

## BREVIARY for Use of Dominican Nuns

In Latin with some rubrics in German, decorated manuscript on parchment

Southern Germany (diocese of Bamberg), c. 1460-1490 (likely after 1462, and before 1481)

164 folios, modern foliation top outer corner in pencil, 1-163, not including the first blank leaf, with two smaller leaves, tipped in, complete (collation, i<sup>16</sup> ii<sup>12</sup> iii<sup>10</sup> iv<sup>8</sup> v<sup>10</sup> vi<sup>12+2</sup> [+2 single leaves, ff. 55 and 56, before 1, 3, f. 59, and 10, f. 66, single] vii<sup>10+2</sup> [+ one leaf, f. 73, added after 4, and + one smaller leaf, f. 79, tipped in, now loose, after 9] viii<sup>10</sup> ix<sup>8</sup> [-1, cancelled] xi<sup>8</sup> xii<sup>11</sup> [structure uncertain, + one smaller leaf, f. 124, tipped in after 10] xiii<sup>4</sup> [+1, smaller sheet, f. 129, added after 3] xiv<sup>8</sup> xv-xvi<sup>10</sup> xvii<sup>4</sup> [-2, following f. 159, stub remains, -4, cancelled] xviii<sup>4</sup> [4, pastedown]), horizontal catchwords, lower inside margin (many trimmed), no leaf or quire signatures, apparently frame ruled in ink with all rules full-length (but cf. f. 92, prickings outer margin for horizontal rules, which are indiscernible), calendar is completely ruled in ink with full-length vertical bounding lines, many folios have a single pricking in the outer margin, and prickings in the upper and lower margins, (justification, 72-69 x 50-47 mm.), written in a hybrid script in sixteen long lines, red rubrics, one- to two-line red initials and KL-monograms, well-used, with lower outer corners thumbled and soiled, occasionally with some of the text rubbed away (as ff. 114, 117, 118, 120-121), f. 163, creased and partially torn. ORIGINAL BINDING in beveled wooden boards covered with leather, tooled in blind with a cross-saltire (partially visible on the back cover), sewn on three bands with head and tail bands, numerous tabs made of small square of bright pink leather, remains of a strap, lower board, and a hole on the upper board (for the clasp?), lower half of spine now uncovered, much of the leather on the upper board worn away, leather on the lower board scuffed and worn. Dimensions 100 x 70 mm.

This very small Breviary was copied for Dominican Nuns in the Southern German, probably in the diocese of Bamberg. Still in its original binding, with as many as twenty-eight fore-edge tabs marking the beginning of texts, it is of interest for its small size, relatively informal appearance, and evident signs of use (thumbled and dirty in the lower corners, to the point where occasional phrases of the text have been rubbed away). Manuscripts once belonging to Nuns are less common than those from male foundations, and are of special interest.

## PROVENANCE

1. Evidence of the calendar, litany, and liturgical use allow us to determine the origin and date of this manuscript, which was copied in southern Germany, almost certainly in the diocese of Bamberg for Dominican Nuns, in the second half of the fifteenth century, after 1462, and probably before 1481. The saints in the calendar and litany provide firm evidence that this was copied for a Dominican Convent; included, all in red, are Dominic ("our father Dominic"), and his translation, as well as Thomas Aquinas and his translation, Vincent Ferrer, Peter Martyr and his translation, and Catherine of Siena. Litany includes Dominc (twice), Thomas Aquinas, Peter Martyr and Vincent Ferrer. Both the Hours of the Virgin and the Office of the Dead follow Dominican Use. Liturgical forms further demonstrate that it was written for Dominican Nuns; in particular, note the form for Compline on f. 117 mentioning the sisters ("Sorores sobrie estote ..."; "Confiteor deo et beate marie et beato dominico et omnibus sanctis et vobis sorores ...").

The calendar and litany also include saints venerated in Southern Germany, and in particular, the diocese of Bamberg, in particular Henry Emperor (or Henry II), and his wife, Cunigundis (both in red), Sebald, also in red (especially venerated in Nuremberg), and Otto, bishop of Bamberg (canonized in 1139), here on 30 September, the date his feast was celebrated in Bamberg; the prominence of the feasts for the Michael is also notable (the Benedictine Abbey of St. Michael stands to the North of the Cathedral). George (April 23), here in the calendar in red, duplex, is one of the Cathedral's patrons. Henry II (974- 1024) of Germany was an ardent supporter of the Church, and was canonized in 1146. He founded the diocese of Bamberg in 1007. Henry, and his wife, Cunigundis (c. 975-1040), canonized in 1200, are both buried in the Cathedral.

