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Choir Book with Selected Texts for the Mass and Office

In Latin with some Italian, illuminated stenciled book on paper with musical notation
Italy, late 18th-19th century(?)

ii (paper) + 23 + i, (paper), on very thick paper, watermark, "C. Volpini," and an unidentified crest(?), stenciled folio numbers in red top outer corner recto, complete (collation i-ii⁴ iii² iv-v⁴ vi³ vii³), no catchwords, a few quires numbered top outer corner modern pencil, ruled lightly in pencil, prickings remain along the outer bounding lines, one for each text and staff line (justification 390 x 260 mm.), produced with stencils with seven lines of text and seven red four-line staves on each page, red rubrics, red 1-line initials, two blue initials on gold grounds within the rubric on f. 7, FIVE LARGE ILLUMINATED INITIALS, equivalent to one line of text and a musical staff (initial on f. 8 within the opening rubric is somewhat smaller) in the medieval style, white- or silver-patterned red or blue with simple infilling on gold grounds, with lush acanthus leaves in green, blue and purple, with black balls on red ink sprays on ff. 1, 7, 8, 11v, 19v, a few stains but in excellent condition. Eighteenth-century binding of gold-tooled leather with an ecclesiastical coat of arms (charged with three strawberries(?), surmounted by an ecclesiastical hat with six tassels on each side) and border on both covers, smooth spine, edges dyed red, front hinge broken, somewhat rubbed, otherwise good condition. Dimensions 460 x 320 mm.

Books with text made by using stencils occupy an interesting, and relatively unstudied, mid-ground between manuscripts and printing with movable type. This is a particularly lavish example, adorned with illuminated initials, painted by hand. Further research is needed to closely date this volume, which is bound in an eighteenth-century gold-tooled armorial binding (either original with the book, or perhaps re-used for this special volume). Its contents include the Mass and Office of St. Joseph Calasanctius the founder of the Piarist Order, who was canonized in 1867.

PROVENANCE

1. The watermark suggests this book may date from the nineteenth century. This is perplexing since the binding certainly dates from the eighteenth century (probably c. 1767). Interpreting the watermark evidence is difficult. The very thick paper was very probably machine made (the earliest examples of paper made by machine date from 1799), and the Volpini firm appears to have been active in Florence in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century (we thank Meghan Constantinou for her expertise). Paper made by C. Volpini was used for a drawing sold by Forum by William Strang c. 1900 (Online Resources). The same watermark is found on blank music paper c. 1913 (Online resources, used for a score in Milan). However, the firm was active at least as early as 1862, when it exhibited its paper at an international exhibition. Was it active earlier than that? Are the Strang drawing, the music paper, and our volume really made on paper by the same firm? Further research is certainly needed to identify and date the watermark, and to trace the history of paper made by "C. Volpini."

Two alternatives seem possible. If the book and the binding originated together, it seems likely that this was made in the late eighteenth-century for a high-ranking

ecclesiastic, perhaps an abbot or bishop, close-to, or in the Piarist Order, perhaps to celebrate the canonization of the order's founder, St. Joseph Calasanctius (1556-1648), who was canonized in 1767.

Alternatively (as the watermark may suggest), this luxurious book may be a special commemorative volume, made in the later nineteenth century as a replica of an eighteenth-century book, re-using the eighteenth-century binding (we thank Meghan Constantinou for sharing her theories about the origin of this volume). If this is in fact a later nineteenth-century replica of an earlier stenciled volume, it is quite unusual, both as a replica, and as a late example of a book made with stencils.

2. Front flyleaf, f. ii verso, mounted engraving of a small landscape surrounded by ornament against a striped background by Georg Leopold Hertel (printmaker) and Johann Georg Hertel I (publisher) in Augsburg, c. 1760 (Online Resources); engraving 238 x 180 mm., dimensions to plate marks 238 x 180 mm. numbered '4' in pencil, bottom outer corner; lettered "G: I: Hertel. del. et fecit No. 290 I.G. Hertel exc: A: V" Augsburg, c. 1760.
3. Front flyleaf, notes from two booksellers in pencil, f. i, in pencil, "GF/20"; and front flyleaf, f. ii, "Graduale, um 1650."

