

## Missal

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment

Low Countries or Germany (Northern Rhineland-Westphalia), c. 1400-1450

*i* (parchment) + 83 folios on parchment, original foliation upper margin on the verso of each opening in black Roman numerals, modern foliation in pencil top outer corner recto, accurate collation now impossible, but it is incomplete with only 83 of the original 223 leaves remaining: lacking folios originally numbered as IV, V, VI, VIII, XIII, XXIV-XXIX, XXXIV-LII, LXXI-LXXIV, LXXVI-LXXVIII, LXXXV, CI-CIX, CXXII-CXLVII, CXLIX-CLII, CLIV-CLXIV, CLXXIV-CCXI, and CCXV, horizontal catchwords, very bottom inside margin, ff. 9, 31v, 42v (ff. 32-42, quire of 12 with one leaf missing), 45v, 56v, (ff. 46-56, quire of 12, lacking first leaf), 61v, and 74, (justification, 253 x 177 mm.), ruled in ink with the top, fourth, bottom, and fourth from the bottom rules full across; single full-length vertical bounding lines, prickings in three outer margins, written below the top line in a formal gothic bookhand in two columns of twenty-nine to thirty-two lines, Canon of the Mass on ff. 63-68, (justification, 253-250 x 163-162 mm.), ruled in ink with the top and bottom horizontal rules full across, single vertical bounding lines, copied in a larger script in two columns of twenty-two lines, guide notes for the rubricator in the margins in a very small cursive script, guide letters within initials, red rubrics, two- to three-line (on f. 56, four-line) alternately red and blue initials (some with decorative void spaces within the initial), four eight- to four-line parted red and blue initials, ff. 2, 57, 59v, and 63, with very fine red, red and blue, or red and brown pen decoration, two roundels with a Greek Cross in orange and red, bottom margin, ff. 58v and 66v (very pristine, added?), Crucifixion miniature (one column, thirteen lines) neatly excised from f. 57v, signs of heavy use throughout, including impressively dirty pages, the ink is worn on some pages (for example, f. 6), but text is legible throughout, parchment surrounding tab on f. 13rv is torn. Bound in its ORIGINAL BINDING of very heavy wooden boards covered with dark brown leather, tooled in blind with two sets of fillets forming a narrow outer frame and a cross, saltire, in the center panel, sewn on six double thongs, spine with six raised bands, once fastened back to front (metal fittings and remains of leather straps, back cover, catches, front cover), worn, especially at edges, top and bottom of spine, slight split in spine, covers scuffed, and misshapen because of loss of so much of the bookblock, but overall sturdy and in solid condition. Dimensions 360 x 255 mm.

Even in its fragmentary state, this Missal survives as a superb example of an ordinary liturgical manuscript that was intended for, and received, daily use. This is decidedly not a manuscript that was produced as a treasure or for show. The dirt, stains, indeed the very softness of the well-thumbed vellum all speak eloquently of its long years of use. In its original binding, it is complete with medieval tabs, and includes an unpublished inventory of a Church treasury, dated 1509, that deserves further study.

## PROVENANCE

1. The style of the script and decoration suggests that this manuscript was copied in the first half of the fifteenth century, c. 1400-50, in the Low Countries or the neighboring area of Germany, northern Rhine-Westphalia. The liturgical evidence is slight, since only one leaf of the calendar and most of the Sanctoral are now lacking. The calendar (which may be added), includes Gertrude of Nivelles (a very popular saint in the later Middle Ages, but venerated especially in Flanders and in Westphalia). She is lacking in the Sanctoral. Possibly copied for a church dedicated to St. Blaise (3 February, in red in the

calendar; see also f. 76v in the Sanctoral). St. Blaise was also wide venerated; there is a church dedicated to St. Blaise at Balve, in Westphalia. The liturgical inventory on the flyleaf (see below) was signed by a notary who also witnessed an unrelated document involving a man from Münster in Westphalia in 1532 (Online Resources).

The script is an example of a formal liturgical Gothic (note the frequent use of decorative hairlines); there are also notes to the rubricator throughout and liturgical directions (for example f. 49v) copied in a gothic cursive script, an interesting example of how these two types of scripts were used within the same manuscript for different functions.

There are abundant signs of use throughout, including dirt and stains; the Canon, the section of the text said at every Mass, here included twice on ff. 57-59 and ff. 63-68v, is particularly dirty and worn in both sections; added notes in a gothic cursive script f. 67rv (one note on the verso copied on a square of parchment glued to the bottom margin). Bottom margin, f. 67v, rectangular section in the lower margin, cleaner than surrounding parchment, with some rust stains and holes, suggesting a badge was sewn into the manuscript at some point.

