

Choir Book with Selected Texts for the Mass and Office

In Latin with some Italian, illuminated stenciled book on paper with musical notation

Italy, c. 1767

ii (paper) + 23 + i, (paper), stenciled folio numbers in red top outer corner recto, on very thick paper [no watermark], complete (collation i-ii⁴ iii² iv-v⁴ vi² vii³), no catchwords, a few quires numbered top outer corner modern pencil, ruled lightly in pencil, prickings remain along the outer bounding lines, one for each text and staff line (justification 390 x 260 mm.), produced with stencils with seven lines of text and seven red four-line staves on each page, red rubrics, red 1-line initials, two blue initials on gold grounds within the rubric on f. 7, FIVE LARGE ILLUMINATED INITIALS, equivalent to one line of text and a musical stave (initial on f. 8 within the opening rubric is somewhat smaller) in the medieval style, white- or silver-patterned red or blue with simple infilling on gold grounds, with lush acanthus leaves in green, blue and purple, with black balls on red ink sprays on ff. 1, 7, 8, 11v, 19v, a few stains but in excellent condition. ORIGINAL BINDING of gold-tooled leather with an ecclesiastical coat of arms (charged with three strawberries(?), surmounted by an ecclesiastical hat with six tassels on each side) and border on both covers, smooth spine, edges dyed red, front hinge broken, somewhat rubbed, otherwise good condition. Dimensions 460 x 320 mm.

Books composed with stencils occupy an interesting, and relatively unstudied, mid-ground between manuscripts and printing with movable type. This is a curious example, and one that has the added advantage of including richly illuminated initials. It was certainly made for someone in or close to the rare Piarist Order (the "Order of the Pious Schools"), likely to celebrate the sanctification of the founder of the order, St. Joseph Calas Sanctus, who was canonized in 1767. Bound in a gold-tooled armorial binding, this handsome book was surely appropriate for such a special occasion.

PROVENANCE

1. Made for someone of high rank close to, or within, the Piarist Order, perhaps an abbot, whose coat of arms, not yet identified, appear on the binding in gold. Includes the Mass and Divine Office for St. Joseph Calas Sanctus (1556-1648), founder of the order, who was canonized in 1767, and it seems quite possible that this stately volume was made around that time, perhaps even on the occasion of his canonization.
2. Front flyleaf, f. ii verso, mounted engraving of a small landscape surrounded by ornament against a striped background by Georg Leopold Hertel (printmaker) and Johann Georg Hertel I (publisher) in Augsburg, c. 1760 (Online Resources); engraving 238 x 180 mm., dimensions to plate marks 238 x 180 mm. numbered '4' in pencil, bottom outer corner; lettered "G: I: Hertel. del. et fecit No. 290 I.G. Hertel exc: A: V" Augsburg, c. 1760.
3. Front flyleaf, notes from two booksellers in pencil, f. i, in pencil, "GF/20"; and front flyleaf, f. ii, "Graduale, um 1650."

TEXT

Inside front cover, [index], *Indice de Messe e Vespri*, incipit, "Messa di S. Giuse: Calasantio, 1
Ant: Dei Conf. In 5 Tuo, ... 20";

ff. 1-7, [no rubric, from index, *Messa di S. Giuse. Calasantio*], incipit, "Veni te filii audite me
timorem domini ... [Ps. Benedicam ...; Gloria; Kyrie, ...; f. 3v, *Credo*; *Sanctus*; *Agnus dei*]";

ff. 7-8, *Ad Vesperas, Antiphona*, incipit, "Domine quinque talenta tradidisti mihi ...";

ff. 8-9v, [from index, *Hinno [sic] di S. Giuseppe Cal.*], *Hymnus*, incipit, "Sacram venite supplices
josephi ad aram parvuli quos ille primos advocat ... Hymni tributum solvite";

Hymn for the Office of St. Joseph Calasanctius; here longer than the three stanzas printed in
Venturi, 1879, p. 376, where it is attributed to Raimundo Ribera.

ff. 9v-11, *Ad Magnificat Ant.*, ...;

The book opens with the Mass and Office of the founding saint of the Piarist order, St. Joseph
Calasanctius.

