

Noted Breviary for the Winter Season (pars hiemalis) (secular use)
In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment with musical notation
Southern Netherlands, Belgium (Hainaut), c. 1250-1275

iii (paper) + 276 folios on parchment, foliated in pencil top outer corner recto, missing leaves, a quire (?), at the end (collation i-xxiii¹²), no catchwords or early signatures, quires signed in modern pencil, bottom corner recto, A-I, K-T, V, X-Z, ruled in lead, with the top two horizontal rules full across on some folios, and sometimes with full-length vertical bounding lines (justification 128 x 82-80 mm.), written below the top line in a regular gothic bookhand in thirty long lines on the few pages with text only, almost every page with both text and musical notation, with up to ten lines of text and Laon (Messine or Lorraine) notation on red four-line staves, red rubrics (majuscles within the text are not highlighted in red), one-line red or blue initials, two- to three-line alternately red or blue initials with contrasting pen decoration, six 5- to 3-line polished gold initials infilled with gold rinceaux on pink or blue on pink and/or blue grounds that follow the shape of the initials (f. 1, f. 2, first Sunday of Advent and first reading at Matins, f. 37, Christmas, first reading at Matins, f. 72, Epiphany, first reading at Matins, f. 194, Nicholas, and f. 216, Purification, with a finely drawn face of a woman within the initial); initials are all slightly worn or rubbed, some with slight loss of gold, lightly trimmed with occasional minor loss of pen decoration at the bottom of pages, soiling, especially in the lower outer corners, but in very good condition overall. Bound in a modern brown leather binding by Scott Kellar, Chicago, 2016, excellent condition. Dimensions 152 x 113 mm.

Despite its relatively small size, this is a comprehensive and detailed record of the Divine Office at the Premonstratensian Abbey of St. Mary at Leffe, Belgium (the same Abbey famous today for its beer), and is thus a precious resources for scholars of the liturgy and medieval music. The notation here – Laon neumes on four-line staves – is of special interest (by the fourteenth century this notation was replaced by Hufnagel or square notation). Small-format Breviaries such as this one with complete musical notation are quite rare and pose intriguing questions of use.

PROVENANCE

1. Evidence of the script (written below the top line in a regular gothic bookhand ('a' copied with both open and closed upper looks, uncrossed tironian '7', straight upright 's' except at the end of a word), musical notation, and the style of the penwork initials suggests this was copied in the middle to the third quarter of the thirteenth century, c. 1250-1275. This Breviary was owned later by the Premonstratensian Abbey of Leffe, in Dinant, Belgium, and it was very likely made for use at the Abbey, possibly even at the Abbey itself. Its text with nine readings at Matins for Sundays and major feasts follows secular use.

Leffe was founded as a priory of Floreffe Abbey in 1152, replacing the secular canons at the church of St. Mary; it became an independent foundation c. 1200. It was secularized in the wake of the French revolution in 1796, and its possessions including its library were dispersed. It was re-founded in the early twentieth century and is still a Premonstratensian Abbey today (Cottineau, 1935-1970; vol. 1, col. 1580; Online Resources). Manuscripts from Leffe do not appear to be common (none appear for example in "Guide en ligne des manuscrits médiévaux Wallonie-Bruxelles," Online

Resources; Van Waefelghem, 1930, and Misonne, 1987, were not available for consultation).

2. Notes added later, probably in the fifteenth century, are evidence of continued use, ff. 15, 19, 33 (including an additional text for St. Barbara). F. 195v, brown "N" copied over the original red initial (which was the incorrect letter).
3. Seventeenth- or early eighteenth-century ex libris note, f. 1, top margin, "Ecclesia Beate Marie Leffiensis," the Church of Our Lady at Leffe, Dinant, Belgium; front pastedown, eighteenth-century(?), brief note in ink about versus and responsorium for a particular feast (incomplete?), possibly while this was still in use at Leffe.
4. Belonged to Bartélémy Quevrin (or Kevrin) (fl. 1723-1747; perhaps 1716-1799), front flyleaf, f. i, in ink (faded or erased), "Ce petit livre [apatrien?] a Bartelemey Quevrin Awagne," and then in another hand in ink, "fin du 15e siècle." Awagne and Dinant are neighboring towns, only about seven kilometers apart. After his death the manuscript went to Quentin Joseph Quevrin (perhaps 1771-1854), likely his son, who inscribed it both on a front flyleaf, f. iii verso ("Quentin Joseph Quevrin, le 23 decembre 1803," and in the upper margin, f. 205.
5. Belonged in the twentieth century to Dr. P. Van Oordt, first of Rossinilaan, and then of Hilversum, Holland (inscriptions front pastedown, and front flyleaf, f. ii verso, and front flyleaf, f. iii).
6. Front pastedown, and front flyleaf, f. ii verso, below P. Van Oordt's inscription, another name, in modern pen, "Christiaan de Wetlaan[t?]."

