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**Noted Hymnal with noted portions of the Mass (for Franciscan use)  
In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment and paper  
[Northern Italy, Ferrara?, c. 1450-1475]**

222 ff., followed by 17 paper flyleaves, missing an undetermined number of leaves (collation: i-iv<sup>10</sup>, v<sup>8</sup> [10-2, last 2 ff. of quire likely cancelled], vi<sup>5</sup> [10-5, missing 5 first ff. of quire], vii-x<sup>10</sup>, xi<sup>11</sup> [10+1], xii-xvi<sup>10</sup>, xvi<sup>7</sup> [10-3], xviii<sup>10</sup>, xix<sup>10</sup>, xx<sup>6</sup>, XXI<sup>8</sup>, xxii<sup>10</sup>, xxiii<sup>3</sup> [6-3, missing 3 last ff. of quire], xxiv<sup>12</sup>, xxv<sup>3</sup> (original structure uncertain) followed by paper quires: xxxvi<sup>8</sup>, xxvii<sup>3</sup> (original structure uncertain), on parchment with an added section on paper (no visible watermark), written in a rounded Gothic liturgical hand in dark brown ink (justification 105 x 75 mm), a number of bands, some later, rubrics in red, catchwords, opening initial painted in pink on a burnished gold ground with a floral infill on a blue ground and green acanthus leaves extending into the margins, noted music on four-line staves traced in red, elegant line-fillers in empty space of staves (for ex. ff. 142v-143). Bound in a later 17<sup>th</sup> century (Franciscan?) binding of reddish-brown calf over pasteboard, sides paneled to a double gilt frame with gilt floral tools at angles of inner frame, gilt decor placed over double frame composed of multiple fillets in blind, figures of Christ on the Cross on upper cover and Saint Clare holding a monstrance and crozier, both gilt in central medallions surrounded by radiating gilt rays, leather and brass catches (Some worming to front cover, sections of text scratched and rewritten to adapt to change in liturgy, quire 10, ff. 84-93v, is loose, and almost detached, f. 231 detached). Dimensions 143 x 105 mm.

Hymnals are not common among later medieval liturgical manuscripts, and this one in an intriguingly small format is especially interesting. It contains some of the most famous hymns of the early Church, along with other noted texts for the Office and the Mass, employed here in a Franciscan context continually used through the seventeenth century (witness also the later Franciscan binding) and frequently modified, scratched out, written over, with an almost palimpsest treatment.

## PROVENANCE

1. Script and decoration suggest an Italian origin for this manuscript, likely northern. A specifically Franciscan provenance is suggested by the emphasis accorded to hymns in honor of Franciscan saints in the later paper portion of this manuscript (Francis, Anthony and Clare), and by a few marginal notes such as "De sancto Francisco" (f. 102v).

2. The manuscript was subsequently bound in a 17<sup>th</sup> century binding, with figures of Christ on the upper board and Saint Clare on the back board (confirming continuing Franciscan use of this manuscript). There is a 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> century inscription on lower pastedown that reads: "Ignacio

Varca Hymni....” A later inscription on back pastedown reads: “Lecionario varia Hymni nunc sancte nobis spiritus pro varie <?> temporii ....” It is possible the manuscript was assembled in the early modern era (likely when it was bound), from as many as four different fifteenth-century Italian manuscripts.