Saints included in the calendar allow us to date the manuscript; it certainly dates after 1462, since it includes Vincent Ferrer (canonized in 1455; totum duplex and in Dominican litany in 1456), the Transfiguration (observed from 1457), and Catherine of Siena (canonized in 1461, and included in the Dominican calendar in 1462). It is likely to date before 1481 since Dionysius the Areopagite, here in the calendar on 9 October graded simplex, was raised to totum duplex in 1481.

Although further research would be necessary to definitely assign the manuscript to one particular Dominican convent, it is possible that the manuscript may have been copied in Bamberg itself for the convent of the Heilig Grab, founded in 1365. A number of manuscripts survive from Heilig Grab's library (see "The Monastic Matrix," listed below, Online Resources; and Krämer, 1989-1990, volume 1, pp. 67-8). Other Dominican convents within the diocese of Bamberg include the very well-known convent of St. Catherine's in Nuremberg, which, especially after its reform in 1428, was known for its active scriptorium and library (see Krämer, 1989-1990, volume 2, p. 622; Ruf, 1932, pp. 578-670, and "The Monastic Matrix," Online Resources), and Frauenaarach at Erlangen, founded in 1268 and suppressed in 1548 (see "The Monastic Matrix," listed in Online Resources).

2. Printed description from an English bookseller, cat. no. 167, laid in; inside front cover, "16741," in pencil; "170" in ink, and "43" in pencil.

## TEXT

ff. 1-12v, Graded calendar in red and black including the Octave of Stephen (2 January), Erhard (8 January), Translation of Thomas Aquinas, in red (28 January, totum duplex), "Aniversarium patrum et matrum" (4 February), Cunigundis, in red (3 March, simplex), Thomas Aquinas, in red (7 March, totum duplex), Octave of Thomas Aquinas (14 March), Vincent Ferrer, in red (5 April, totum duplex), Octave of Vincent Ferrer (12 April), George, in red (23 April, duplex), Peter Martyr, in red (29 April, totum duplex), Translation of Peter Martyr (7 May, totum duplex), Apparition of Michael (8 May, totum duplex), Translation of Dominic, in red (24 May, totum duplex), Ulric (4 July), Kilian (8 July), Procopius (11 July, three lessons), "Anniversarium cimiterium" (12 July), Henry Emperor, in red (13 July, totum duplex), Invention of Stephen (3 August, simplex), "Dominici patris nostri," in red (5 August, totum duplex), Transfiguration (6 August, totum duplex), Octave of Dominic (12 August, simplex), Sebald, in red (19 August, totum duplex), Louis the Confessor (25 August, simplex), "Aniversarium familiam" (5 September), Translation of Cunigundis, in red (9 September, simplex), Michael, in red (29 September, totum duplex, with octave), Otto (30 September, in red), "Aniversarium fratrum" (10 October), Catherine, in red (25 November, totum duplex), Conrad (26 November), Stephen, in red (26 December, totum duplex).

f. 13, Computistic calendar, copied on a large size leaf [folded to fit] based on the nineteen year golden number cycle [ff. 13v-14, blank];

f. 14v, incipit, "Domina labia mea aperies ...";

The familiar prayers said at the beginning of each Hour of the Virgin, here probably added on a blank leaf in an early hand.

f. 15rv, Pater noster and Creed;

f. 16rv, Benedicte oculi omnium in te ..; ... *Abent*, incipit, "Benedicte edent pauperes et saturabuntur ..."; with the *Salve regina*, and prayer, incipit, "Noctem quietam et finem perfectam ...";

Blessings and prayers for the evening.

ff. 17-21, Commemorations of the Virgin, and Dominican Saints, Dominic (incipit, "Deus qui ecclesiam tuam beati dominici ..."), Peter martyr (incipit, "Presta quesumus omnipotens deus ut beati petri martiris ..."), Thomas Aquinas ("Deus qui ecclesiam tuam mira beati thome confessoris tui eruditione ..."), Vincent ("Deus qui gencium multitudinem mira beati vincencii ..."), Catherine ("Deus qui beate Katherina virginitatis ..."), and the Virgin.