ff. 11v-16v, [index, *Messa degli apostoli*], *In Festo S. Bart. Apostoli, introitus*, incipit, "Mihi autem nimis
honorati ...;

ff. 16v-20, [index, *Ves. degli Apostoli*], *Communalis in com. sanctorum apostolorum ad vespas Ant.*, incipit,
"Hoc est praecemptum ..."; f. 18, *In Secundis Vesperis Angiphona*, ...; [f. 19, hymn, no rubric],
incipit, "Exultet orbis gaudiis coelum ..."; f. 19v, *Ad Magnificat Ant.*, ...;

ff. 20rv, *Nelle Feste degli apostoli a vespro e Mattutino*, ... (including *Magnificat*, *Benedicamus domino*;
Kyrie);

Mass and Office of an apostle, Common of Saints (the rubric for the Mass identifies the apostle
as St. Bartholomew).

ff. 21-23, [rubric found on f. 20v], *In Festo S. Josephi [sic] Calasan. Ad Vesp Ant.*, incipit, *Qui cumque*
susceperit unum ..."; ff. 22, *In I Vesp. Magnif.*, ...; *In II Vesp. ad Magn.*, ...; [f. 23v, blank].

Office of St. Joseph Calasanctius, first and second Vespers.

St. Joseph Calasanctius or Calasan (1556-1648), was born in Spain near Petralta de Sal,
Aragon, Spain, studied law and theology, and pursued an ecclesiastical career first in Spain and
then in Rome, where he took up the cause of the education of neglected and homeless children,
ultimately founding the first free public school in Europe in 1597. From 1602 he lived in a
community with others dedicated to teaching, laying the foundation of the Order of Piarists in
1617. Throughout the rest of his life he advocated for the right to free education for the poor,
and famously was one of Galileo's supporters. He was canonized July 16, 1767. The mission of
the Piarist Order (the Order of Poor Clerics Regular of the Mother of God of the Pious

Schools), continues to be education, and in particular the free education of the poor. Today it is an international Order that runs schools in many countries.

Stenciled manuscripts are curious hybrids. They are unique items, like handwritten manuscripts, but were produced with a mechanical aid, and in that sense are more like printed books. Here the text, including the rubrics, running titles, and other headings, and almost certainly the musical notation were all constructed with stencil templates. This example, however, is a hybrid, since it includes painted initials in the medieval style done (quite skillfully) by hand.

Liturgical books made by means of stencil templates, many of them very large Choir Books with musical notation, are an extremely interesting artifact in the history of the book. They flourished in France and Germany in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and in some cases, well into the nineteenth century. Producing a book with stencils, although labor intensive, may have been quicker than copying a book by hand; it was also a method that was likely easier to learn than copying books in formal scripts. Gilles Filleau des Billettes composed an extensive account of the process for the "Description des Arts et Métiers" of the French Royal Academy of Science c. 1700 (edited in Kindel, 2013). In his description he suggests the practice was created by someone (name unknown) c. 1650, and specifically mentions that books for particular churches were written in this way, as opposed to printed books used more generally by the whole church ("C'est celui par lequel on écrit les plus beaux livres d'églises particulières qui n'ont pas besoin d'être autant répandus que ceux qu'on imprime pour l'usage général du clergé ..."; quoted by François, 2010). Another early historian of these books, Fischer van Waldheim, writing c. 1800, suggested that they were invented by a Trappist monk in 1674.

Stenciled liturgical books, often made in monastic settings, are known from the mid seventeenth century until the latter decades of the nineteenth century, and in some cases later. This practice probably began in France, and then spread around Catholic western and southern Europe, including the Low Countries (presently francophone Belgium), Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, and Portugal, and possibly even Mexico. One example has been identified in England (I thank Mr. Eric Kindel for sharing his research, in correspondence, 2012). In Germany the monasteries around Mainz were known for their stenciled books (see Schreiber, 1927; Gottron, 1938; Rodrigues, 1973; and Rosenfeld, 1973), and numerous stenciled books were also produced in France (François, 2010; O'Meara, 1933).

It is difficult to judge how many stenciled books are still extant. Descriptions of these books often fail to recognize the process. There has been no attempt yet at a general census, although it is a topic that has increasingly in recent years attracted the attention of scholars of the history of the book.

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