3. Private Collection, France.

## TEXT

ff. 1-84, Noted hymns for the Office, usually for vespers and lauds; temporale from Advent to Corpus Christi: f. 1, *Sabbato adventus dominica ad uesperas*. Creator alme syderum eternal lux ... [cf. RH 3734; “Conditor alme”]; f. 3, *Ad laudes ymnus*. En clara vox redarguit obscura ... [cf. RH 22199, Vox clara ecce intonat]; f. 5, [In *nativitate domino ad vespas et ad nocturnum hymnus*. Iesu redemptor omnium quem ... [cf. RH 2960 *Criste redemptor*]; f. 8, *Ad laudes ymnus*, A solis ortus ... [RH 26]; f. 11, *In Epiphanya domino ad uesperas*. Crudelis herodes deum regem ... [cf. RH 8073 *Hostis herodes*]; f. 13, *Ad uesperas ymnus*, Audi benigne conditor nostras preces ... [RH 1449]; f. 15, *Ad laudes*, O sol salutis in.. jesu ...; f. 17, *In dominicis diebus ad uesperas*, Aures ad nostras deitatis preces ... [RH 1612]; f. 20v, *Sabbato de passione ad uesperas ymnus*. Uexilla regis prodeunt fulget cruces ... [RH 21481]; f. 23v, *Ad laudes*. Lustra [sic] sex qui iam peregit ... [RH 10765]; f. 23v, *Dominica prima post pasca ad uesperas*, Ad regias agni da ... [cf. RH 110 *Ad cenam agni*]; f. 25v, *Ad laudes*, Aurora caelum prepiat ...; f. 26v, *In ascensione domino ad uesperas et ad laudes ymnus*, Salutis suma<?> ...; f. 28v, *In pentecosten ad vespas*, Ueni creator spiritus mentes ... [RH 21204]; f. 31v, *In festo sancta trinitatis ad uesperas ymnus*, Iam sol recedit igneus ...; f. 34v, *Ad nocturnum ymnus*, O lux beata trinitas tres ... [RH 13155]; f. 36v, *Ad laudes ymnus*, Festi laudes hodierni ritu ... [RH 6151]; f. 38v, *In festo corporis christi ad uesperas ymnus*, Pange lingua glorioso ... [RH 14467]; f. 44, *Ad laudes ymnus*, Uerbum supernum ... [RH 21398]; [abbreviated sanctorale, including:] f. 45v, *In conuersione sancti pauli*, Egregrie doctor ... [cf. RH 4791, *Doctor egregie*]; f. 46v, *In cathedra sancti Petri ad vespas et ad nocturnum*, Quodcumque onde [?] nexibus ... [cf. RH 16918, *Quodcumque uinclis*]; f. 47v, *Ad laudes*, now reads: Beate pastore petre .... [clearly changed from “Iam bone pastor petre .. RH 9196]; f. 48v, [rubric expunged through scraping] Iesu dulcis memoria ...// [ends imperfectly; followed by seven stubs]; f. 49, *In festo sancti michaelis archangeli ad uesperas et ad nocturnum*, Te splendor et uirtus ... [this feast not in Keble 31]; f. 50v, *Ad laudes*, Christe sanctorum decus ...; *In nativitate beati Iohannis bapstiste ad uesperas hymnus*, Ut queant laxis ... [RH 21039]; f. 55, *Ad laudes*, O nimis felix ... [RH 13311]; f. 56v, *In festo omnium sanctorum ad uesperas et ad nocturnum*, Placare septem ...; f. 59, *Ad laudes*, Salutis eterne ...; f. 60v, *In sancta marie Magdalene ad uesperas et ad nocturnum*, Nardi maria pistici ...; [same hand continues, no break in ms, with common of saints:] f. 61v, *In nativitate apostolorum ad uesperas et ad laudes*, Exultet orbis ... [cf. RH 5832, *Exultet celum*]; f. 63v, *In nativitate unius martiris* ..., Deus tuorum ... [RH 4534]; ... concluding with f. 77, *In dedicatione ecclesie* ...; and, in the same hand: f. 81, *In assumptione beate marie in omnibus festis eius*. *Ad uesperas ymnus*, Ave maria stella ....

