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## Psalter (Premonstratensian Use)

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Western Germany (diocese of Trier?), early thirteenth-century, with additions after c. 1234

113 folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, top, outer corner recto, now missing 12 leaves: leaf before f. 1, and leaves following ff. 36, 69, 84 (two), 88, 90, 92, 99, 107 (three), (collation, i<sup>s</sup> [-1, with loss of text] ii-iv<sup>s</sup> v<sup>s</sup> [-6, following f. 36v, with loss of text] vi-viii<sup>s</sup> ix<sup>s</sup> [-2, following f. 63, cancelled with no loss of text] x<sup>o</sup> [-1, before f. 70, with loss of text, -5 and 8, following f. 72 and 74, cancelled with no loss of text] xi<sup>s</sup> xii<sup>s</sup> [-1 and 2, before f. 85, with loss of text] xiii<sup>s</sup> [-2, following f. 90, with loss of text, -5, after f. 92, with loss of text] xiv<sup>s</sup> [-5 and 6, following f. 99, with loss of text] xv<sup>s</sup> [-7 and 8, following f. 107, with loss of text] xvi<sup>s</sup> [-1, before f. 108, with loss of text, -8, cancelled, with no loss of text]), no catchwords or signatures, copied by two scribes: ff. 1-104v, copied above the top line in an upright, early gothic bookhand in twenty-two long lines; ff. 105-end, copied above and below the top line in a quick gothic bookhand in twenty-one to twenty-two long lines (justification 143-140 x 94-90 mm.), ruled in lead or brown crayon with single full-length vertical bounding lines, and with the top two or three and bottom two horizontal rules full-across on some folios, prickings outer margins, red rubrics, one-line red initials, three-line red initials with green pen decoration, ONE five-line, and SEVEN larger ten- to twelve-line, gold and silver initials, described in detail below, of three types; on diagonal grounds of red and green, infilled with red and green pen work, on square grounds framed in green, or infilled with white vine and leaf spirals, on square grounds framed in green. Many leaves are darkened through use, but overall in excellent condition; outer margins cut-away, ff. 45, 62, 67, 74, 100, and 104, with no loss of text, or loss of a few letters. Bound in a fifteenth-century dark brown leather binding over boards, cut flush with textblock, with rounded corners and edges, decorated with rectangular double fillets forming a center panel with diagonal double fillets, spine with three raised bands and head and tail bands, once fastened back to front; back cover, two brass plates with remains of leather straps, and holes in the middle of the front cover for pins; front and back covers are quite worn, rebacked in cloth, with the remains of the spine laid down, front cover almost detached. Dimensions 193 x 136 mm.

This is a very fine example of an illuminated Psalter from a German House of Premonstratensian Canons, probably from the diocese of Trier. Dating from the early thirteenth century, it is decorated with handsome illuminated initials that perpetuate the traditions of earlier twelfth-century manuscripts. It is increasingly uncommon to find illuminated German manuscripts from this early date offered for sale. The early binding is an additional draw.

## PROVENANCE

1. Copied in Germany for a House of Premonstratensian Canons in the early thirteenth century. The manuscript was copied by two scribes; the script used by the first scribe, who copied the Psalms and Canticles, suggests a date early in the thirteenth-century, but before ca.

1234, since the texts copied in the second, later hand at the end of the volume must date after 1234 (St. Dominic, canonized in 1234 is included in the litany; note St. Francis, canonized in 1228 is an addition in a contemporary hand). The litany includes St. Eucharius, the first Bishop of Trier, St. Maternus, the first bishop of Cologne, who died at Trier, and St. Valerius, the second bishop of Trier, suggesting the manuscript was copied in the diocese of Trier.

2. The Liturgical use of the office of the Dead establishes the connection with the Premonstratensian Order. Known also as the White Canons or the Norbertines, the Premonstratensians were founded in 1120 by Norbert of Xanten. The order was well-established by the thirteenth century with more than 1,000 houses by 1230. Their way of life combined an austere regular monastic existence and an active cure of souls.

3. Belonged to Leander van Ess (1772-1847); "Professor van Ess in Margurg," in ink, top margin, f. 1, and printed label, "Van Ess," inside front cover. Leander van Ess was born as Johann Heinrich van Ess, and adopted the name Leander in 1790, when he became a monk at Marienmünster in 1790. He remained at the monastery until 1803, when it was secularized. He served as a Catholic Pastor and Professor of Theology at Marburg from 1812-1822, and then retired to Darmstadt, where he died in 1847. A distinguished biblical scholar, known for his translation of the New Testament into German, van Ess was also an important collector of books and manuscripts. His collection was assembled primarily from German monasteries that were dissolved during his lifetime (see Hermann Knaus, "Die Handschriften des Leander van Ess," *Archiv für Geschichte des Buchwesens* 1 (1959) 331-336; and the works and website by Milton Gatch, cited below).

