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## MONASTIC RITUAL AND PASSION SEQUENCE

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment  
Italy, dated 1518

66 ff., including parchment flyleaves, parchment of Italian preparation, complete (collation: [1] + i-viii<sup>s</sup> + [1]), horizontal catchwords, written in brown ink in a slightly sloping bâtarde script, on up to 20 long lines (justification 106 x 73 mm), ruled in plummet, paragraph marks in red, some headings in red, capitals stroked in yellow, SEVEN PAGES WITH SQUARE NOTED MUSIC on a 4-line staff traced in red ink, initials painted in alternating red and blue throughout, many with guide letters visible. Contemporary binding of overturned leather (tan-color) over thin wooden boards, back sewn on 3 thongs, gilt edges, metal clasp and catch replaced (Very good sound condition, the odd defect to parchment, traces of ink on l. 11v, and some minor defects to covers of binding). Dimensions 161 x 110 mm.

In its contemporary and unrestored leather binding, this manuscript is a small portable monastic ritual or *libellus*, a type of book that varied considerably according to local customs. It contains a description of the rites administered to an ill monk as well as the burial rites of a monk or a layman, with the accompanying prayers, chants and processions. The present *libellus* testifies that monks not only took on pastoral duties within their monastery but also ensured burial rites of members of the lay community.

## PROVENANCE

1. Written for the use of monks (the prior and convent are mentioned on f. 12v, although no specific convent is indicated), perhaps Carthusian to judge from the *punctus flexus* punctuation and the inclusion of Saint Hugh of Lincoln in the otherwise sparse Litany (f. 8). The book is dated 1518 with the name "Hieronymus" in red (fol. 65v): this may be the scribe's name or a simple invocation. The name of Saint Jerome also appears in red in the Litany (f. 8) and that of Saint Katherine of Siena (f. 8v), canonized in 1461. This could suggest that the manuscript might have been tied to the Hieronymites (or Hermits of St-Jerome) of Fiesole, that venerated both Jerome and Katherine of Siena (see *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques...* (1993), vol. XXIV, col. 422).
2. Ex-collection Dr. André Rooryck, his MS. 23.

## TEXT

f. 1, Apostles Creed, rubric, *Simbolum apostolorum*; incipit, "Credo in deum patrem omnipotente creatorem celi et terre..."

f. 1v, blank;

ff. 2-6v, Services of the Last Rites [Anointing the sick], rubric, *Quomodo monachus oleo infirmorum sit unguendus* [How the monk anoints the sick with holy oil]; incipit, "Cum autem frater egrotus morti propinquare putabitur congregatus conventus ad eum visitam..."; additional rubric reads, *Porro a die un[c]tionis aqua benedicta in aliquo vase ibi maneat. Ipsa vero die qua aliquis inunctus est: posit eum visitare fratres et etiam redditi*;

ff. 6v-9v, Litany, incipit, "Kyrieleyson..."; Saint Jerome in red (f. 8); also Saint Katherine of Siena in red (f. 8v) [canonized in 1461]; other saints, in brown ink, include saint Hugh of Lincoln (f. 8);

ff. 9v-21v, Various prayers for the Dead, incipit, "Misericordia tuam domine sancta pater omnipotens..."; including burial rites to follow in the case of a layman's death: "Cum laycus defunctus portatur superius ponit ante portam ecclesie superioris et presente conventu..." (ff. 12v-13);

ff. 22-25, Hymn, *Credo quod redemptor meus vivit*, with music;

ff. 25v-65v, Passion sequences from the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, rubric, *Sequitur .iiii.<sup>or</sup> [quattuor] passiones. Passio domini nostri Yhesu Christi secundum Matheum*; incipit, "In illo tempore dixit Yhesus discipulis suis..."; f. 38v, rubric, *Passio domini nostril Yhesu Christi secundum Marcum*; f. 49, rubric, *Passio domini nostril Yhesu Christi secundum Lucam*; f. 58v, rubric, *Incipit passio domini nostril Yhesu Christi secundum Iohanem*;

f. 66, Added prayers to Saint Bernard and Augustine, rubric, *Devotus Bernardus*; incipit, "Passio tua domine ultimum refugium singulare remedium..."; heading, *Augustinus*; incipit: "Tota spes mea est in morte domini mei. Mors eius est meritum meum et refugium meum...";

f. 66v, blank.