Hymns included often, but not always, agree with those found in Franciscan Breviaries; with frequent changes to the text in a later hand, usually without accompanying changes to the musical notation (exceptions include the musical changes, f. 33).

ff. 84-94v, [same hand as hymnal] Noted antiphons for processions for Purification and Palm Sunday [ending imperfectly f. 94v, stub follows; ff. 95-102v now missing];

ff. 103-143, [new hand] Noted short responses (*responsorium breve*), versicles and responses for Terce, Sext and None, and sometimes Prime, beginning imperfectly in the first Sunday after Epiphany, and continuing through the Temporal, followed by an abbreviated Sanctorale (Invention of the Cross, Michael, John the Baptist, Assumption, Exaltation of the Cross, and the Dedication of St. Michael), and common of saints; concluding with the dedication of a church and the *responsorium breve* for Compline during the paschal season [copied by two scribes, with a new hand beginning f. 133];

ff. 143-151, *In agenda mortuorum*, noted Mass for the Dead [f. 150v-151 scraped and rewritten in a later hand];

ff. 151-178, Noted portions of the Mass, Common of Saints, interrupted by directions for the chant, f. 159v with notes on psalmody, "Primi toni melodia psallat in directo / Secundus in medio et infine sic variatur... [notes] Pri. re la / Se. re fa / Ter. mi fa..."; [ff. 151v-155v and 160-177v completely scraped and rewritten by a later hand];

ff. 178-210, Noted texts from the Mass, often with multiple settings, including Kyrie, Magnificat, Gloria, Item missus est (ff. 201v-202), and concluding with eight settings for the Gloria (ff. 207-209) [ff. 176-179, completely scraped and rewritten; ff. 196v-200, and f. 210, scraped and now without text];

ff. 210v-222, Noted portions of a Mass for the a Marian Feast (the Assumption?);

ff. 222-233 [beginning of paper quires; later hand], Noted hymn, "Aurea luce et decore rose ...," and other texts [f. 233v blank];

ff. 234-239 [added later; in another hand], Settings for "Nunc sanctus nobis spiritus" for eighteen feasts, including Francis, Anthony, Clare and Louis, and other texts for the Office.

Some of the most famous hymns of the early Church are included here. The manuscript opens with the "Creator alme siderum" (Creator of the stars of the night) which is based on the seventh-century anonymous hymn and the "Conditor alme siderum" composed along the model of classical Latin poetry (f. 1). "Vexilla Regis," one of the greatest hymns of the Roman rite liturgy, was written by Venantius Fortunatus who lived between 530 and 609 (f. 21). "Ut queant laxis" or "Hymnus in Ioannem" is a plainchant hymn to John the Baptist written by Paulus Diaconus, the eighth-century Lombard historian (f. 53). Finally, the "Exsultet orbis gaudiis" (Now Let the Earth with Joy Resound), written in the tenth century by an unknown author, is used for Vespers and Lauds for the Common of the Apostles and Evangelists out of Pascal Time. Liturgically interesting, also, is the inclusion of the processions for the Purification of the Virgin and during the Pascal season (cf. f. 84ff.). The music accompanying the hymns deserves further study.

It appears likely this manuscript was assembled in the early modern era (likely when it was bound), from as many as four different fifteenth-century Italian manuscripts. Numerous leaves were completely scraped and rewritten during this process, and the texts at the end were added. The

resulting compilation includes texts for both the Office and the Mass, in an intriguingly small format.

## LITERATURE

Brownlie, John. *Hymns of the Early Church*, London, Morgan & Scott, 1913.

Chevalier, U. *Repertorium hymnologicum, catalogue des chants, hymnes, proses, séquences, tropes.*, 6 vols, Louvain: 1892-1921 [RH].

Messenger, Ruth Ellis. *The Medieval Latin Hymn*, Washington D.C., Capital Press, 1953.

Reynolds, William J. and Milburn Price. *A Survey of Christian Hymnody*, revised and enlarged by David Music and Milburn Price, Carol Stream, IL, Hope Publishing Company, 1999.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Catholic Encyclopedia on Hymns

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07595a.htm>

Cantica Nova's Online Catalogue

[http://www.canticanova.com/catalog/products/a\\_creat.htm](http://www.canticanova.com/catalog/products/a_creat.htm)

Introduction to Latin Hymnody

<http://www.smithcreekmusic.com/Hymnology/Latin.Hymnody/intro.latin.html>