4. In 1823, his collection was acquired by Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872) (see *Sammlung und Verzeichnis handschriftlicher Bücher . . . welcher besitzt Leander van Ess*, Darmstadt, 1823, and Munby. *Phillipps Studies* 3:29-30). This manuscript was Phillipps MS 473: paper label with shelfmark on the spine; f. 1, shelfmark in pencil, and stamped, "Sir T. P. Midell [sic] Hill, 473"; see *The Phillipps Manuscripts. Catalogus librorum manuscriptorum in bibliotheca D. Thomae Phillipps, B.T., impressum typis Medio-Montanis 1837-1871*, reprint with intro by A. N. L. Munby, London, Holland Press, p. 6, MS 473.

5. Inside front cover, clipping from German sales catalogue, with "2675," in pencil above, and "78084-190," below; f. 1, in pencil, "MS 512, 78084-190."

## TEXT

ff. 1-97, Psalms 1-150 in biblical order, now missing the following eight folios; text begins imperfectly at Psalm 2:9, "//eos in uirga ferrea . . ."; f. 36v ends imperfectly at Psalm 53:9, "... despexit oculus mei//," and f. 37 begins at Psalm 54:24, "[sangui]//num et dolosi . . ."; Psalm 100 ends imperfectly at f. 69v, and f. 70 begins at Psalm 101:21, "//ut audiret gemitus . . .; two folios missing between ff. 84v-85, with f. 84v ending at Psalm 118:42, "... mihi uerbum quia spe//," and f. 85 beginning at Psalm 118:99, "//tua meditation mea . . ."; f. 88v ends imperfectly at Psalm 123:8, "adiutorium nostrum in nomine//," and f. 89 begins at Psalm 128:1, "Sepe expugnauerunt . . ."; f. 90v ends imperfectly at Psalm 134:9, "... Que percussit gentes//," and f. 91 begins at Psalm 136:3,

“//nos uerba cantionum ...”; f. 92v ends imperfectly at Psalm 139:11, “... in ignem deicies eos//” and f. 93 begins at Psalm 142:1, “Domine exaudi orationem meam ...”;

ff. 97-104v, Gallican Canticles, as follows: Confitebor domino, Ego dixi in dimidio, Exultat cor meum, Cantemus domino gloriose, Domine audivi auditionem tuam, ending imperfectly, at Habacuc 3:4, f. 99v, “... Splendor eius ut lux//,” f. 100, begins, Deuteronomy 32:21, “//in uanitatibus suis ....”, Benedicte omnia opera dominum, Benedictus dominus deus, Magnificat anima, Quicumque uult, Te deum laudamus, Spiritus sanctus a patre, and the Nunc dimitis, see James Mearns. *The Canticles of the Christian Church, Eastern and Western, in Early and Medieval Times*, Cambridge, 1914, p. 60, this manuscript with Canticles 1-9, 15, 11, and 10.

ff. 105v-113v, Litany, including George, Quentin, Denis and Maurice among the martyrs, Augustine (twice), Martin, Eucharius, Valerius, Maternus, Jerome, Benedict, Dominic, and Anthony among the confessors, and Genevieve, Katherine, Ursula and Elizabeth among the virgins and widows, with Francis and Barbara added by a contemporary hand; Prayers, with three leaves missing after f. 107v; the Office of the Dead with responsories to the lessons that agree with Premonstratensian Use (see Knud Ottosen. *The Responsories and Versicles of the Latin Office of the Dead*, Aarhus, Denmark, Aarhus University Press, 1993, pp. 141-2, and pp. 277-8).

Back pastedown, one leaf from an early thirteenth-century copy of a Homily in honor of the Nativity of Mary, “Creatoris matrem omnis creatura magnificent ...,” here beginning “//desideratum illud lumen quo inuenta est ...” Edited in Migne, PL 95, column 1517A (Homilia LII, *In nativitate beatae Mariae Virginis*, Auctore incerti).

The weekly recitation of the one hundred and fifty Psalms was the heart of the Divine Office said by members of religious orders. This manuscript, from a German House of Premonstratensian Canons includes the Psalms and Canticles; shortly after the main text of the manuscript was copied, another scribe added a Litany, Prayers, and the Office of the Dead. Later hands provided the antiphons recited with the Psalms in the margins, proving that this manuscript was in active use for over a century.