ff. 21-25v, Prayers at the hours for the dead;

f. 26rv, Prayers for various occasions, including a *Umb ein regen* (for the king), *Umb schon wetter* (for good weather, incipit, "Ad te domine clamantes exaudi aeris serenitate ..."), *An der aschermitwoch und dornstag*, and *An den <t>reucher tagen*;

ff. 27-62v, Hours of the Virgin, Dominican Use (tabs at the beginning of each of the hours); changed office on f. 59rv following Vespers; ends with the *Salve regina*;

ff. 63-68v, [f. 62v, rubric, *Vnseres haberi salt[er]*], Psalms 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30 (some by cue only);

ff. 69-98v, Office of the Dead;

Office of the Dead, Dominican Use (Ottosen, 108-110, and pp. 239-242.; note the use of feminine forms in the prayer, f. 97v, incipit, "Quesumus domine perpetua pietate nostri serenitate anime famule tue ...."

ff. 99- 115, *Die siben psalm...* ; Penitential Psalms and Litany, including Vincent, Maurice and Thomas among the martyrs, Dominic (twice), Thomas, Vincent, Francis, Benedict, Anthony, Bernard, Henry, "Audwice" (Aldric?), and Sebald among the confessors, and Catherine (twice), Cunigundis, and Elizabeth among the virgins or widows; concludes with prayers invoking Dominic, Peter Martyr, Thomas Aquinas, and Vincent: f. 113v, incipit, *Oratio*, "Protege domine famulos tuos subsidiis pacis ..."; incipit, "Concede quesumus ominpotens deus .... beati dominici confessoris ..."; f. 114, incipit, "Preces quas tibi offerimus domine intercedente beato petro matire tuo ...", incipit, "Deus qui ecclesiam tuam mira beati thome confessoris ..."; incipit, "D[eus qui gentium] multitudine [ .. mira beati vincencii confessoris] ..."; f. 114v,

incipit, "Ineffabilem misericordiam tuam ..."; incipit, "Pretende domine famulis et famulabus ..."; incipit, "Ecclesie tue domine preces placates admitte ..."; f. 115, incipit, "Deus a quo sancta desideria recta consilia et iusta sunt opera ...";

The litany is clearly Dominican (Rogers, 1995, especially appendix II, pp. 228-9, is a useful study of Dominican litanies). Concludes with the same nine prayers found in Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS Lat. 173 (Germany, c. 1450-1500), and California, Claremont College, MSS Crispin 8 and 9, Dominican Psalters from Germany, c. 1450-1500 (see also TM 630, sold on this site).

ff. 115-116v, *Das totem propicius*, prayers for the dead;

A second litany, with prayers for the dead, can be found in this place in similar manuscripts.

ff. 116v-121v, *Die complet*, (f. 117, incipit, "Sorores sobrie estote ..."; "Confiteor deo et beate marie et beato dominico et omnibus sanctis et vobis sorores ...")

Compline, for nuns (note mention of "sorores," or sisters in the prayers cited above); f. 117v, brief musical notation added for the Allelulia.

ff. 121v-125v, Antiphons and hymns for compline and none for various times in the liturgical year;

ff. 125v-140v, Offices for the Conception of the Virgin, Visitation, and Corpus Christi, followed by prayers, incipit, "Ave rex noster filio ..."; incipit, "Ave caro sanctissima ..."; incipit, "Salvator mundi ..."; [unidentified office], incipit, "Mecum enim habeo custodem coporis mei angelum ..."; f. 136, incipit, "Illumina oculus meus ...," R., incipit, "Discubuit Ihesus ..., *In festo visitationis*, O preclara stella maris ..."; [followed by a reading from John 1:1, and blessings]; concludes with prayer, "O sapientia que ex ore altissimi ..., O adonay et dux domus ...";

ff. 141v-152v, *De curs von den ewigen weisheit, ad matut.*, incipit, "Salutem mentis et corporis ..."; concluding with the prayer, incipit, "Fragilitatem nostrum quesumus domine propicius ...";

Office of Eternal Wisdom, sometimes attributed to Henricus Suso.

ff. 153-155v, *Dominica prima aduentum ymnus*, incipit, "Conditor alme siderum ..."; f. 154, *D[ominica] in pas[ssione]*, incipit, "Vexilla regis ..."; f. 155, incipit, "Ad cenam agni ..."; [ff. 156-160v, blank but ruled];

Hymns (not noted).

ff. 161-163v, Added in a contemporary hand, penitential prayers [f. 163v, creased and torn, and difficult to read]; inside back cover, prayer in German, incipit, "Dem vns preusliche par[m] herz ..."

