

Passionarium (Passional)

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment with musical notation
Spain or Majorca, c. 1550-1600

64 + ii (paper) folios on parchment (pronounced difference in color between hair and flesh side), early foliation in ink in Arabic numerals top outer corner recto (some trimmed and supplied in modern pencil), complete (collation i-vi⁶ vii² [both single?] viii² [both single?] ix² x⁶ [2-5 single] xi⁶ xii⁴ xiii⁶), ruled very lightly in lead, with lines of text copied with the bodies of each letter touching the rules top and bottom (and ascenders and descenders extending above and below the rules), full-length vertical bounding lines (justification 290-285 x 190-185 mm.), written in a rounded formal gothic bookhand with up to seven lines on text and seven musical staves, square musical notation on red five-line staves, red rubrics, red initials and black or red cadell initials equivalent to one line of text and music, ff. 37-38 partially loose, some stains at beginning and end, slightly cockled, but overall in very good condition. CONTEMPORARY BINDING, likely original, of black leather over pasteboard, tooled in blind with an outer frame of double fillets and small triangular tools and with single fillets crossing on the diagonal, with fleurons in the four outer corners, small rosettes in the corners and along the diagonals, rectangular strapwork stamps in each quadrant, and a larger floral stamp in the center, spine with four raised bands, head and tail bands, covers scuffed, wear along the joints, top edge upper board damaged, front pastedown with several holes, but overall in good serviceable condition. Dimensions 345 x 245 mm.

Passionals, manuscripts with the text and music for Holy Week, were particularly important to liturgical practice in the Iberian Peninsula from the later Middle Ages and well into the seventeenth century. This is a large folio example of a fine Spanish Passional, still in its original binding and with interesting provenance (possible links with Majorca). The chant preserved here seems more elaborate than that found in other examples studied and calls for closer study.

PROVENANCE

1. Evidence of the script and style of the initials suggests this was copied in the second half of the sixteenth century in Spain or Majorca. The script and decoration in Spanish liturgical books are quite constant over a long span of time in the sixteenth and into the seventeenth century; further analysis of the music in this manuscript might make it possible to date and localize this manuscript more closely.
2. In the twentieth century, it was apparently sold by a bookshop in Palma de Mallorca (see below), and the possibility that it was copied on this island off the Spanish coast is intriguing. Majorca was Christian from 1229 when it reconquered by James I of Aragon; it remained part of the Kingdom of Aragon until 1715 when it incorporated into Spain. It was a prosperous trading center, and an important center of Christian culture for centuries. The famous theologian and philosopher Ramon Llull was born on Majorca in 1232/3.
3. A few additions by users of the manuscript show use including Arabic numerals beginning on f. 2v with one (in the margins and within the line of text), crosses added alongside certain initials, and occasional modification to the notation (e.g. ff. 7v, 10, 49).
4. A long modern handwritten letter included within this manuscript, dated 24 June 1976, from Dorothy to Doctor De Sanctis written at St. Luke's (hospital?), describing the

"glorious Spanish day in Palma de Mallorca" when she first saw his illustrated manuscript in a book shop. Since the letter was preserved laid in here, it is likely that she is describing this book although she says the first few pages are missing (the text is actually complete, but the first leaf is blank on the recto), and it is questionable if it is fair to describe this as illustrated (although there are numerous decorated initials in red or black). Nonetheless, she does comment on the striking contrast in color to hair and flesh side of the parchment, which is certainly true here, and there is no real reason to doubt that this letter describes the modern provenance of our manuscript.

TEXT

[f. 1, blank]; ff. 1v-24v, incipit, "Passio domini nostri iesu Christi secundum matheum. Passio domini nostri iesu Christi secundum matheum [repeated twice with slightly different notation]. In illo tempore dixit Iesus discipulis suis ...;

Matthew 26-27; Palm Sunday.

ff. 24v-36v, *Passio ferie tertie*, incipit, "Passio domini nostri iesu Christi secundum marcum. Erat pascha et azima post biduum ...";

Mark 14-15:46; Tuesday in Holy Week.

ff. 37-50, *feria iv*, incipit, "Passio domini nostri iesu Christi secundum lucam. In illo tempore. Appropinquabit autem dies festus azimorum ...";

Luke 22-23:53; Wednesday in Holy Week.

ff. 50-59v, *Passio in die parasceue*, incipit, "Egressus est iesus cum discipulis suis trans torrentem ...";

John 18-19:42; Good Friday.

ff. 60-63, [Prayer of Jeremiah], incipit, "Oratio ieremie prophete. Recordare domine quid acciderit ... contra nos vehementer. Jerusalem ierusalem conuertere ad dominum deum tuum"; [f. 63v-64rv, blank].

