

Gradual (Franciscan Use)

In Latin with some Portuguese, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Portugal, c. 1575-1600

209 pages, on parchment, preceded by a paper flyleaf, missing a leaf at the end and perhaps another in the core of the manuscript, mostly in quires of 8 (collation: i4, iis, iiis, iv8, v8, vi8, vii7 (missing 8, likely a cancelled blank as text and liturgical sequence seems uninterrupted [see pp.102-103]), viiis, ix8, x4, xi8, xii8, xiii8, xiv7 (missing 7, with 8 a blank leaf)), written in a rounded gothic liturgical bookhand on up to 16 lines per page in brown to darker brown ink, ruled in plummet (justification 430 x 285 mm), no catchwords, a few quire signatures, rubrics in bright red, pitches marked in red over words, some corrections and contemporary annotations in the margin; later annotations in the margins (in Portuguese), elaborate calligraphic pen flourishing swirling in the margins in purple, dark blue and red ink, larger cadels in black ink with elaborate calligraphic penwork (e.g. ff. 197-198), a number of initials traced in blue or red (2- to 5-lines high) enhanced with calligraphic penwork and sometimes with floral motifs, fruits, faces, putti or satyrs (e.g. pp. 82-83; p. 151), a few initials pasted in on small paper strips (cadels on decorated grounds, see f. 171), numerous decorated initials in colors (and some liquid gold) and acanthus leaves of varying size (1-line high, larger 3-line high) (e.g. ff. 9-10 et passim), 13 historiated initials with elaborate calligraphic penwork, often with a variety of birds, putti, insects, bestiary, fruit etc., large illuminated bracket border of strewn illusionistic flowers on a yellow ground (inspired from the Flemish illusionistic borders) with a purple decorated initial with similar illusionistic floral motifs (f. 8). Bound in a contemporary late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century tanned calf over heavy wooden boards, blind-tooled binding, back sewn on 5 raised thongs, boards with multiple frames composed of blind filets and roll-tooled interlaced motifs, central lozenge frame, edges stained in red, brass bosses on the boards, traces of clasps (now wanting, with brass catches still in place) (Upper board detached, some stains and scuffing to boards, one leaf with a structural misfold, p. 7, a bit of discharge on p. 8; a few erased inscriptions, e.g. pp. 159-160). Dimensions 560 x 380 mm.

Copied for an unlocalized congregation of Franciscan nuns in Portugal, this illuminated Gradual contains only the accented texts of the musical settings without notation. The iconography of its colorful initials suggest a Franciscan origin: Saint Francis is frequently represented, and the wonderful array of birds in the margin alludes to the famous story of Saint Francis and the birds. The Gradual is close in style to other manuscripts copied and used in Portugal just before 1600, which are less well studied than their Spanish or French counterparts.

PROVENANCE

1. This Gradual was copied in last quarter of the sixteenth century or even beginning of the seventeenth century in the Iberian peninsula, based on style of ornamentation and script. More specifically, the codex presents decorative elements that confirm a Portuguese origin, and its use in Portugal is confirmed by the presence of a few rubrics in Portuguese and marginal notes and commentaries also in Portuguese (see below). The presence of Saint Vincent of Saragossa (p. 90) in association with another saint dressed as a deacon (Lawrence), makes sense in a manuscript copied and used in Portugal. Saint Vincent of Saragossa (or of Valencia) was indeed amply venerated in Portugal as the patron saint of sailors.

A Franciscan origin and use for this Gradual is suggested in the ornamentation and

iconography of certain of the historiated initials (see Illustration, below). The rubric on pg. 111 assigning the verse to "Due sorores" (two sisters), suggests this was copied for Franciscan nuns.

2. Added notes in Portuguese in the margins, such as "A esta vigilia senpre dizem duas cantoras" (p. 19); "Este verso dis...libera nos estando em pee e en ajudando todas e ella poem de ioelhos com as outras" (p. 49). See other notes for instance on p. 99. A near contemporary added rubric in the margin reads in Portuguese: "Nesta sequencia nam se diz mais que huna vez so dic nobis maria" (p. 195).

