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Gradual (for Carthusian use)

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Germany (Lower Rhine, perhaps Cologne or nearby?), 1526 (dated)

Eight large historiated initials with tinted penwork borders

i (reused parchment leaf, described below) + 150 folios on parchment (overall white and uniform, with a number of original sewn repairs, f. 117, an example of an offcut with an uneven edge) + 2 unnumbered paper leaves, laid in between ff. 99v-100, and inserted between ff. 129v-130 + *i* (reused parchment leaf, described below), original foliation top margin in red roman numerals beginning on f. 4, with errors as follows: three unnumbered leaves, 1-56, *59-106, *108-148, two unnumbered leaves, complete (collation *i*⁴ [-4, cancelled blank] *ii*⁸ [beginning f. 1, signed 'a'] *iii*-*xviii*⁸ *xix*⁸ [-7, 8, cancelled blanks] *xx*⁶ [-6, cancelled blank]), alphanumeric quire signatures in the first half of each quire beginning with 'a' in the second quire (occasionally trimmed), horizontal catchwords (occasionally trimmed), full-length vertical bounding lines in faint lead (no horizontal rules visible, and the scribe may have aligned his text with the staves) (justification 282-280 x 185-184 mm.), written in a formal gothic book hand with nine lines of text and nine staves per page, music in square notation on 4-line black staves, cadel initials highlighted in red throughout, red rubrics and folio numbers, red and blue initials, equivalent to one line of text and music, some decoratively shaped or with simple decoration in void (each occurrence of the same initial letter repeats one basic shape, suggesting these initials were made using a stencil template), FOURTEEN LARGE DECORATIVE INITIALS and EIGHT LARGE HISTORIATED INITIALS WITH TINTED PENWORK BORDERS (described below), cockled, small holes, lower and upper margins, through f. 3 at the front and on f. 150 and black flyleaf from the metal fittings, correction (paper pasted over a passage?) on f. 11, some soiling from use, particularly in the lower margin and lower outer corners, but overall in very good condition. ORIGINAL BINDING with extensive repairs, some probably early, of dark brown leather over heavy wooden boards, angled at the top and bottom, front cover tooled in blind with diagonal triple fillets forming diamond-shaped compartments with small round stamps at the intersections, back cover, tooled in blind with broad outer borders and two bands intersecting on the diagonal, all infilled with fleurons, and edged in triple fillets, lettered near the lower edge "Anno <illegible>", spine with six raised bands, heavy metal centerpiece and four cornerpieces back and front, and partial hardware, back cover, from catches (straps now missing), leather fore-edge tabs marking important sections of the text, traces of two catches (now missing) front cover, two small holes on the front cover from hardware, now missing, modern repairs to the spine, leather repair lifting at the top of the spine, both covers scuffed and darkened, with some loss at the edges, but overall in sound condition. Dimensions 385 x 275 mm.

Binding fragments, Southern France, fourteenth century: four large and very handsome leaves from a deluxe fourteenth-century glossed legal manuscript, probably copied in Southern France, used as pastedowns front and back and as the front and back flyleaves; more thorough study is needed, but the text appears to be the *Constitutiones Clementinae* of Pope Clement V, enacted at the Council of Vienne (1311-1312) and promulgated in 1317. The leaves are preserved almost entirely, but with some trimming (especially in the inner margins), (justification, front, c.378x 260-250 mm.; back: c.323-315- x 230 mm.), text copied in a rounded Gothic bookhand in slightly larger script in two central columns, surrounded by gloss on all sides, copied in an equally formal, and slightly smaller script, and with early additions by several hands in tiny noting scripts, number of lines varies on each page, the recto back flyleaf, for example, has 25 lines of text surrounded by 72 lines of gloss, red rubrics and paragraph marks, two-line pen initials, blue or red, with red or violet pen decoration respectively, three gold initials infilled and on colored grounds,

ONE HISTORIATED INITIAL, front flyleaf, f. i verso, of a Bishop. Present dimensions vary, c.384-370 x 275 mm.

