

[Book of Hours] *Officium Beatae Mariae Virginis nuper reformatum & Pii V Pont. Max iussu editum . . .*

In Latin, uncut sheets for illustrated imprint

Belgium, Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Press, 1677

12 sheets, now folded in half with each half sheet numbered, 1-24, plus an extra half-sheet numbered 25 after sheet 12, each sheet includes four quires of eight leaves, or thirty-two folios (sixty-four pages), except the final quarter sheet, which includes one quire, when folded and cut to form a codex of 784 pages: [64] + 712 + [8] pages (the last two leaves blank), 32mo in eights, (collation i-xlix⁸), signatures: the first four quires signed with asterisks (*-****), A-Z, AA-YY all in eights, each page measures 60 x 33 mm., printed in red and black in Roman type, EIGHTEEN FULL-PAGE METALCUTS (58 x 32 mm.), title page with small engraving (15 x 23 mm.), eight wood-cut decorated initials, eleven tail-pieces printed in red or black, slight stains from damp, inner margin, first sheet separated at the fold, and following leaf and last leaf separating along the inner fold, wear to edges, but in excellent condition, almost pristine (especially the metalcuts). Unbound (in blue paper folder). Dimensions of each sheet 380 x 480-490 mm.

This is a complete set of the original unfolded sheets for a tiny Book of Hours printed by the Plantin-Moretus press in 1677. Hand-press books were printed in large sheets, which were then folded and cut to form the volume's quires or gatherings. Unfolded (and uncut) sheets rarely survive, and most surviving examples are fragments of a single sheet. This example of a complete seventeenth-century book as unfolded sheets is an important artifact that provides almost unparalleled opportunities for teaching and collections devoted to the material history of the book.

PROVENANCE

1. Unfolded and uncut sheets from a Book of Hours printed in 1677 at the illustrious printing house of Plantin-Moretus, when it was run by Balthasar III Moretus (1674-1696) (Voet, 1969, vol. 1, pp. 228-237). Hand-press books were printed in large sheets, which were then folded and cut to form the volume's quires or gatherings. Unfolded (and uncut) sheets survive occasionally, usually as single sheets or parts of a single sheet that was discarded for some reason and reused as binding material or flyleaves (see Kwakkel, Online Resources for an example). Here in contrast we have a very rare example of the complete set of the original unfolded sheets for this tiny Book of Hours.

The history of the Plantin-Moretus Press begins with its founder, Christopher Plantin (1520-1589), who created one of the most successful publishing and printing establishments of all times. The permanent home of the press dates to 1564 when Plantin set up in a new shop at the sign of *De Gulden Passer* ("The Golden Compasses"), which became the model for his printer's mark, showing a compass, with the motto *Labore et Constantia* ("By Labor and Constancy"). Antwerp was an established center of printing woodcuts, engravings and books, and with the success of the Plantin press, became one of the centers of the international booktrade.

Plantin died in July of 1589, leaving the business to his son-in-law and long-time business partner Jan Moretus (1543-1610). The descendants of Plantin and Moretus continued as

printers and publishers under the Plantin name until 1867. Jan Moretus II (d. 1618) and Balthasar Moretus I (d. 1641) became the great printers of the Counter Reformation in the Southern Netherlands. By the time of Balthasar Moretus II (1615-1674), the press's production was focused mainly on liturgical books. This trend that continued under Balthasar Moretus III (1646-Antwerp, 8 July 1696) when Breviaries, Missals, Books of Hours, and other liturgical books formed most of the press's production, thanks in particular to the lucrative Spanish market (Sabbe, 1929, mentioning this edition, p. 120).

TEXT

Title page: *OFFICIVM/ B. MARIAE VIRG./ nuper reformatum & Pii V./ Pont. Max. iussu editum./ Ad instar Breuiarij Romani sub/ VRBANO VIII. recogniti./ Ubi omnia suis locis sunt extensa./ Cum indulgentiis & orationibus/ à PIO V ordinatis, & Hymnis ab/ URBANO VIII. correctis./ Accedunt Psalmi Vesperarum &/ Completorij pro dominicis & Fe-/stis totius anni, vnà cum Rosario/ B. MARIAE./ ANTVERPIAE/ EX OFFICINA PLANTINIANA/ Apud Viduam & Heredes Balth. Moreti/ M. DC. LXXVII;*