TEXT

Inside front cover, [index], *Indice de Messe e Vespri*, incipit, "Messa di S. Giuse: Calasantio, 1 Ant: Dei Conf. In 5 Tuo, ... 20";

ff. 1-7, [no rubric, from index, *Messa di S. Giuse. Calasantio*], incipit, "Veni te filii audite me timorem domini ... [Ps. Benedicam ...; Gloria; Kyrie, ...; f. 3v, *Credo*; Sanctus; Agnus dei]";

ff. 7-8, *Ad Vesperas, Antiphona*, incipit, "Domine quinque talenta tradidisti mihi ...";

ff. 8-9v, [from index, *Himno [sic] di S. Giuseppe Cal.*], *Hymnus*, incipit, "Sacram venite supplices josphi ad aram parvuli quos ille primos advocat ... Hymni tributum solvite";

Hymn for the Office of St. Joseph Calasanctius; here longer than the three stanzas printed in Venturi, 1879, p. 376, where it is attributed to Raimundo Ribera.

ff. 9v-11, *Ad Magnificat Ant.*, ...;

The book opens with the Mass and Office of the founding saint of the Piarist order, St. Joseph Calasanctius.

ff. 11v-16v, [index, *Messa degli apostoli*], *In Festo S. Bart. Apostoli, introitus*, incipit, "Mihi autem nimis honorati ...";

ff. 16v-20, [index, *Ves. degli Apostoli*], *Communalis in com. sanctorum apostolorum ad vespas Ant.*, incipit, "Hoc est praecemptum ..."; f. 18, *In Secundis Vesperis Angiphona*, ...; [f. 19, hymn, no rubric], incipit, "Exultet orbis gaudiis coelum ..."; f. 19v, *Ad Magnificat Ant.*, ...;

ff. 20rv, *Nelle Feste degli apostoli a vespro e Mattutino*, ... (including Magnificat, Benedicamus domino; Kyrie);

Mass and Office of an apostle, Common of Saints (the rubric for the Mass identifies the apostle as St. Bartholomew).

ff. 21-23, [rubric found on f. 20v], *In Festo S. Josephki [sic] Calasan. Ad Vesp Ant.*, incipit, *Qui cumque suscepit unum ...*"; ff. 22, *In I Vesp. Magnif.*, ...; *In II Vesp. ad Magn.*, ...; [f. 23v, blank].

Office of St. Joseph Calsanctius, first and second Vespers.

St. Joseph Calasanctius or Calasanz (1556-1648), was born in Spain near Petralta de Sal, Aragon, Spain, studied law and theology, and pursued an ecclesiastical career first in Spain and then in Rome, where he took up the cause of the education of neglected and homeless children, ultimately founding the first free public school in Europe in 1597. From 1602 he lived in a community with others dedicated to teaching, laying the foundation of the Order of Piarists in 1617. Throughout the rest of his life he advocated for the right to free education for the poor, and famously was one of Galileo's supporters. He was canonized July 16, 1767. The mission of the Piarist Order (the Order of Poor Clerics Regular of the Mother of God of the Pious Schools), continues to be education, and in particular the free education of the poor. Today it is an international Order that runs schools in many countries.

Stenciled manuscripts are curious hybrids. They are unique items, like handwritten manuscripts, but were produced with a mechanical aid, and in that sense are more like printed books. Here the text, including the rubrics, running titles, and other headings, and almost certainly the musical notation were all constructed with stencil templates. This example, however, is a hybrid, since it includes painted initials in the medieval style done (quite skillfully) by hand.

Liturgical books made by means of stencil templates, many of them very large Choir Books with musical notation, are an extremely interesting artifact in the history of the book. They flourished in France and Germany in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in some cases, well into the nineteenth century. Producing a book with stencils, although labor intensive, may have been quicker than copying a book by hand; it was also a method that was easier to learn than copying books in formal scripts. Gilles Filleau des Billettes composed an extensive account of the process for the "Description des Arts et Métiers" of the French Royal Academy of Science c. 1700 (edited in Kindel, 2013). In his description he suggests the practice was created by someone (name unknown) c. 1650, and specifically mentions that books for specific churches were written in this way, as opposed to printed books used more generally by the whole church ("C'est celui par lequel on écrit les plus beaux livres d'églises particulières qui n'ont pas besoin d'être autant répandus que ceux qu'on imprime pour l'usage général du clergé ..."; quoted by François, 2010). Another early historian of these books, Fischer van Waldheim, writing c. 1800, suggested that they were invented by a Trappist monk in 1674.

Stenciled liturgical books, often made in monastic settings, are known from the mid-seventeenth century. The practice probably began in France, and then spread around Catholic western and southern Europe, including the Low Countries (presently francophone Belgium),

Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, and possibly even Mexico. Numerous examples are known from France (François, 2010; O'Meara, 1933). One example has been identified in England (I thank Mr. Eric Kindel for sharing his research, in correspondence, 2012). In Germany the monasteries around Mainz were known for their stenciled books (see Schreiber, 1927; Gottron, 1938; Rodrigues, 1973; and Rosenfeld, 1973). It is difficult to judge how many stenciled books are still extant. Descriptions of these books often fail to recognize the process. There has been no attempt yet at a general census, although it is a topic that has increasingly in recent years attracted the attention of scholars of the history of the book.

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Milan, 1931, musical score with watermark, C. Volpini.
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