Everything about this large, well-preserved, music manuscript is a delight. Carthusian monks were renowned for the austerity and simplicity of their lives, which they spent almost entirely alone in communities of hermits, living in silence. Imagine then, what the joy of the music of the liturgy of the Mass, as embodied in this manuscript, must have meant to them. The monks must have equally delighted in the color found within these pages, which are adorned with tinted penwork borders and charming historiated initials, carefully drawn and colored, and shining with gold and silver. Signed and dated by the scribe, our Gradual is still preserved in an early decorated leather binding, that features paste-downs from a large, illuminated fourteenth-century canon law manuscript.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in Germany in 1526, the scribe concludes with a colophon in large red letters on f. 150v, "Semel pro anima scriptoris, Heu peccatoris 1526" (Once and for all for the soul of the writer, or alas, of the sinner, 1526) and the date, 1526, is also found throughout the manuscript, usually discretely written in the lower margin (often within the loop of a 'g'), in red or black ink: ff. 10v, 72, 73, 98v, 122, 127v, 133, and 136v. However, on f. 60, in the lower margin, again within the look of a 'g', we instead find, "1527." Could this mean that although the scribe finished copying the text in 1526, the volume overall was completed in 1527?

Liturgical evidence establishes that this was copied for use in a Carthusian monastery; note the presence of Hugo of Grenoble (f. 124, April 1), Bruno, the founder of the Carthusian order (f. 132, October 6), the feast of the Holy Relics (f. 132v, *Sanctuarum reliquiarum*, November 8), and Hugo, bishop of Lincoln (f. 132v, November 17). St. Bruno is also included in the litany beginning on f. 80v. In the Temporal, there is a reference to the liturgy of the General Chapter on f. 93. The text and music for "festis candelarum," on f. 150, refers to a specific grading of feasts in the Carthusian liturgy.

Since the Carthusian liturgy was mandated across the Order by the General Chapter, the contents provide almost no clues as to where this was made. The presence of the feast of the Ten Thousand martyrs (June 22), may, however, have local significance since it was not included in the Carthusian calendar. Their cult was popular in Germany and Switzerland generally, and Cologne possessed their relics (see Online Resources, and the discussion of British Library, Egerton MS 1318, a Missal from Cologne with an image depicting their martyrdom). The introit for "De virginibus," on ff. 141v-142, includes a mention of the Ten Thousand martyrs (*Decem milia martirum*), along with the Martyrs of Agaunum (*Augunensium martirum*). St. Maurice and companions (the Martyrs of Agaunum) were included in the Carthusian calendar on September 22. (The Roman Agaunum was located near present day Saint-Maurice in Switzerland).

We have found no close parallels with the illumination and the unusual and very fine penwork border decoration in our manuscript. Nonetheless stylistic evidence generally suggests that it was made in the Lower Rhine region, perhaps in or around Cologne (discussed below). St. Barbara's, Cologne, was an important Charterhouse, and Cologne

remained staunchly Catholic through the turmoil of the Reformation. Their extensive library has been studied (Marks, 1974). However, just as its connection with Cologne is an unproven hypothesis, there is nothing specific to link our manuscript with St. Barbara's.

2. Annotations updating the liturgy provide evidence this was actively used in a monastery at least through the seventeenth century, and possibly later. There are sixteenth-century additions including f. 19, Feast of the name of Jesus (observed 1597?), f. 123, Thomas Aquinas (7 March, observed 1568) and Joseph (19 March, observed 1567/8), f. 129, Bonaventure (14 July, observed 1589, 1599), f. 131, Januarius (September 19, observed 1589). Other marginal additions, some in later hands, are found on ff. 22v, 73v, 100, 125v, and 131. More extensive additions were made by inserting paper leaves between ff. 99v-100 (now laid in, but once glued), and between ff. 129v-130, with text for the Transfiguration (August 6, observed 1582). A smaller paper slip added between ff. 121v-122 is stenciled and thus almost certainly dates no earlier than the middle of the seventeenth or eighteenth century.

