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Breviary (Use of Montier-la-Celle, Diocese of Troyes)

In Latin, manuscript on parchment  
[France, Champagne, c. 1510-1520]

*156 folios, complete, in quires of 8 (first folio copied on first flyleaf, ii-xx<sup>8</sup>, xxi<sup>2</sup>), written in a cursive script in light brown ink by two separate scribes (ff. 3-153v and ff. 1-2v/154v-156v), on 18 to 20 long lines (justification: 62 x 78 mm), frame for text ruled in light red, rubrics in red, catchwords, some quire signatures, line-fillers in red, numerous small initials in red. Bound in an elegant seventeenth-century gilt binding [dated 1611 on back board], brown calf on pasteboards, gilt spine in four compartments with foliate and rinceaux tools (restored spine), covers with gilt roll-tool and double fillet inner panel containing an oval-shaped medallion that reads "F / Tous / Saints" on upper cover and "Roglet / 1611" on bottom cover, four gilt fleur-de-lis fleurons at corners of inner panel, outer panels composed of same gilt roll-tool friezes, pointillé and double fillets, remains of ties on upper and back covers, gilt fillet on board edges, gilt edges (upper part of spine fragile). Dimensions 135 x 102 mm.*

Complete, in good condition, and preserved in an elegant binding, this Breviary comes from one of the great Benedictine abbeys in Champagne. Its execution dates just at the moment of renewed activity under the notable abbots Charles the Refuge and Antoine Girard, who sponsored the transcription of a series of liturgical books for the use of the Abbey of Montier-la-Celle. It is the only surviving Breviary from this important period in the abbey's history, and it may preserve the hands of two of the scribes recorded by documents.

## PROVENANCE

1. Use of Montier-la-Celle as specified on folio 27: "Sequitur officium beatissime ac gloriosissime virginis Marie secundum usum et morem preclare abbacie monasterii Celle Trecensis ordinis sancti benedicti." The provenance is confirmed by the Calendar that records the feast of both patron saints: Frobert (8 Jan.) and Translation of Frobert (16 Oct.) (ff. 3 and 12) and Ayoul or AYGULPHUS (3 Sept.)

(fol. 11) and *Inventio sancti Aygulphi* (27 Feb.). A Benedictine abbey, Montier-la-Celle was founded by Saint Frobert, a monk from Luxeuil († 673). Located in the diocese of Troyes, the abbey was placed under royal protection (Cottineau, II, col. 1952-1953). Most of the books that formed part of the medieval library of Montier-la-Celle are now in the collection of the Bibliothèque municipale of Troyes (20 manuscripts described: see CGM, II, p. 1017).

2. Upper and back boards of dated binding read : " F / Tous / Saints" and "Roglet / 1611." This latter name could be that of a previous owner that had this manuscript elegantly bound. "Roglet" is a common surname from the Champagne region.

## TEXT

ff. 1-2v, Common of the Saint: second part (beginning of the Common of the Saints is found on ff. 154v-156v) ; f. 1: "diebus ferialis," f. 1v: "in natali unius confessoris," f. 2-2v: "in natali unius virgiis martiris";

ff. 3-14v, Calendar for Montier-la-Celle: local champenois and Montier-la-Celle patron saints such as Saint Frobert, Saint Sabinien martyr and bishop of Troyes (24 Jan.), Saint Sabine (29 Jan.), as well as Benedictine saints (Aigulphe, Hidulphe, Benedict, 18 July).

ff. 15-26v, Temporale: ff. 15-16: "feria secunda," ff. 16-18: "in adventu," f. 18-18v: "in commemoratio de trinitate," ff. 19-20: "feria tertia," ff. 20-22: "feria quarta," ff. 22v-23v: "feria quinta," ff. 23v-26v: "feria Sexta", f. 26v: "sabbato quere in officio beate marie virginis ", f. 113, numerous references to the psalms and prayers contained in the Breviary.

ff. 27-40v, Office of the Virgin: " [...] secundum usum et morem praeclare abbatiae monasterii Celle tresensis ordinum sancti Benedicti" (f. 27); matins, ff. 40v-49, lauds; ff. 49-54v, prime; f. 54v-59v, terce; ff. 59v-64v, sext; ff. 64v-69v, none; ff. 69v-78, vespers; ff. 78- 82v, compline;

ff. 83-84, Suffrages: Peter, Frobert and Aigulphe, Godon, "commemoratio de sancta Trinitate," "commemoratio de sancta Cruce," "adventum," "nativitas Domini," "pro pace," Michael, John, Peter and Paul, the Apostles, Lawrence, the Martyrs, Relics, Martin, Nicolas, Benedict, the Confessors, Mary Magdalena, Catherine, the Virgins;

ff. 90-97, Seven Penitential Psalms;

ff. 97-105v, Litany and Prayers;

ff. 105v-125v, Office of the Dead;

ff. 125v-132v, Recommendation of the Soul: "commendatio animarum";

ff. 133-144, "in commemoratione beate Marie virginis que sit diebus sabbatis," f. 133, matins; f. 138v, prime; f. 142, terce; f. 142, sext; f. 142v, none.