TEXT

p. 1, Chants to replace Alleluia after Mass for Septuagesima and Gradual chant at Easter, rubric, *Post Sept. omissio alleluia et versi sequenti dicitur. Tra[ctus]*; incipit, "Ab ortu solis usque ad occasum magnum est..."; rubric, *A dominica pasche usque ad pentecostes dicitur...*; "Vidi aqua egrediet de templo...";

pp. 2-5, [Ordinary Mass settings for the Feast of Corpus Christi], rubric, *In Solemnitate corporis christi. Sequentia*; Sequence for the Mass of Corpus Christi, incipit, "Lauda Sion salvatorem, lauda ducem et pastorem...";

p. 6, blank;

p. 7, Antiphon, sung before the Asperion with Holy Water (outside of Eastertide), incipit, "Asperges me domine hysopo..."; Antiphon, sung before the aspersion with holy water (during Eastertide until Pentecost), rubric, *A dominica pasche usque ad pentecoste dicitur antiphona*;

pp. 8-20, Temporale, Chants for the first and second Sunday of Advent, rubric, *In nomine domini nostri Iesu Christi. Incipit dominicale missarum. Dominica prima de adventu. Introitus*; incipit, "Ad te levavi animam meam..."; following rubric, *Dominica secunda de adventu. Introitus*; incipit, "Populus syon ecce domine veniet...";

pp. 20-35, Temporale, Chants for Nativity, rubrics, *In nativitate domini in prima missa. Introitus*; *Ad missam maiorem. Introitus*; *In sancti stephani protomartyro. Introitus*; *In sancti Ioanis apostoli...Introitus*;

pp. 35-198, Temporale, Chants for Epiphany to the twenty-fourth Sunday after Pentecost, rubrics, *In vigilia epiphaniae fit totum officium misse de dominica. Introitus*; *Dominica in .lxx. Introitus*; *Dominica in lx(a). Introitus*; later rubric, *Ad adorationem crucis impropriae due sorores in medio chori dicant versus* (p. 111); incipit, "Popule meus quid feci tibi aut in contristavi..."; *Dominica in resurrectionis. Introitus* (p. 121); *In vigilia ascensionis officium misse dicitur de dominica preteritur* (p. 138); *In die sancto pentecostes. Introitus* (p. 151); *In festo corporis christi. Introitus* (p. 159); *In die Pentecostes et per octavas dicitur sequentia* (p. 197);

pp. 198-199, Kyrie, followed by Gloria; rubric in Portuguese, *Estes versos de nossa senora na dizem ia*; rubric in Latin, *In festo vero conceptionis virgine marie dicitur*;

pp. 200-202, Credo; Sanctus; Agnus dei;

pp. 203-206, Mass in honor of the Holy Trinity, rubric, *Missa in honore sancte trinitatis. Introitus*; rubric, *Ad missam angeli custodis. Introitus* (p. 204);

pp. 207-209, Added Mass for the Feast of the Crown of Thorns, rubric, *Missa dicenda in festo*

Coronae Domini; reading from the Book of Wisdom, with rubric, *Lectio libri Sapientiae* (p. 208); *Sequentia Sancti Evangelii secundum Joannem* (p. 209); rubric, *Praefatio*, "Qui salutem humani generis..."; *Communio*, "Laetare mater nostra, quia dabit..."; *Post communio* (rubric) [wanting ending].

This is a Gradual, a liturgical chant book that compiles all the chants for the Proper of the Mass (the texts that change daily or seasonally which are known as the Propers) and in many cases those of the Ordinary of the Mass (set of texts that are generally invariable, although the melodies of the chants varied). A Gradual is generally distinguished from the Missal by omitting the spoken items and usually including the music for the sung parts. It includes both the Ordinary and Proper, as opposed to the Kyriale, which includes only the Ordinary, and the Cantatory, which includes only the responsorial chants.

Graduals, like most liturgical books are composed of overlapping layers of material: as a type of liturgical book, the Gradual still awaits a much-needed census of institutional holdings. This manuscript was clearly once part of a multi-volume set (two or three?) that originally must have also included the volumes for the Proper of Saints (*Sanctorale*, with chants for feast days of special saints occurring on set dates), and the Common of the Saints (chants for saints or groups of saints for whom there are no special commemorative rites or fixed feast days in the *Sanctorale*).

As is the case of most late medieval and Renaissance Choir Books, which had to be legible for all the member of the *schola cantorum*, the volume is large in size, with a very large text area. Usually this text portion is accompanied with the noted music. The present Gradual is, however, devoid of any of the notation and musical apparatus and contains only the text for the chants, omitting the accompanying music. One of the reasons is probably because the noted music that went with the sung parts of the Mass was known to most chorists and cantors. It was not necessary to copy them, since they could be sung from memory. Music was typically taught orally in the Middle Ages and well into the modern age and was for the most part performed from memory. A Gradual such as the present one would thus have been used as a basic guide for the choir master.