[unnumbered pages preceding p. 1; prefatory computational tables related to the calendar, and calendar], *Tabula litterarum dominicalium; Tabula epactarum respondentium aureis numeris; De epactis . . . ; De indictione . . . ; De anno et eius partibus; De anni correctione eiusque necessitate et Calendario Gregorio; . . . ; Nuptiae iuxta decretum concilii Tridentini; . . . ; Calendar; Institutio Christiana;*

pp. 1-712, Office of the Virgin Mary, in three sections, from the feast of the Purification to Advent, in Advent, and then after Advent to the feast of the Purification: *Officium B. Mariae Virginis à purification usque ad aduentum;* p. 82, *Idem in adventu;* p. 145, *Idem post Aduentum . . . ;* p. 213, Office of the Dead, p. 268, Gradual Psalms, p. 283, Penitential Psalms, p. 307, Prayers to be said after Litanies for various occasions, p. 323, Prayers at the beginning and ending of meetings, p. 324, To invoke the grace of the Holy Spirit, p. 329, *Gratiarum actiones;* p. 333, Hymns for the Year, p. 376, Prayers for Sundays and Feasts, p. 434, Prayers for the sanctorale, p. 504, *Commemorationes sanctorum . . . ;* p. 509, Prayers for the Common of Saints, p. 523, Office of the Cross, p. 531, Office of the Holy Spirit, p. 537, Daily Spiritual Exercises, pp. 545, and 548, Prayers to prepare for Confession, p. 550, prayer after Confession, pp. 551 and 553, Prayers before Communion, pp. 554, 555, 557, Prayers after Communion, p. 558, Prayers on the Passion of Our Lord, pp. 566, Prayer to the Virgin, p. 570, Prayer to the Virgin and John the Evangelist, p. 575, *Planctu B. Mariae Virginis* (the Lament of the Virgin Mary), p. 575, Various prayers, p. 597, *Itinerarium;* p. 603, Passion according to Matthew, p. 621, Mark, p. 635, Luke, 649, and John, p. 660, *Modus ministrandi sacerdoti celebranti missam;* p. 670, Vespers and Compline, p. 691, Rosary of the Virgin, p. 706, Litany of the Virgin, p. 710, *Oratio ad Reginam omnium creaturam;*

[8 unnumbered pages], Index.

Book of Hours, *Bibliotheca Catholica Neerlandica, impressa 1500-1727* (BCNI), no. 13622; two copies in Antwerp, both at the Plantin-Moretus Museum (see Anet, Online Resources), a copy in the British Library (British Museum, Department of Printed Books, 1881-1900, vol. 139, col. 298; not listed in STCV (Online Resources)). There are copies in the United States at Columbia University, the University of Rochester and at the University of Iowa (Online Resources).

ILLUSTRATIONS

The volume is illustrated with sixteen full-page engravings, in addition to a small engraving on the title page, as follows (the folio number represents the uncut sheet, and the page number in brackets is that in the bound imprint):

- f. 1 [n.n.], Title page in red and black with a small image of Mary, half length, bordered by stars;
- f. 1 [n.n.], Calendar: the Annunciation;
- f.2 [p.24], Lauds: Mary and Elizabeth (the Visitation);
- f.3 [p.76], Vespers: Mary as the woman of the Apocalypse, a snake beneath her feet, standing on the earth crowned with stars;
- f. 3v [p. 66], Compline: Flight into Egypt;
- f.5 [p.213], Office of the Dead: souls in Hell surrounded by flames, IHS above;
- f.6v [p.282], Gradual Psalms: Sacrifice of Isaac (?) depicting an altar, with wood, and a patriarch talking to a younger but bearded man; angel in sky holding sword, a bundle of sticks and a round object;
- f.10v [p.522], Office of the Cross: Crucifixion;
- f.10v [p.530], Office of the Holy Spirit, Holy spirit, dove, surrounded by angels;
- f.11v [p.602], Passion according to Matthew: Christ praying in Gethsemane;
- f.12 [p.648], Passion according to John: Christ on the Cross with Mary and John;
- f.14 [p.634], Passion according to Mark: Christ carrying the Cross;
- f.14v [p.617], Passion according to Matthew: Buffeting of Christ;
- f.23 [p.42], The Nativity;
- f.23 [p.51], Circumcision of Christ;
- f.23v [p.60], Presentation (offering birds in the Temple);
- f.23v [p.48], Three Magi.

These sheets are an example of a book in a form that was never meant to circulate, and are thus a remarkable, and rare, survival. To understand how they originated, one must first understand that early printed books, like manuscripts, were not made from single pages, but rather from quires or gatherings, made up of leaves folded in half to form two folios or four pages stacked one inside the other, and then later sewn together in sequence within a binding. Generally speaking, each quire began with one large sheet of paper (or parchment), that was folded multiple times. Folding a sheet in half produced what is known as a folio (with two leaves and four pages); folding it in half again and cutting along the original fold produced a two sheet quarto with four leaves and eight pages; folding it in half again, produced a four sheet octavo signature with eight leaves or 16 pages, and so forth. Interestingly, the evidence now strongly suggests that this procedure was not invented for printed books; not only were quires constructed in this fashion when making manuscripts, but many manuscripts (at least later in the

Middle Ages, and in the case of small format books) may even have been copied on unfolded sheets (see Bischoff, 1990, p. 21, and notes 8-10, citing numerous articles).

