prayer Book from Medingen, Göttingen, SUB, 8 Cod. MS theol. 242, ff. 79 and 169 (Online Resources).

## LITERATURE

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Thorndike, L. and P. Kibre. *A Catalogue of Incipits of Medieval Scientific Writings in Latin*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1937.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Germania Sacra Klosterdatenbank, Zisterzienserinnenkloster Magdeburg (Agnetenkloster)  
<https://klosterdatenbank.adw-goe.de/gsn/92066>

Calendrier cistercien

<http://www.musmed.fr/CMN/calclistw.htm>

Nikolaus Kindlinger (Wikipedia)

[https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolaus\\_Kindlinger](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikolaus_Kindlinger)

Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Lichtenthal 20

<https://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bsz:31-16133>

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS germ. oct. 48

<http://resolver.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/SBB00016D2D00000000>

Göttingen, SUB, 8 Cod. MS theol. 242

<http://resolver.sub.uni-goettingen.de/purl?DE-611-HS-3551429>

Crucifixion with Margaret of Plettenberg kneeling at the cross, Maastricht,  
Bonenfantenmuseum, inv./cat.nr. 1606

<https://rkd.nl/nl/explore/images/36203>

*Regimen sanitatis per circulum anni valde utile*, Rockville (Maryland), National Library of Medicine,  
2211052R (see images 13-15)

<https://collections.nlm.nih.gov/bookviewer?PID=nlm:nlmuid-2211052R-bk>

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