

THOSE WHO PRAY
Monastic Communities in Medieval Europe



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SAM FOGG



Introduction

‘It is well known that in this world there are three orders set in unity,’ wrote Aelfric, abbot of Eynsham, Oxfordshire, at the turn of the eleventh century. ‘*Laboratores* are those who labour for our living; *Oratores* are those who pray to God for our peace; *Ballatores* are those who battle to protect our towns and defend our land against invading armies.’ Of these three pillars of medieval feudal society, it is the second, ‘those who pray’ — members of the monastic and religious orders and those in holy orders — who have left the greatest artistic and cultural legacy.

From its earliest days in the deserts of the Middle East, prayer has been at the core of Christian monasticism. In the late third century, its pioneers sought solitude in the deserts of Egypt and Syria to escape the sinfulness of the late Roman world. Living as hermits they endured — even inflicted upon themselves — the most severe austerities. Such sufferings, and their lives of prayer, provided an unassailable shield against the temptations of the spirit and the flesh. The most famous of these ‘Desert Fathers’ was St Anthony Abbot (251-356), who became a role model for ‘eremitic,’ or solitary monastic life (Cat 13). Given his importance, it is fitting that a sculpted image of the saint is included in the exhibition. Clad in a monastic habit and carrying his trademark staff, St Anthony is accompanied by a pig, his usual attribute, or symbol in art. Dating to c.1450, this Nottingham alabaster is testament to the enduring appeal of this unflinching founder of the monastic tradition.

Followers coalesced around these saintly hermits, giving birth to the ‘coenobitic’ or communal monastic tradition. The monks — and later nuns — who gathered in these loosely organised early monasteries could call upon the prayerful support of their spiritual brothers or sisters to better resist bodily temptations (those described as afflicting St Anthony Abbot have provided an endless source of inspiration for the fevered imaginations of artists) and survive the violence and disorder that accompanied the collapse of the Roman Empire.

Life within these nascent monasteries was invariably subject to a Rule, or collection of precepts. This was usually composed by the founder and concerned all aspect of life within the monastery’s walls. In the Catholic West, the dominant Rule became the one which St Benedict (480-521) wrote for his monasteries at Monte Cassino and Nursia. A sculpted image of this great monastic saint features in the exhibition (Cat 10). Life within Benedictine monasteries (that is to say, those adhering to the Rule of St Benedict) revolved around the singing of the Divine Office. Eight times each day monks and nuns gathered in their churches, raising their voices in praise of God, Christ, the Virgin and the saints. The liturgy was centred on the recitation of the Psalter, or book of Psalms, and the beautifully illuminated late thirteenth-century copy present in exhibition would have been the pride any monastery (Cat 15).

Medieval monasticism was constantly evolving. Several new orders emerged in the eleventh century. These included the Augustinian canons, ordained priests who lived together as a monastic community adhering to the Rule attributed to



St Augustine of Hippo (354–430), who is depicted in a magnificent historiated initial by the Master of Osservanze (Cat 17). There were also the Cistercians, whose brand of monasticism was so successful that one twelfth-century author called them ‘the surest road to heaven.’ Among the founders of the Cistercians (also called the White Monks because of the colour of their habits) was St Robert of Molesme (d. 1111). In 1095, accompanied by over twenty followers, the abbot left Molesme to found the ‘New Monastery’ at Cîteaux in Burgundy — the first Cistercian abbey. Because of this, he is usually depicted holding a representation of a church, and the exhibition’s fifteenth-century sculpture of an abbot with this attribute may well depict this austere spiritual leader (Cat 8).

The thirteenth century witnessed the emergence of the friars, who rather than living in seclusion, left the cloister in their mission to evangelise Christ’s poor. The learned Dominicans, also known as the Black Friars because of the colour of the cloak they wore over their white habits, acquired a reputation for preaching (they were also called the Friars Preacher) and as a hammer of heresy. The Franciscans, or Grey Friars (the name again inspired by the colour of their habits), likewise became renowned for their evangelising mission and, in imitation of Christ and the Apostles, their exaltation of poverty and reputation for charity. The depictions of St Francis, St Clare and other Franciscan saints in this exhibition, in media including stained glass, manuscript miniatures and luxury ceramics, are testimony to the importance and popularity of the Franciscan Order (Cats 14 & 29).