This is an example of a sheet folded two more times, a 32o format, although in this case it is to be folded into quires of eight, with four quires printed on each sheet, since a quire of thirty-two folios or sixty-four pages would be cumbersome to sew. Printers using a hand-press from the late fifteenth century were able to print a full sheet at one time, with each sheet including all the pages necessary to form one quire of gathering. The survival of these sheets allows us to see this Book of Hours as its birth, so to speak, just as it emerged from the printing press in 1677. Normally each sheet would have been folded to form the quires of a volume, and the quires would have been sewn together and either sent to a binder for a permanent cover, or loosely stitched together so a customer could later have the volume bound as he or she preferred. Books may have been proofed at the press while still in whole sheets such as these, although there are no corrections on this example. Books were also sometimes transported as piles of unfolded sheets – perhaps explaining the origin of this example.

This is a very tiny book indeed – each page measure only 60 x 33 mm. Tiny Books of Hours were something of a specialty of the Plantin-Moretus press, and as early as Christopher Plantin's day, Books of Hours in this format were published (Bowen, 1997, p. 78, 133, 241, 252, 254 and Bowen and Imhof, 2008, pp. 152-154). Interestingly enough, there is a surviving example of this edition with untrimmed pages, at the University of Iowa, Special Collections, untrimmed copy, in which each page measures 110 x 90 mm., leaving the tiny actual printed page surrounded by untrimmed paper. Another copy, now in England at the Royal Collection Trust is similarly described as being bound untrimmed.

LITERATURE

Bibliotheca Catholica Neerlandica, impressa 1500-1727, Hagae Comitum, M. Nijhoff, 1954 (=BCNI; also available online, see below).

Bischoff, Bernhard. *Latin Palaeography: Antiquity and the Middle Ages*, translated by Dáibhí ó Cróinín and David Ganz, Cambridge and New York, 1990.

Bowen, Karen Lee. *Christopher Plantin's Books of Hours: Illustration and Production*, Nieuwkoop, De Graaf Publishers, 1997.

British Museum. Department of Printed Books. *Catalogue of Printed Books in the Library of the British Museum*. London, 1881-1900.

Gaskell, Philip. *A New Introduction to Bibliography*, New York (discussing imposition, pp. 78-117).

Bowen, Karen Lee and Dirk Imhof. *Christopher Plantin and Engraved Book Illustrations in Sixteenth-Century*, Cambridge and New York, 2008.

Imhof, D., ed. *The Illustration of Books Published by the Moretuses*, with contributions by K. L. Bowen, et al., Antwerp, Plantin-Moretus Museum, 1996.

Sabbe, Maurice. "Démêlés des Moretus avec les R. P. Jérmîtes de l'Escuria au xvii siècle," *De Gulden passer* 7 (1929), pp. 119-145, at p. 120.

Voet, Léon. *The Golden Compasses. A History and Evaluation of the Printing and Publishing Activities of the Officina Plantiniana at Antwerp*, Amsterdam, Van Gendt and New York, Abner Schram, 1969-1972; available online at http://www.dbnl.org/tekst/voet004gold01_01

ONLINE RESOURCES

Christopher Plantin

http://spcoll.library.uvic.ca/Digit/physiologum/commentary/bio_plantin.htm

Anet (Netwerk van Wetenschappelijke Bibliotheken in Antwerpen en Limburg

<http://anet.ua.ac.be/record/opacanet/c:lvd:6824706/N>

BCNI, electronic version, UB Nijmegen

<http://helikon.ubn.ru.nl/anon/b/biblcanej/>

STCV (Short-title Catalogue Flanders)

<http://www.vlaamse-erfgoedbibliotheek.be/en/stcv>

University of Iowa, Special Collections, "Uncut copy" (now bound as a volume)

<http://uispeccoll.tumblr.com/post/63376551916/minature-monday-when-is-a-miniature-book-not-a>

Images of Books of Hours printed by Plantin-Moretus in 1661 and 1687 in this

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.665534033513090.1073741838.444400852293077&type=3>

Copy in Royal Collection Trust, in an arts and craft binding by Cobden and Sanderson, described as bound without trimming

<http://www.royalcollection.org.uk/collection/1082348/officium-beatae-mariae-virginis-nuper-reformatum>

Erik Kwakkel (unfolded sheet at the Folger Library)

<http://erikkwakkel.tumblr.com/post/61021070022/stop-the-press-this-object-is-both-very-odd-and>

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