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Prayer Book (fragmentary)

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Southern Germany (Augsburg?), c. 1490-1500, and Western Germany (diocese of Cologne?), c. 1500-1510

4 historiated initials, 18 illuminated borders

i (paper) + 14 + i (paper) folios on parchment, modern foliation in the lower corner in pencil, 1-14, all leaves are singletons pasted onto parchment tabs, one horizontal catchword relevant to original context (f. 4v), ruled in brown ink (justification 87 x 47 mm.), written in dark brown ink in a round gothic textualis bookhand on 21 lines (except for f. 6rv and the lower part of f. 10v which are written in brown ink in gothic hybrid bookhand on 21 lines), capitals touched in red, 1- to 3-line initials alternating in red and blue, fifteen 1- to 5-line initials with burnished gold and colors, FOUR 5-LINE HISTORIATED INITIALS with burnished gold and colors, EIGHTEEN PAGES WITH VERY FINE HISTORIATED AND DECORATED MARGINS containing acanthus leaves, carnations and other flowers, wild men, jugglers, noblemen and a lady, the Christ Child, Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane and Christ crucified, a peacock, monkeys, birds, a hunter, the shroud of Veronica and a wonderful unicorn, all painted in bright colors, liquid gold and details highlighted in burnished gold, very few small stains, in overall excellent condition. Modern dark pink buckram binding, joints brittle otherwise in good condition, black velvet pouch.

Dimensions 137 x 80 mm.

Unicorns, jugglers, strewn flowers, peacocks, monkeys – the margins of this now fragmentary Prayer Book abound with flamboyant illumination. Five beautiful historiated initials complete the ensemble. The marginal images may be evidence that this was made for the use of a laywoman in her private chapel; could this be her on f. 3v in the lower border watching the jugglers perform? The content and rubrics, however, suggest liturgical use by a priest saying Mass. Whomever the original owner was, the work offers endless delight.

PROVENANCE

1. This is a composite volume made of single leaves bound together in a random order. The original manuscript was made by two different scribes and two illuminators. The styles of the scripts and illuminations suggest localizing the making of the book in Germany around 1490-1510 (see below).

The choice of images in the margins implies that the book was likely made for a noblewoman. She may have had a Dominican confessor. The scene represented inside the initial on f. 1 includes a priest in prayer wearing a white robe and a ragged, hooded cloak with a long red tie-string, perhaps a Dominican friar, suggesting that the Prayer Book was initially made for a person close to the Dominicans.

The rubrics include instructions for a priest, but the secular subjects depicted in the margins (e.g. ff. 2v, 3v) may suggest that the manuscript was not made for a priest, but rather for a noblewoman for use in her private chapel. If this is the case, the text, copied closely from its exemplar and including instructions to the celebrant, would have

enabled its owner to follow the Mass closely.

2. Belonged to the French doctor and bibliophile Lucien Graux (1878-1944); his ex libris is pasted inside the front cover.
3. Belonged to Klaus Dieter Dahmen (1934-2020); his ex libris is pasted inside the front cover.
4. Modern booksellers's markings in pencil on the front pastedown and the front flyleaf; list of contents written French in pencil on the end flyleaf, mostly erroneous.

TEXT

f. 1rv, [Prefatory hymn and text for the Mass], *Accessus altaris ym̃pnus*, incipit, "Veni creator spiritus ... [ending imperfectly in Ps. 84:12] ... Deus gratiam et glori//[am]" [lacking the end of verse 12 and verse 13];

f. 2rv, [John 19:31-39, beginning and ending imperfectly], incipit, "[rema]//nerent in cruce corpora sabbato ... quasi libras cen//[tum]";

f. 3rv, [Chants and texts for Mass during Holy Week, beginning with the antiphon *Domine, audivi auditum tuum*, beginning imperfectly], incipit, "[Domine, audivi auditum tuum et timui, consideravi opera] //tua, et expavi ..."; "Deus quo et vidas reatus ..."; "In diebus illis..." [Exodus 12:1-4, the rubric instructs that it is to be read by the subdeacon; ending imperfectly], " ... possit ad//";

f. 4rv, [Prayers for a king (where the name of the king is to be inserted in the place of 'N') and for a catechumen, beginning imperfectly (at the very end of a prayer *Pro universalis gradibus ecclesie*)], incipit, "//serviatur. Levate. Per eiusdem. *Pro Rege*. Oremus et pro christianissimo rege nostro .N. ut deus... Levate. Per. *Pro Cathecuminis* ... tue filiis aggregentur";