The marginal tabs or place-markers, consisting of large braided leather knots attached to leather ovals that are glued to both sides of the leaf are of special interest, and they are also a good indication of how the manuscript was used; see f. 5, f. 13 (Feast of the Circumcision), f. 22 (Ash Wednesday), f. 55, Ordinary of the Mass (tab missing, but mark remains), f. 56 (Prefaces), f. 57, Canon, and each folio of the second Canon, ff. 64, 65, 66, 67 (tab missing, mark remains), f. 79 (Annunciation), f. 80 (tab missing, but mark remains), and f. 83. Similar tabs are found in Utrecht, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, MS 402 (illustrated in de Hamel, 1986, p. 187, fig. 191).

2. Apparently used in a church dedicated to St. Brendan – or in a Church with an Altar dedicated to the saint -- in the later part of the fifteenth century, certainly by 1509; inventory of the Church's treasury was added to the front flyleaf (see text, below); it was witnessed by Bernardus von Schuren, a notary, in June of 1509 (the last entries including his name may be slightly later additions to an earlier list). There is another related short note, dated 1508, inside back cover "... Officiante tho synte Brandanus altar ..."
3. Inside front cover, "760," and "670" (in pencil); front flyleaf, f. i verso, and inside back cover, modern stamp in purple ink, of P. E. Ecuyer, Lyon.

## TEXT

f. i (front flyleaf), incipit "Oüt syn de clenodia <de: added> tho synte Brandanes Altar horen ... Item eyne sulueren kelck und eyne sulueren patene und eyne sulueren cruce ... Item eyne misboeck op perghemynte ghescreuen dat is dyt kieghen wordige ... Ego notarius ... vidi et aspexi anno domini 1509 ... Bernardus Tor Schuren, notarius";

Inventory of the treasury (*de clenodia*, literally "jewels") of St. Brendan's Altar. The last lines (including the date and signature) are copied in a more cursive script, suggesting that the list itself may be somewhat earlier in date; in addition to numerous liturgical vessels and implements, the inventory includes at least two books. The first, the "misboek" is probably this manuscript. The list is certainly unpublished, and deserves careful

study. For another (unrelated) document, dated 1532, witnessed by Bernardus tor Schuren, see Online Resources, below.

f. 1rv, Single leaf from a calendar, January-April, among the saints included are Maurus (15 January), Agnes (21 January), with octave, Blaise, in red (3 February), Scholastica (10 February), Longinus (15 March), Cyriacus (16 March), Gertrude of Nivelles (17 March), and Benedict (21 March);

Likely added, since there is an off-set from the initial on the present f. 2 on the verso of the front flyleaf; it may originally have been included in another location within this volume (although calendars in Missals are generally at the beginning) or it may be from a companion volume, since it appears to share a common origin with the rest of the manuscript (it is contemporary with the main manuscript and copied in a very similar script).

ff. 2-55, Temporal, Advent-Easter Vigil, now lacking numerous leaves (folios cited in Arabic numerals refer to the continuous modern foliation; Roman numerals are references to the original foliation):

ff. 2-4 (originally I-III), First Sunday in Advent to the fourth feria after the Second Sunday;  
<lacking IV, V, VI>

ff. 5 (VII);  
<lacking VIII>

ff. 6-9 (IX–XII) beginning imperfectly in the fourth Sunday in Advent, continuing with the fourth and sixth feria before the Vigil of the Nativity;  
<lacking XIII>

ff. 10-19 (XIV-XXIII), Stephen, John, Holy Innocents, Sunday in the Octave of the Nativity, Circumcision, Vigil of the Epiphany, Epiphany, Octave of Epiphany, and continuing to fourth feria after the octave;  
<lacking XXIV-XXIX>

ff. 20-23 (XXX-XXXIII), Quinquagesima Sunday to the sixth feria after Ash Wednesday (blessing of the ashes on f. 21);  
<lacking XXXIV-LII>

ff. 24-41 (LIII-LXX), Beginning with the third Sunday in Lent; f. 34v, *Dominica in passione* to Palm Sunday (f. 41v, blessing of the palms);  
<lacking LXXI>

ff. 42-43 (LXXII- LXXIII), Continuing with Palm Sunday, ending imperfectly in Mathew 26:51;  
<lacking LXXIV>

f. 44 (LXXV), Continuing in the Passion narrative; beginning abruptly in Matthew 27:21;  
<lacking LXXVI-LXXIII>

f. 45 (LXXXIII);  
<lacking LXXXV>

ff. 46-55 (LXXXVI-XCV), Passion reading; f. 48rv, Good Friday collects (for the Pope, or deacons, bishops and priests, for the king, for catachumens, for heretics, for the perfidious Jews and for pagans; f. 49v, Easter Vigil;

The Good Friday collects include the usual – and from our modern perspective, controversial –prayers for the “perfidious” Jews; note the liturgical direction f. 47v, *Finita passione sacerdos incipiat orationes que secuntur cum genu flectionibus per singulas nisi tantum pro iudeis nec in conclusiones orationis pro iudeis dicatur finem amen*. See the discussion [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good\\_Friday\\_Prayer\\_for\\_the\\_Jews](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Good_Friday_Prayer_for_the_Jews).