Generations of abbots and abbesses, priors and prioresses were energetic patrons of art and architecture. The imposing ruins of Rievaulx Abbey, North Yorkshire, bear the imprint of St Aelred, the monastery’s abbot in the mid twelfth century, and also John Burton, its abbot at the turn of the sixteenth century. The depictions of diminutive monastic donors that you can see in this exhibition are reminders that individual monks and nuns were also prolific patrons.

So too were the laity. Princes, prelates and peasants alike were benefactors of monasteries and churches. They made gifts in expectation that their generosity would be rewarded with prayers to hasten the passage of their sin-stained souls through the pains of Purgatory. Rich and powerful benefactors were frequently rewarded with burial within monastic and other churches, their eye-catching tombs often adorned with sculptures of monks and priests re-enacting their funerary rites — you can see examples in this exhibition.

Reformation, religious warfare and revolution have taken a heavy toll on the artistic legacy of the Middle Ages. Abundant evidence is present in the exhibition. The architectural fragments from Croyland, Lincolnshire and Grelonges and Belleperche in France, the fifteenth-century choir-stall end with iconoclast damage, the cuttings from dismembered manuscripts, panels extracted from painted retables and the *ex situ* stained glass are reminders of how religious art and architecture, especially that associated with monasteries, have been targeted for derision and destruction. They are also testimony to the vital role of ‘those who pray’ in the medieval centuries, the endurance of the human spirit and our constant quest for the divine. ‘Those who pray’ have bequeathed an artistic legacy that deserves to be treasured and nurtured by people of all faiths and none.

Michael Carter, English Heritage

A tall shaft section from Crowland Abbey

92 x 13 x 16 cm; coarse-grained sandstone, surface considerably abraded as a result of weathering. One section broken and rejoined.

A tall shaft section from one of the portals of the former abbey at Crowland in Lincolnshire, decorated with a loosely coiled cable pattern incorporating scrolling foliage and small animals. Although heavily worn, the stylised foliage typical of this part of England is still recognisable. The shaft would have been a part of a series of jambs, flanking a doorway and complementing one another with their distinct patterns.

This sinuous architectural fragment was previously in the collection of Professor George Zarnecki, an eminent scholar of English Romanesque sculpture who owned several pieces from the abbey (fig. 1). In the 1980s, Zarnecki loaned the Crowland sculptures to the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in Norwich and to the Lincolnshire City and County Museum. In a letter to the Lincolnshire Museum in 1982, Zarnecki mentioned that these pieces had been built into the wall of a house at Crowland for a considerable time. This was the case with several other sculptures from the site, most notably a 6-foot figure of Christ with an orb now surmounting the fourteenth-century Trinity Bridge at Crowland.

Crowland Abbey was dedicated to Saint Guthlac, a hermit believed to have lived on the site. After the abbey was founded, it became an important pre-Conquest primage site and a highly influential institution in the economy and administration of the area. The original building, begun in 1113, was damaged by both a fire and an earthquake in the twelfth century. Many repairs ensued but by the early nineteenth century the abbey was in ruins (fig. 2). Some remnants of the original structure and its Romanesque sculpture still survive on site, while others are dispersed amongst the Lincolnshire Museum and in private collections.¹

Provenance

Crowland Abbey, South Lincolnshire Fenlands;
A private house at Crowland (from a letter dated 1982 from Professor George Zarnecki);
Collection of George Zarnecki, London, until 2002

Related Literature

George Zarnecki, *Early Sculpture of Ely Cathedral* (London, 1958)
'Ruins and site of Crowland Abbey.' Historic England. (accessed 10/5/2019)
<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1012410>
N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England, Lincolnshire* (New Haven, 1989)