This manuscript contains an account of the services of the last rites to a monk of the monastery or of a layman. It opens with the Apostles Creed, perhaps added on the first leaf. The principal text begins with the anointing of the ill man with holy oil and ashes. A litany, prayers for the dead, burial ritual and Passion Sequences complete the manual.

Rituals were liturgical books reserved for priests, whereas Pontificals were intended for bishops, containing rites only bishops could administer. The first known Rituals (twelfth century) come from monastic environments, with the appearance of parish Rituals in the thirteenth century under diverse appellations such as *Rituale*, *Manuale*, *Sacerdotale* or *Parochiale*. An attempt to unify the various circulating Rituals was made in 1523 with the publication of a *Liber sacerdotalis* or *Sacerdotale romanum* that was well used in France and Italy (On the development of the Ritual as a liturgical book, see Palazzo, 1993).

The present manuscript does not constitute a complete Ritual as it does not cover all the sacerdotal functions of a secular or regular priest. Instead, the manuscript can be classified amongst the liturgical books referred to as "libelli" that contain a brief description of certain rites and their accompanying prayers and readings for very specific pastoral needs such as penitence, extreme unction of the sick and dying, and burial rites. Their small format allowed for easy transportation as the priest was often itinerant when it came to administering last rites or burying the deceased (on these "libelli," see Gy, 1990, esp. pp. 111 and 120: "Des livrets séparés destinés à telle ou telle action liturgique [...] La fin du moyen âge a également utilisé des *libelli*, spécialement des livrets de la liturgie des maladies et des défunts, ou des livrets funéraires sous divers formes [...] Le nom d'*obsequiale* pour les livrets de funérailles est surtout germanique" [Separate books destined for this or that liturgical action ... The end of the Middle Ages also used *libelli*, especially books of the liturgy for the ill and the dead or funeral books of different types ... The name *obsequiale* for funeral books is above all Germanic]; see also Palazzo, 1993).

Although clearly made in Italy, and dated 1518, the original owner (monk or priest) or religious foundation of this *libellus* remains unknown. Perhaps the emphasis placed on Jerome in the Litany, repeated at the end of the manuscript, points to a monastery where Jerome was particularly venerated, such as the Hieronymites of Fiesole, founded by Carlo de Montegraneli (originally a Franciscan, died in 1417), a congregation that soon incorporated a convent in Siena (this could explain saint Katherine of Sienna, in red in the Litany). The congregation eventually counted some 40 convents, and adopted the rule of Saint Augustine in 1441 (Helyot, 1715, IV, pp. 18-25).

The medieval Latin Church developed a ritual process around death, burial, and the incorporation of souls into the otherworld that became a standard for Christian Europeans until the Reformation and is still applicable to Catholics today. Interestingly, the present manuscript shows how laymen were brought to a specific monastery to be buried: the body of a layman was delivered directly to the door of the monastery, and the manuscript details the successive burial rites, prayers, and processions, from the monastery to the church to the grave: "Cum laycus defunctus portatur superiorus, ponit ante portam ecclesie superioris et presente conventu, prior indutus cuculla cum stola exit ad eum..." (f. 12v). Historically, monks were allowed to administer last rites to sick laymen, although this was a controversial issue since it often meant breaking their vow of enclosure.

## LITERATURE

Avril, Joseph. "La pastorale des malades et des mourants aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles," in *Death in the Middle Ages*, Louvain, Louvain University Press, 1983, pp. 88-106.

Gy, P.-M. "Collectaire, ritual, processional," in *La liturgie dans l'histoire*, Paris, Cerf, 1990, pp. 91-126.

Helyot, P. *Histoire des ordres monastiques, religieux et militaires...*, A Paris, Chez N. Gosselin, 1715, vol. IV.

Palazzo, E. *Histoire des livres liturgiques. Le Moyen Age. Des origines au XIIIe siècle*, Paris, Beauchesne, 1993.

Paxton, Frederick S. *A Medieval Latin Death Ritual: The Monastic Customaries of Bernard and Ulrich of Cluny*. Missoula (MT), 1993.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

On the Sacrament of Extreme Unction

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/05716a.htm>

On Death in the Middle Ages

[http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/deth/hd\\_deth.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/deth/hd_deth.htm)