ff. 55-58v (XCV-XCCX), Ordinary and Canon of the Mass: f. 55, *Incipit ordo ad preparacionem*, f. 56, Prefaces, f. 57v, Canon;

ff. 59v-62v, Temporal, Easter-Corpus Christi;

f. 59v (XCCX-C) Easter;  
<lacking CI-CIX>

ff. 61-62v, (CXX-CXXI) Sunday after Pentecost; note f. 62, Octave of Pentecost, ending with rubric for Corpus Christi;

ff. 63- 68 (six leaves, originally unnumbered), Canon of the Mass (repeating the Canon found above, ff. 57v-58v, but copied in a larger script, and in greater detail);  
<lacking CXXII-CXLVII>

ff. 69-70v, Temporal:

f. 69 (CXLVIII), Masses for September;  
<lacking CXLIX-CLII>

f. 70rv (CLIII), Ending with the nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost;  
<lacking CLIV-CLXIV>

ff. 71-79 (CLXV-CLXXIII), Sanctoral, beginning with Andrew (30 November), followed by Nicholas (6 December) and concluding with Tiburtius et Valerianus (16 April);

Note, f. 76v, St. Blaise is included within the text, and a later hand added another collect for his feast in the lower margin, as well as a note concerning St. Anskar (or Anscarius), known as the “apostle to the North,” (Denmark), and archbishop of Hamburg and Bremen.  
<lacking CLXXIV-CCXI>

ff. 80-82 (CCXII-CCXIII), Common of Saints, one martyr, martyr and pontif;  
<lacking CCXV>

f. 83rv (CCXVI), Common of Saints.

This manuscript is a Missal – the liturgical book for the celebrant that includes all the texts necessary to celebrate the Mass. By the thirteenth century Missals were the predominant book used by the celebrant during the Mass, largely replacing Sacramentaries. Sacramentaries included only the prayers said by the celebrant; Missals, in contrast also included the biblical readings, read or chanted by the Subdeacon and Deacon, as well as the texts sung by the choir.

The contents of the Missal reflect changing liturgical practice during the Middle Ages; by the eleventh century the Celebrant was required to sing or say, either aloud or quietly to himself, all the Mass texts, including the sung texts and the readings. Missals also answered the need of priests saying private Masses, and many surviving Missals, especially from the later Middle Ages, are rather small, portable volumes suitable for this use. This Missal, in contrast, is a splendid example of a large format Altar Missal that must have been used for daily worship in a Church.

The text itself does not allow us to establish the type of church where this Missal was used. The Mass readings do not agree with the Franciscan Use of the Papal Court (or Roman use) – which was becoming widespread by the fifteenth century, but which was certainly not universally used. We can say that it was not made for Franciscans, but it could have been used in a monastery, by Dominicans, or in a secular church. Further study of the treasury inventory would be of great interest in establishing the manuscript's early history, and possible origin.

This Missal is unusual in including the Canon of the Mass twice; it is found following the Easter Vigil on ff. 57v-58v, preceded by the Ordinary and the Prefaces (the Ordinary, Prefaces and Canon are often found in this place, roughly in the middle of the Missal), and then again on ff. 63-68, between the Octave of Pentecost and Corpus Christi (a much less common placement). The Canon consists of the texts said by the celebrant at every Mass, regardless of the time of year or the feast being celebrated. The most important texts in a Missal, they were often introduced by an image of the Crucifixion (the Crucifixion has been cut out here on f. 57v). During Mass, the Priest kissed the image of the Crucifixion, or other crosses provided alongside the miniature or in the margins (see the roundels with crosses on ff. 58v and 66v, although they do not appear to have been heavily used). Why two Canons were included here is a puzzle, but the second Canon is copied in the traditional larger script for easy consultation on the altar, and includes a more detailed text. It was inserted into the manuscript, and is not part of the original foliation. Both sections appear to have been used heavily.

Missals survive in great numbers; the Schoenberg Database, for example, yields 1,893 results under the general heading Missal (although not all of these results are in reality Missals). This manuscript is of special interest, however, as a survival of a “working” liturgical manuscript that includes evidence of heavy use throughout, and is preserved in its original binding, including early leather tabs or place-markers.

## LITERATURE

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Harper, John. *The Forms and Orders of Western Liturgy*, Oxford, 1991.

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

Document witnessed by Bernardus tor Schuren (Digitale Westfälische Urkunden-Datenbanke)

<http://www.westfaelische-geschichte.de/que102898>

Thurston, Herbert. "Missal," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 10, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1911

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/10354c.htm>

Jean-Baptiste Lebigue. "Les livres de la messe. Le missel," in *Initiation aux manuscrits liturgiques*, Ædilis, Publications pédagogiques, 6, Paris-Orléans, IRHT, 2007

<http://aedilis.irht.cnrs.fr/initiation-liturgie/missel.htm>

Introduction to liturgical manuscripts:

"Celebrating the Liturgy's Books":

<http://ww.columbia.edu/itc/music/manuscripts>

British Library on the Mass:

<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/TourLitMass.asp>

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