Lamentations of Jeremiah, chapter 5.

This volume contains the chants for the Passion readings from the Gospels for Holy Week, as well as the Prayer of Jeremiah (Lamentations, chapter 5). The Passion of St. Matthew was chanted during Mass on Palm Sunday, that of St. Mark on Holy Tuesday, St. Luke on Holy Wednesday, and that of St. John on Good Friday. The Lamentations of Jeremiah were traditionally the readings for Matins on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of Holy Week; chapter 5 (also known as the Prayer of Jeremiah), was often chanted during Matins on Saturday.

In contrast with the very large Choir Books used by monasteries and Cathedrals from the fifteenth century and on, many of which measure well over 500 mm. in height, this manuscript, although still a large folio in size, is more manageable overall in its dimensions and length. It

would have been a practical book for the use by a choirmaster (or possibly by the choir, since the text and music are still large enough to be read at a distance) during the Easter triduum, recalling the Passion, death, and burial of Jesus. Passionals from Iberia circulated extensively both in manuscript and print, one often copying from the other and vice-versa (Hardie, 1991, 2007).

Passionals were liturgical chant books that were particularly popular in the Iberian Peninsula, both in Spain and in Portugal. They typically contained all or some of the texts and music for either or both the Office and/or Mass from Palm Sunday to Easter Day. Since Holy Week was, and still is, such an important period of commemoration in Spain, and its attendant rituals are so rich and complex, it made sense to isolate this material in a single easily transportable volume (Hardie, 2007, pp. 12-13). As a side note, a Passional (or Passionarium), of this sort, should not be confused with the book called a Passionary or Legendary which is a liturgical service-book that contains lives of the Saints ordered according to their feast days.

All the texts in this manuscript are accompanied by music in square notation on red five-line staves; the entire reading from Matthew and the Prayer of Jeremiah are accompanied by monophonic chant notation; in the remaining Passion readings, occasional verses were copied without music, although there is musical notation on each page of the manuscript.

The Gospels were usually chanted on a simple tone, and many Passionals record this with long lines of the same note. The chant in this manuscript, however, is more complex. In our preliminary look at this matter, we briefly compared the chant in this manuscript with three other Spanish Passionals: the Passional printed in Palencia in 1536 (formerly *Les Enluminures* TM 723, Light and Boynton, no. 16), University of Sydney, RB Add.Ms. 378 Deane, *Passionarium*, Burgo, 1599 (Online Resources), and *Officium hebdomadae sanctae et paschalis*, printed in Salamanca in 1582 (Online Resources). The chant in each of these three randomly chosen comparisons is simpler than the chant in our manuscript, suggesting a thorough study of the chant preserved here may prove to be of interest to scholars.

LITERATURE

Braun, Warner and Kurt Von Fischer. "Passion," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, New York, 2001.

Gonzalez Valle, José-Vicente. *La tradición del canto litúrgico de la Pasión en España: estudio sobre las composiciones monódicas y polifónicas del "cantus passionis" en las catedrales de Aragón y Castilla*, Barcelona, 1992.

Hardie, Jane. "Liturgical Books for Use in Spain 1468-1568: Puzzles in Parchment and Print," *Musica antiqua* 9 (1991), pp. 279-319.

Hardie, Jane. "Salamanca to Sydney: A newly discovered manuscript of the Lamentations of Jeremiah," in *Music in Medieval Europe Music in medieval Europe: Studies in Honour of Bryan Gillingham*, eds. Terence Bailey, Alma Santosuosso, Aldershot, England, and Burlington, Vermont, 2007, pp. 11-22.

Light, Laura and Susan Boynton. *Sacred Song; Chanting the Bible in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, Les Enluminures, 2014, cat. no. 16.

ONLINE RESOURCES

University of Sydney, RB Add.Ms. 378 Deane, Passionarium, Burgo, 1599
<http://hdl.handle.net/2123/14023>

Digital reproduction, *Officium hebdomadae sanctae et paschalis*, Salamanca 1582
<http://www.memoriademadrid.es/buscador.php?accion=VerFicha&id=27014>

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