## ILLUMINATION

Initials are gold and silver, now darkened, with decorative motifs in dark pen within the initial resembling metal-work, on square red grounds, heavily framed in green, sometimes in several shades:

[Psalm one, incipit excised];

f. 16, Psalm 26, 10-line silver and gold initial, infilled with white vine and leaf spirals with yellow and green wash;

f. 26, Psalm 38, same type of 10-line initial, infilled with white vine and leaf spirals with red and green;

f. 35v, Psalm 51, same type of 12-line initial, infilled with white vine and leaf spirals with red, yellow and green;

f. 36, Psalm 52, 8-line gold and silver initial on a ground of alternately red and green, divided into sections by diagonal lines (no frame);

f. 45, Psalm 68, 10-line gold and silver initial infilled with red and green pen decoration;

f. 57v, Psalm 80, 10-line silver initial on diagonally divided grounds of alternate red and green (no frame);

f. 68, Psalm 97, 5-line silver and gold initial on diagonally divided grounds of red and green (no frame);

[Psalm 101, incipit missing];

f. 79v, Psalm 109, 10-line silver and gold initial with red and green pen decoration.

The style of the white vine and leaf initials is reminiscent of twelfth-century manuscripts from Germany. Manuscripts from Trier with similarly conservative motifs include Paris, BnF, MSS lat. 9741 and lat. 9742, *Legendarium* from Trier, dating from the second quarter of the thirteenth century, see François Avril and Claudia Rabel, *Manuscrits enluminés d'origine germanique*, Paris, 1995, nos. 128 and 129, pp. 145-149; both of these manuscripts use red and green for the minor initials; Paris, BnF, MS lat. 9633, Gregory IX, *Decretals*, also from Trier, from the middle to the third quarter of the century, has similarly archaic white vine initials, but in this case paired with secondary initials influenced by contemporary French manuscripts, see Avril and Rabel, no. 130, pp. 149-150. A manuscript with initials with diagonally-divided backgrounds is a Psalter, possibly from Würzburg from the middle of the thirteenth century, now Bayerische SB, Clm 23110, see Elisabeth Klemm, *Die Illuinierten Handschriften des 13. Jahrhunderts deutscher herkunft in der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*, Katalog der Illuinierten Handschriften der bayerischen Staatsbibliothek in München 4, Wiesbaden, 1998, no. 193, pp. 197-198.

As was traditional in many Psalters, the illuminated initials in this manuscript mark the Psalms recited at Matins for each day of the week, beginning with Psalm 1, now missing, on Sunday at Matins, and continuing with Psalm 26 on Monday, Psalm 38 on Tuesday, Psalm 52 on Wednesday, Psalm 68 on Thursday, Psalm 80 on Friday, and Psalm 97 on Saturday; there is also an initial at Psalm 109, said on Sunday at Vespers. The presence of historiated initials at Psalm 51 and 101 (although the beginning of this Psalm is now missing in this manuscript), reflects the older tradition of dividing the Psalter into three parts.

## LITERATURE

van Dijk, S.J.P. "The Bible in Liturgical Use," *The Cambridge History of the Bible. Volume 2, The West from the Fathers to the Reformation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969, pp. 244-248.

Gatch, Milton McC., ed. 'So Precious a Foundation': *The Library of Leander van Ess at the Burke Library of Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York*, New York, Union Theological Seminary and the Grolier Club, 1996.

Leroquais, V. *Les psautiers manuscrits latins des bibliothèques publiques de France*, Maçon, 1940-1.

*The Place of the Psalms in the Intellectual Culture of the Middle Ages*, ed. Nancy Van Deusen, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999.

Plummer, John. *Liturgical Manuscripts for the Mass and Divine Office*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, 1964.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Gatch, Milton McC. "The book collections of Leander van Ess"  
[http://www.miltongatch.us/the\\_book\\_collections\\_of\\_leande.html](http://www.miltongatch.us/the_book_collections_of_leande.html)

Introduction to liturgical manuscripts: "Celebrating the Liturgy's Books"  
<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/music/manuscripts/>

"Psalms," New Catholic Encyclopedia  
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12533a.htm>

Premonstratensian Order in Germany: "Prämonstratenser-Chorherren"  
<http://www.opraem.de/ordo.htm>

International website of the Order of Prémontré (includes both primary and secondary sources relevant to the history and liturgy of the Order)  
<http://www.premontre.org/>

Premonstratensian Houses in Germany  
[http://www.kloster-roggenburg.de/klro.04/kloster/prem/prem\\_d.htm](http://www.kloster-roggenburg.de/klro.04/kloster/prem/prem_d.htm)

Geudens, Francis Martin, "Premonstratensian Canons," Catholic Encyclopedia, New York 1911, New Advent,  
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12387b.htm>