This very small Breviary was copied for Dominican nuns in Southern Germany, almost certainly in the diocese of Bamberg. Miniature and well-thumbed, it is a personal volume that fits easily in the hand, and one can imagine it was carried tucked in a sister's pocket or sleeve. In general, manuscripts once belonging to Nuns are less common than those from male foundations, and are of special interest. Other examples of small-format personal liturgical manuscripts –

Breviaries, Psalters, and Rituals with texts associated with funerals and the commemoration of the dead, for example –from Southern German Dominican female convents do survive, however, and studying them together as a group would make a fascinating project (even possible on a small scale within collections now in the United States). One might see books such as this made for humble Dominican sisters as in some senses a counterpoint to the fine processions copied for the much wealthier aristocratic nuns at the Royal Abbey of Poissy.

The Divine Office is the continuous cycle of prayer said throughout the day and night by the clergy at the offices of Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline. A Breviary is the liturgical manuscript that contains all the texts required for the celebration of the Office -- prayers, hymns, antiphons, readings (many, but not all of which are from the Bible), responsories, versicles, and the Psalms.

This is not a complete Breviary with the full text of the Divine Office. Instead, this manuscript includes the auxiliary Offices and prayers that were also said throughout the day in addition to the Office (the Office of the Dead, the Penitential Psalms and Litany, the Hours of the Virgin), together with Compline, and other selected texts from the Office. Only Psalms 22-30 are copied, many of them with only their first line or "cue" (here with a rubric saying they constituted "our Psalter"); these same Psalms are also found in another Dominican Breviary for Nuns from the Diocese of Bamberg (TM 387, sold on this site). The desire to produce a very personal, highly-portable volume may in part explain contents of this manuscript, but there may also be a connection with how the liturgy was organized, and the role of each individual nun. We may note that very small Breviaries such as this one are relatively uncommon. A general query "Breviary," produces 2,719 results in the Schoenberg Database; of these, only eighty measure 100 mm. or less in height.

Women played an important role in the Dominican Order from its very earliest years. St. Dominic himself founded the first Dominican convent for Nuns at Prouille in 1206, and the number of convents grew rapidly. In 1267 a papal order secured the place of women within the order. Throughout the medieval period the number of convents was especially notable in Germany, particularly in the southeast; in 1277 there were fifty-three convents in Germany; by 1303 the number had grown to seventy-four, compared with only forty-eight Houses for men. Modern historians interested in the religious life of women have tended to focus on vernacular sources, and on illuminated liturgical manuscripts that belonged to Nuns. Small, undecorated, or simply decorated manuscripts such as this one are a source that deserves to be studied more closely for what they can teach us about the daily life of religious women in the late Middle Ages.

## LITERATURE

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Rogers, N. "Oxford University College MS.5: A Flemish Book of Hours for a Dominican Nun," in *Flanders in a European Perspective*, ed. M.Smeyers and B.Cardon, Louvain, 1995, pp. 219-235 (Appendix II p.228-29).

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Salmon, Pierre. *The Breviary through the Centuries*, Collegeville, Minnesota, 1962.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

The History of the Breviary

[www.newadvent.org/cathen/02768b.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/02768b.htm) (Catholic Encyclopedia, "Breviary")

Introduction to liturgical manuscripts:

"Celebrating the Liturgy's Books"

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

Jean-Baptiste Lebigue, "Livres de l'office. L'office des heures," in *Initiation aux manuscrits liturgiques*, Paris-Orléans, IRHT, 2007 (Ædilis, Publications pédagogiques, 6)

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

"The Roman Breviary" (text of modern Roman Breviary in Latin and English, with historical introduction):

[www.breviary.net](http://www.breviary.net)

Dominican Liturgy;

A Mirror for Dominican Material Published on the New Liturgical Movement

<http://www.dominican-liturgy.blogspot.com/>

Mandonnet, P, "Order of Preachers," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, New York, Robert Appleton Company, 1911

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12354c.htm>

Hypertext Book of Hours (Office of the Dead, Penitential Psalms and Litany in Latin and English; not exactly as in this manuscript)

<http://medievalist.net/hourstxt/home.htm>

Frauenklöster in Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Literatur, Dominikanerinnen

<http://www.frauenkloester.de/>

Monastic Matrix: A scholarly resource for the study of women's religious communities from 400 to 1600 c.e.

<http://monasticmatrix.org/>

Monastic Matrix: Heilig Grab

<http://monasticmatrix.org/monasticon/heilig-grab>

Monastic Matrix: Frauaurach

<http://monasticmatrix.org/monasticon/frauaurach>

Monastic Matrix: S. Katharinenkloster (St. Catherine's, Nuremberg)

<http://monasticmatrix.org/monasticon/s-katharinenkloster>

TM 728