The text is found in the Missal printed in Antwerp in 1527 by Willem Vorsterman and Godfried of The Hague, f. 71rv.

f. 5rv, [Prayers, beginning imperfectly at the end of the Marian prayer *O intemerata*], incipit, "[despi]//cere et nulla eius adversa formidare, et talem penitenciam... sempiternam. Amen"; [followed by a prayer to St. Michael, ending imperfectly];

f. 6rv, [St. Bonaventure's prayer to Christ; "O Domine Jesu Christe Fili Dei vivi qui pro nobis miseris peccatoribus, here beginning and ending imperfectly], incipit, "//In oratione pre anxietate spiritus sanguineo sudore perfundi, et dulcissimam animam tuam tristitia ... sensus meos, et omnem [affectum meum] interiorem//" [copied in a hybrid bookhand];

f. 7rv, [Prayer, "Deus, cui proprium est misereri semper et parcere," which normally follows the litanies, here beginning and ending imperfectly], incipit, "[confiten]//cium tibi parce peccatis ... et per te cepta finiatur//";

f. 8rv, [St. Bonaventure's Psalter of the Virgin Mary], *Incipiunt septem psalmi ad gloriosam virginem Mariam dei genitricem.*, incipit, "Domina ne in furore Dei sinas me corripere ... [ending imperfectly], ... Beati, quorum corda te diligunt ... salus de supernis [sedibus] visitavit. Glo//";

f. 9rv, [Psalms for the week, beginning and ending imperfectly, beginning in Ps. 37:18, the last Psalm sung at Matins on Monday], incipit, "[fla]//gella paratus sum ..."; [followed by Ps. 50 (*Miserere mei*), the first psalm sung at Lauds (on each weekday except for Sunday), ending imperfectly in Ps. 50:12], "Cor mundum ... Deus, et//";

f. 10rv, [Psalm 50 continues from verse 19 until the end; beginning imperfectly], "//et humiliatum Deus non despicias ..."; [verses 13-18 are therefore lacking completely and verses 12 and 19 are partially incomplete, followed by the responsory *Sepulto Domino* and a versicle, which the rubric instructs the priest to say slowly, *lenta voce tunc Sacerdos dicat*; two prayers follow: *Respice quaesumus* (with instructions, *Et aspergatur et Thurificetur Crucifixum*) and St. Bonaventure's prayer to Christ], "O Domine Jesu Christe Fili Dei vivi qui pro nobis miseris peccatoribus ...", [continues on f. 6; copied in a hybrid bookhand];

f. 11rv, [Prayer *Salve sancta facies*, ending imperfectly within the concluding prayer, "Deus qui nobis famulis tuis ... per passionem et cru//";

f. 12rv, [Prayers to St. Apollonia and St. Mary Magdalene; originally the leaf was bound the other way round, and now the prayer to St. Apollonia begins on the verso], incipit, "Salve sancta apollonia, virgo et martir Dei...", [continuing on the recto, followed by the prayer to Mary Magdalene, ending imperfectly], "Gaude pia Magdalena, spes salutis vite vera penitendi//";

f. 13rv, [John 19:39-42, continuing from f. 2v], incipit, "[cen]//tum. Acceperunt ergo ... posuerunt Ihesum"; [followed by three short prayers which the priest is instructed to say genuflecting, the last for the Pope, ending imperfectly], "Oremus et pro beatissimo papa nostro//";

f. 14rv, [Prayers to St. Gregory, beginning imperfectly], "[concede] //propicius, ut qui eius beneficia poscimus ..."; "Sancte gregori pontifex christi funde preces pro nobis ad dominum ..."; [prayer to St. Jerome, ending imperfectly], "Quasi stella matutina splendet pater inclitus//"