TEXT

ff. 1-186v, Temporale from the first Sunday in Advent to Easter Eve;

ff. 186v-236v, Sanctorale from Saturninus (29 November) and the Vigil of St. Andrew to the Annunciation (March 25);

Includes Nicasius (December 14), followed by Thomas of Canterbury (29 December), whose feast occurs both here and in the Temporale, Genevieve (3 January), Remigius (13 January), Blaise, bishop (3 February), Scholastica (10 February), Gertrude (of Nivelles?, 17 March), and Benedict (21 March). On f. 183, St. Barbara is added in the lower margin; f. 198, addition in a later hand, lower margin.

ff. 236v-272, Common of Saints, and the Dedication of a Church, concluding with readings for Sundays within the octave;

ff. 272-276v, Seven settings of the Invitatory Psalm 94, "Venite exultemus," ending imperfectly in the last setting in the sixth verse.

Musical Notation

Written here on red four-line staves, with the "c"-line marked; the custos does not appear to be used, with neumes in the form known by historians as Laon (or Messine or Lorraine) notation (we thank Professor Susan Boynton for her assistance; Hiley, 1993, pp. 347-361). This notation was used in northeastern France, extending into modern-day Belgium, in an area including most of the archbishopric of Reims, bounded in the east by the Vosges, Eifel and Hunsrück. Early examples of this type of notation, written on a staff, can be found in twelfth-century manuscripts copied in this area, although many twelfth-century examples are still copied *in campo aperto* (without a staff). From the thirteenth-century they appear regularly copied on red or black four-line staves, only to be replaced by the fourteenth century by the German Gothic neumes known as Hufnagel, or by square notation.

The Divine Office (today known as the *Liturgy of the Hours*) was the daily prayer of the Church, recited (or chanted) by priests, and other religious, including monks and nuns, beginning with Matins, said during the night, and continuing through the day, with Lauds at dawn, followed by Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and concluding with Compline. These are the prayers modeled on the scriptural teaching to pray without ceasing (for example, I Thessalonians 5:17-18 "Pray without ceasing. In all things give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you").

The prayers and readings for the Office are included in a Breviary. Early in the Middle Ages, the Divine Office was chanted in choir from a variety of different books (the biblical readings from different books of the Bible, the psalms in the Psalter, the antiphons and chanted responses in Antiphonals, hymns in the Hymnary, collections of prayers, in the Collectar, and other readings in hagiographic and Patristic Lectionaries). Beginning in the eleventh century one begins to see efforts to collect all these texts into one book, known as the Breviary, although eleventh-century examples are very rare, and twelfth century copies are still not common. Breviaries were widely copied beginning only in the thirteenth century, when they were adopted by the Franciscans and Dominicans, whose religious life was itinerant by definition.

Breviaries include the words for both the chanted and spoken texts of the Office, but they usually do not include musical notation. This volume, however, is a very detailed record of the texts spoken and sung, complete with extensive musical notation on almost every page. How it was used is something of a puzzle. This seems too small to be intended for use in the choir, as a comprehensive guide to the services, or for use as an exemplar. But if it was designed for the use of canons when they were travelling, or in the infirmary, music would have been unnecessary (we assume priests saying the Office alone did not sing all the texts). Perhaps it was used by canons saying the Office in neighboring churches?

The Premonstratensian Order, also known also as the White Canons or the Norbertines, was founded in 1120 by Norbert of Xanten. The first foundation was at Prémontré, near Laon; the second foundation, however, was at Floreffe (near Namur) in 1121, and the order was particularly important in the Belgium. Leffe itself was a priory of Floreffe, and became an independent abbey c. 1200. The order was well-established by the thirteenth century with more than 1,000 houses by 1230. Their way of life combined an austere regular monastic existence and an active cure of souls. The regular observance of the Office was particularly important to the Premonstratensians. The Premonstratensians were canons, and this breviary

follows secular use (Matins for Sundays and major feasts include nine readings and responsories).

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Website, Abbey of Leffe

<http://www.abbaye-de-leffe.be/en/history/since-the-foundation-to-the-expulsion/>

Guide en ligne des manuscrits médiévaux *Wallonie-Bruxelles*
<http://www.cicweb.be/fr/index.php>

International website of the Premonstratensian Order
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