3. European private collection.

TEXT

[Three unnumbered leaves in a different hand, leaving the first recto blank, possibly early replacement leaves], incipit, "Gaudeamus omnes ...; Kyrie, ... Gloria in excelsis ..., *Offertorium*, Felix es Anna luade digna ..., [concluding with the rubric for the text on f. 1], *Dominica prima aduentus domini Introitus ad missam*;

ff. 1-121, Temporal beginning with the First Sunday in Advent through the 23rd Sunday after the Octave of Pentecost, concluding with the Dedication of a Church;

The litany for the Easter Vigil begins f. 80v, including Michael, Raphael, John Baptist, among patriarchs and prophets; Peter, Paul, Andrew, John, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, Simon, Thaddeus, Matthias, Mark (Apostles and Evangelists); Laurence and Vincent among the martyrs; Silvester, Benedict, Bruno, among the confessors; and Felicity, Agatha, and Agnes, among the virgins; f. 93, following 4th Sunday after Easter are texts for the general chapter, without musical notation (*Prima die capitula generalis, introitus, Spritus domini ...; Secunda die Introitus, ...; Tercia die ...*).

ff. 121-132v, Sanctoral from Andrew (30 November) through Katherine (25 November);

Includes, among other feasts, Thomas martyr (29 November), Agatha (February 5), Gregory (March 12), Benedict (March 21), Annunciation (March 25), f. 123, rubric for the feast of Hugh of Grenoble (April 1) and Ambrose (April 4), *Decem milia martirum* (June 22), Assumption (August 15), Bernard (August 20), Ursula and eleven thousand virgins (October 21), *In festo reliquiarum Hupertii, Marti Hugonis* (Feast of Relics, November 8, Hubert, bishop of Maastricht and Liège, November 3, Martin?, November 11, and Hugh of Lincoln, November 17).

ff. 132v-133, Eight tones, and *Aperges me*;

ff. 133v-146, Common of Saints, followed by Mass for the Virgin, *De beata maria*;

Including on ff. 141v-142, *De virginibus*, with the Introit, incipit, "Gaudeamus omnes in domino diem festum celebrantes sub honore Marie virginis de cuius assumptione . . .," which mentions the "decem milium martirum Augunensium martirum de quorum passione gaudet," Agatha, Katherine, Barbara, Mary Magdalene, Anne, and Katherine (note a rubric, partially erased mentioning Maurice).

ff. 146-147v, Mass for the Dead (*Officium pro defunctis*);

ff. 147v-150v, Kyrie, Gloria, Nicene Creed, Sanctus; and Agnus dei (with settings for different occasions, including on f. 150, *In festis candellarum*); [Concluding with the scribe's colophon; see provenance, above].

ILLUSTRATION

This volume has considerable visual impact. There are fourteen large decorative initials, orange-red or blue, twelve of these are equivalent to two lines of text and music, with decorative void spaces within the initial, infilled with curling acanthus in red ink, on square beaded grounds, all delicately tinted with green: f. 17v, Epiphany, f. 95v, Ascension, f. 102v, Corpus Christi, f. 103v, First Sunday after the Pentecost, f. 119, 23rd Sunday after the Octave of Pentecost, f. 121v, Purification, f. 126v, feast of John the Baptist, f. 128, feast of St. Peter, f. 131, feast of St. Michael, f. 136, many martyrs, f. 133, one martyr, and f. 139v, a confessor and pontiff; plus two larger initials, equivalent to three lines of text and music, executed in the same style as these initials, but generally more elaborate, and accompanied by delicate acanthus borders: f. 98, Pentecost; and f. 101v, Trinity Sunday.

Its eight historiated initials, equivalent to three lines of text and music (with smaller initials on ff. 145 and 146, equivalent to two lines of text and music) feature blue initials with curling gold acanthus within the body of the initials on pink grounds, or pink initials with curling acanthus within the body of the initials, on gold grounds; infilled with scenes drawn in pen and ink and then delicately colored with watercolor, with details in shining gold; they are accompanied by exceptionally fine penwork borders, also tinted, and often incorporating figurative details and speech scrolls.