Changes within the manuscript show it was used for performance; on page 195, the sequence "Victimae paschali" has several verses erased, and a Portuguese rubric (apparently the only vernacular rubric written in red ink, like the Latin rubrics, but in a different, contemporary hand) states that the verse "Dic nobis maria" is sung only once. Apparently the Sequence text was originally copied with that verse written three times, but the second and third instances were erased after the rubric was written. These later changes to the sequence show changing ideas about its correct performance.

The most striking aspect of this Gradual remains its elegant penwork, in red and purple ink. The margins are full of life, with an animated bestiary, a variety of birds and flora. Most significant, however, are the frequent references and allusions to the Order of Saint Francis and Saint Francis himself. There are busts and profiles of tonsured monks, mostly Franciscan, as well as clear references to Saint Francis preaching to the birds with a multiplication of birds penned in the margins.

ILLUSTRATION

p. 7v, Historiated initial A, Satyr or Silenus figure with Cornucopia (?); Initial V, Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian;

- p. 45, Historiated initial E, Saint Anthony;
- p. 53, Historiated initial I, Saint Francis receiving the stigmata;
- p. 81, Historiated initial L, Winged angel upholding a vase of fruit and flowers;
- p. 85, Historiated initial C, Standing figure with shield and banner (red with white cross)
- p. 90, Historiated initial I, Saints Vincent of Saragossa (attributes: ship and palm) and Lawrence (attributes: gridiron and palm);
- p. 107, Historiated initial N, Winged angel upholding a vase of fruit;
- p. 122, Historiated initial R, Resurrection of Christ;
- p. 124, Historiated initial A, Bearded figure and fruit;
- p. 127, Historiated initial V, Tonsured profil of a Man (Francis?);
- p. 138, Historiated initial V, John the Evangelist on Patmos, with Virgin appearing in the sky;
- p. 198, Historiated initial G, Annunciaion to the Shepherds;

This Gradual is illustrated with thirteen historiated initials that confirm its Franciscan origin. One historiated initial shows Saint Francis receiving the stigmata, and another depicts Saint Anthony, who was also a Franciscan saint. There is a historiated initial featuring a tonsured monk, likely a Franciscan. The calligraphic penwork clearly alludes to the *Fioretti*, a collection of legends that sprang up after the Saint's death. It is said that while Francis was travelling with some companions, they happened on a place in the road where the birds filled the trees on both sides. Francis told his companions to "wait for me while I go to preach to my sisters the birds." The birds surrounded him and none flew away. This codex is literally swarming with birds of all sorts in the margins.

The initials bear comparison with those found in a *Passionario polifonico* (Coimbra, MM 56) datable to the end of the sixteenth-century (see Pinho, 2011, p. 35), as well as a Missal described in London, BL, MS Stowe 11 (Missal, use of Rome, copied in Lisbon 1557-1563) that presents a more lavish script and lay-out but nonetheless the same very similar bright-colored initials. The colors in the present Gradual are very vibrant, green, red, pink, blue and purple, imitating Flemish late manuscript illumination. The illuminator was also clearly inspired by Flemish illusionistic compositions in the single large illuminated bracket border that opens the texts for Temporale and the chants for the first Sunday of Advent. The influence of Flemish illumination on Iberian manuscript production is no doubt tied to the presence of the Spaniards in the Spanish Netherlands. Portugal's close cultural and aesthetic ties to Spain explains the recourse to Flemish patterns and models. The penwork is very close to that found in the *Libro vermello* of Afonso V (Coimbra, Cofre 21) and also to a Gradual (noted) from the Convent of Nossa Senhora da Anunciada (Lisbon), which presents very similar calligraphic flourishing and birds (D'Alvarenga, 1992, ill. 6, p. 259), copied by an identified scribe Joham Fernandez in 1524 (so earlier than the present Gradual). This type of calligraphic penwork is found earlier still in Portuguese manuscripts; see for instance a fifteenth-century Gradual dated 1494 in Evora that presents similar stylized rinceaux and birds (*Inventario dos codices iluminados até 1500*, vol. 2, p. 117;

Biblioteca Publica e Arquivo Distrital de Evora, Mus. Lit. MS 71). This type of very characteristic calligraphic penwork was certainly an aesthetic particularly popular in Portuguese codices, allowing one to rapidly distinguish them from manuscripts produced in neighboring Spain.

LITERATURE

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D'Alvarenga, J. P. et alia (ed). *Tesouros da Biblioteca Nacional*, Lisbon, 1992.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

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

PEM (Portuguese Early Music Database)
<http://pemdatabase.eu/>

London, BL, Stowe, MS 11: Missal, use of Rome (Portugal, Lisbon, 1557-1563)
<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=1320&CollID=21&NSTart=11>

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