ff. 144v-153v, Sanctorale: "in commemoratione beati Frodoberti/ Petri/ Godoni/ Aygulphy/ omnibus sanctis."

ff. 154, *Super evangelium ; De beata Maria benedictionis (primo, secundo et tertio nocturni)*;

ff. 154v-156v, Common of the Saints: "in natali divinis apostoli," "in natali unius martiris," "de uno martiro non pontifice," "in natali plurimorum martirum," "in natali unius pontificis," "item de uno pontifico," "in natali plurimorum pontificorum." Lack of space has forced the scribe to finish the Common of the Saints on the first flyleaf and beginning of the first quire.

Breviaries for the use of Montier-la-Celle are rare: Leroquais records only three other breviaries for this use in public collections. These are Troyes, BM, MS. 109 (Leroquais, 1932, IV, no. 819) ; Troyes, BM, MS. 1974 (Leroquais, 1932, IV, no. 859) and Châlons-sur-Marne, BM, MS. 360 (Leroquais, 1932, I, no. 150). The first manuscript is dated in the late thirteenth/ early fourteenth century and reads: "Breviarium ad usum monasterii Cellae prope Treca". The second manuscript from the fourteenth century is a "bréviaire de chambre" or portable breviary.

The present manuscript was probably copied in the abbey under the directives of either one or two important abbots: Charles de Refuge (1488-1514), who was succeeded by Antoine Girard (elected 1514; confirmed 1517). It fits precisely into a period of intense scribal activity at the abbey.

In his study on Montier-la-Celle, Jean Godefroy refers to these abbots: "Charles the Refuge had a taste for beautiful books because he possessed a magnificent Breviary in which his arms are repeatedly reproduced. Also, he was concerned about the upkeep of the liturgical books of the abbey. He did not have a Breviary for the Use of Montier-la-Celle printed, because the cost would have been too great, but he employed his own scribes. Under the terms of a curious contract, Jean de Marisy worked for him for four years (1509-1513). Others who undertook the upkeep of the abbey (buying cloth for vestments and so forth) did not fail to oversee also the maintenance and enrichment of the books for the church. Mr. Remon, a priest and scribe, and especially Brother Georges de Fontaine, Prior of Romilly, spent the year writing Breviaries and Antiphonaries for the use of Montier-la-Celle" (Godefroy, 1932, pp. 61 and 66).

(Charles de Refuge avait le goût des beaux livres car il possédait un magnifique bréviaire dans lequel ses armes étaient fréquemment reproduites. Aussi ne manquait-il pas de faire entretenir les livres liturgiques de l'abbaye. S'il n'avait pas fait éditer un bréviaire à

l'usage de Montier-la-Celle, dont le débit n'aurait pas couvert les frais, il emploie des écrivains. Il loue Jean de Marisy pour quatre ans (1509-1513) par un contrat fort curieux. [...] On voit que les commissaires avaient hérité du souci de Charles de Refuge pour tout ce qui pouvait contribuer à la pompe du culte. Ils achètent encore de la toile pour des aubes, et ne manquent pas de veiller à l'entretien et à l'augmentation des livres d'église. Messire Remon, prêtre et "escripvain de forme" et surtout frère Georges de Fontaine, prieur de Romilly, passent l'année à écrire des bréviaires et des antiphonaires à l'usage de Montier-la-Celle).

Previously unrecorded witness to this flurry of activity at Montier-la-Celle in the first decades of the sixteenth century, our manuscript may preserve the hands of the above-mentioned scribes Jean de Marisy, Messire Remon, or Georges de Fontaine.

## LITERATURE

*Catalogue général des manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques des départements*, tome II [Troyes, par Auguste Harmand], Paris, Imprimerie impériale, 1855 [CGM].

Godefroy, Jean. *Un demi-siècle de vie Benedictine pendant la Renaissance à l'abbaye champenoise de Montier-la-Celle*, Ligugé, E. Aubin, 1932.

Godefroy, Jean. "Les derniers jours de l'abbaye de Montier-la-Celle", in *Revue de l'Aube*, 1910, pp. 21-23.

Leroquais, Victor (Abbé), *Les bréviaires manuscrits des bibliothèques publiques de France*, tome I et IV, Mâcon, Protat freres [et] Paris, l'Auteur, 1932-1934.

## Online Resources

Ongoing project to make available the Roman Breviary online in Latin and English, with much complementary information (site of the lay Confraternity of Saints Peter and Paul) <http://www.breviary.net/>