Subjects as follows:

f. 1, (First Sunday in Advent), 'A', King David in prayer, with curling acanthus extending from the initial forming a partial inner border, and with feathery gold borders in the outer and bottom margins, interspersed with painted strawberries and large floral motifs, with small miniatures of the Virgin Mary and God the Father in the outer border (recalling a Tree of Jesse);

f. 12v, (Christmas), 'P', Nativity, with a bar border in the inner margin decorated with delicate ink scrolls, acanthus, and flowers, lightly tinted in blue, orange, and green;

f. 83v, (Easter), 'R', Resurrection, bar border as above;

f. 120, (Dedication of a Church), 'T', Christ and the Apostles with Zacchaeus in the tree, with a scrolling border tinted with green, interspersed with four painted fish and a barrel (or fish trap?, a reference to the apostles the "fishers of men");

f. 133v, (Common of Saints), 'M', St. Andrew and St. James, initial of modelled silver, with a delicate acanthus border in the outer and upper margins;

f. 141v, (Common of Saints, virgins), 'G', Virgin Mary surrounded by cherubs, with acanthus border including two cherubs;

f. 145, (*De beata Maria*), 'S', Mary adoring the Child; smaller initial equivalent to two lines of text and music, with a bar border, surrounded by acanthus;

f. 146, (Office of the Dead), 'R', Skeleton in a tomb with worms in its eyes; smaller orange-red initial equivalent to 2-lines text and music, with acanthus border featuring skulls.

As noted above, we have found no close parallels with the illumination and the unusual and very fine penwork border decoration in our manuscript. Nonetheless stylistic evidence generally points to an origin in the Lower Rhine region, perhaps in or around Cologne. Compare, for example, one leaf from an Antiphonal, now Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS 205, described as originating in Cologne, c. 1510-1520, for a house of the Order of the Holy Cross, probably St. Cornelius at Roermond, Limburg (Online Resources). This leaf was certainly not by the same artist as our Gradual, and the figurative painting style is quite different, but it includes a generally similar, albeit much simpler, delicately tinted penwork acanthus border, and a very similar initial decorated with gold-acanthus within the body of the initial on this particular leaf. In another Antiphonal, Cologne, Erzbischöfliche Diözesan- und Dombibliothek, Hss. 221-225, from c. 1520, the modelling and drawing of the figures in the Pentecost and Blessing Christ are comparable to that of the David and Resurrected Christ in our manuscript (we thank Elliot Adam for this observation; Horst, et al., 2021, pp. 481-499, no. 97). In other respects, however, the decoration of this Antiphonal bears no relationship to our Gradual. Note that that the music in the Fitzwilliam leaf is expressed with square notation, also found in our manuscript, whereas the Cologne Antiphonal, Dom Hss. 221-225, includes Hufnagelschrift notation. Further research is certainly needed. (We thank Professor Jeffrey Hamburger for his expertise, who noted that he had never seen anything quite like this Gradual but suggested the possibility of an origin in the Lower Rhineland, environs of Cologne).

A Gradual is the liturgical book which contains the musical texts for the Mass arranged according to the liturgical year. During the Mass in the later Middle Ages, the priest used a Missal, whereas the cantors and the choir used the Gradual. The texts here include the complete liturgical year: the Temporal (Sundays and feasts celebrating the life of Christ, dependent on the movable feast of Easter), the Sanctoral (fixed feasts of the saints and Virgin Mary), and the Common of Saints. It is an example of a Choir Book, that is a liturgical manuscript designed to be large enough so that the entire choir could sing from a single manuscript, a practice amply documented by miniatures of such groups in manuscripts of the period. These manuscripts often remained in use for several centuries, as was the case here.

The Carthusian Order was founded in 1084 by Bruno of Cologne and his companions in their search for God in solitude in the Chartreuse Mountains. The Carthusian version of the monastic life is a unique one, which combines the solitary life of a hermit with the support of life within a community. The Order was revered throughout the Middle Ages for the austerity and purity of their life, with perpetual closure, almost absolute silence, frequent fasting, and complete abstinence of meat. Daily mass, celebrated by the whole community together in church, was one of the few breaks in their lives of almost unbroken solitude.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Susan Boynton, Consuelo Dutschke, et al. "Liturgical Books" (Columbia University Libraries)
<https://liturgical.columbia.edu/>

Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, Leaf from an Antiphonal, MS 205
<https://collection.beta.fitz.ms/id/object/169750>

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(British Library, Egerton MS 1318, Italy or Lower Rhine, fourteenth century, with Cologne calendar)

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