ILLUSTRATION

Historiated initials

f. 1, 5-line initial 'V' enclosing a scene with the Dove of the Holy Spirit appearing to a priest in prayer wearing a white robe and a ragged, hooded cloak with a long red tie-string, perhaps a Dominican friar; the margins are decorated with acanthus leaves, a yellow flower and balls in burnished gold;

f. 5, 5-line initial 'S' enclosing St. Michael the Archangel with the scales; the lower and inner margins are decorated with a colorful flower stem with balls in burnished gold;

f. 12, 4-line initial 'G' with St. Mary Magdalene holding an ointment jar; the lower and outer margins are decorated with colorful acanthus leaves and balls in burnished gold;

f. 14, 5-line initial 'S' with St. Gregory wearing a papal tiara and holding a book and a papal cross; the margins are decorated with colorful acanthus vines and balls in burnished gold.

Illuminated borders

f. 2v, In the lower margin a wild woman grasps her breast while a wild man raises a wooden (phallic) club; the outer margin has a large imaginative flower with a long flower stem sprouting from its center with curling leaves;

f. 3v, The lower and outer margins are decorated with a noble lady seated in a garden admires three men juggling balls;

f. 4v, In the lower margin the Christ Child is seated on a pillow and holds a small bird; the outer margin has a large imaginative flower with two long flower stems sprouting from its center;

f. 6, Outer and lower margins are decorated with Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane and a naturalistic stem of dark pink carnations, balls in burnished gold;

f. 6v, Outer and lower margins are decorated with Christ on the Cross and naturalistic stems of a pink pimpernel and a blue anemone;

f. 7v, Lower margin has a peacock and a chained monkey, the outer margin has an imaginative flower stem;

f. 8, All margins are decorated with colorful acanthus vines on which are perched birds and a monkey; a hunter blows a horn in the lower margin;

f. 9, All margins are decorated with colorful acanthus vines on which are perched a bird and a monkey;

f. 10, All margins are decorated with colorful acanthus vines with flower buds;

f. 10v, Branches of carrot flowers in the outer and lower margins, the latter serving as a perch for the Christ Child seated on a pillow holding a Cross; balls in burnished gold;

f. 11, All margins are decorated with a colorful acanthus leaves; suspended from the text in the lower margin is the Shroud of St. Veronica;

f. 11v, Lower and outer margins are decorated with colorful acanthus leaves and balls in burnished gold;

f. 13, All margins are decorated with colorful acanthus leaves on which are perched a bird and a monkey;

f. 13v, Lower margin is decorated with a unicorn; the outer margin has a large imaginative flower with two long flower stems sprouting from its center;

Our manuscript is the only known fragment that survives from this richly illuminated Prayer Book. We can deduce from the fragmentary texts that remain that it was originally a lengthy volume. In addition to prayers to God, Christ, the Virgin, saints, the king, the pope, the Holy Shroud, and more, it also once included Ferial Psalter, litanies, the narrative of Christ's Passion, and texts for the Mass. Psalms, prayers, hymns, and texts are accompanied by antiphons, versicles and responsories, suggesting a liturgical use for the book.

The manuscript was made in two stages. It was possibly begun in southern Germany; the borders are stylistically similar to illumination in Augsburg in the 1490s (Hamburger, 2016, pp. 45, 58-60, 102-103). This section of the manuscript was copied in a rounded gothic bookhand, with marginal decoration of colorful acanthus and playful monkeys. The folios copied in a hybrid book script (ff. 6rv and 10v) were a second stage of the production, although one that was planned from the outset, as the rubric on f. 10v indicates. These leaves are illuminated in a different style by a different artist. The flowers are large and naturalistic, and the style suggests that the painting can be localized in the border region between either the Northern or Southern Netherlands and Germany; we are grateful to Anne Margreet As-Vijvers for this suggestion.

LITERATURE

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Hamburger, J. "Another Perspective: The Book of Hours in Germany," *Books of Hours Reconsidered*, ed. by S. Hindman and J. H. Marrow, London, Turnhout, 2013, pp. 97-152.

ONLINE RESOURCES

CANTUS: A Database for Latin Ecclesiastical Chant

<http://cantusdatabase.org>

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