Stylistically, the carving of our shaft is closely related to the jambs on the two surviving Romanesque portals at Ely Cathedral (figs. 3-4). These portals, called the Prior's door and the Monks' door respectively, date to the bishopric of Alexander of Lincoln, 1123-48, and include closely coiled cable patterns with decorative foliage and small figures. Although not as crisply preserved, our fragment possesses the same elements, which in fact typify Romanesque sculpture in this area – whimsical foliate scenes, stylised forms and a guarded symbolism. Such motifs, including small creatures among foliage, are commonly found at the margins of contemporary English manuscripts and buildings. Scholars of Romanesque iconography have related them to the complexities of natural sin and to the struggle between the vices and the virtues. The manner in which the creatures often navigate the foliage, either struggling against it or overcoming it, is believed to symbolise the wider struggles and temptations of life.



Fig. 1 (above)
England, Crowland Abbey (museum),
previously Zarnecki Collection
c. 1120-40

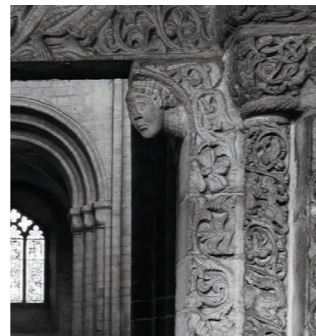


Fig. 3 (above)
The so-called 'Prior's Door'
England, Ely Cathedral
c. 1120-40



Fig. 4 (left)
Detail of the 'Prior's Door'
England, Ely Cathedral
c. 1120-40

¹ 'Ruins and site of Crowland Abbey,' Historic England (accessed 10/5/2019) <<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1012410>>.





Fig. 2
Henry Sargent and James Storer, after a
drawing by Thomas Espin
Crowland Abbey, West front
1824



A double ended corbel with the heads of two monks

19 x 35 x 14.5 cm; granite, general surface wear, the bottom half of one of the heads broken; geological analysis reveals the stone to be a fine-grained granite from the south of Brittany near Quimperlé, Lorient, Vannes and Pontivy.

Provenance

Collection of Richard Wiseman, UK

Related Literature

Cahn, W and L. Seidel. *Romanesque Sculpture in American Collections, I*; New England Museums. New York, 1979

A two-sided corbel with monks' heads on either side and a frieze with a zig-zag pattern running around it. Both sides of this corbel are carved with male heads, recognisable as monks, with short cropped hair in the style of a tonsure. One of these monk's heads, has features that have been grotesquely exaggerated. His nose is very wide, his nostrils flared and his bulging eyes are exaggerated with deep carving underneath them. On the other side, though much of the head has been lost, enough survives to show that the monk does not have bulging eyes or grotesque features – rather, he is shown human-like with small almond shaped eyes and a delicate nose. Although we do not know which site in Brittany this corbel would have originally decorated, the juxtaposition of the two heads is interesting as it suggests a good vs. evil iconography.

The abstracted grimace of one head on this corbel and its large facial features can be compared to a number of 12th century sculptures, such as a corbel from the V&A (fig. 1). The influences between the early Norman sculpture in England and that of Normandy or Brittany are also apparent in this example.



Fig. 1
Corbel
England
c. 1150
V&A.A.4-1946





A pair of capitals from the Abbey of Grelonges

31.5x28x48cm and 30.5x32x40.5cm, limestone, both in good condition.

Provenance

Abbey of Grelonges (destroyed 13th century) (by repute);
Joseph Altounian, Mâcon (1890-1954)

Related Literature

Neil Stratford, "Secular Sculpture in House Cluny", *Bulletin Monumental*;
Jacques Mehu, *History of Nunne*, 1930; Lucian Begule, *Rescherche d'art du
departement du Rhone*, 1911.

These two boldly carved capitals originate from the Saône-et-Loire, a region home to the Cluny Abbey – one of the most emulated buildings of the Middle Ages. Both capitals exhibit a distinctive use of small, drilled holes as ornament on the abacus and on other elements. The first capital is decorated by large fleur-de-lis, which are positioned upside down, cradling the core. Smaller fleur-de-lis with small, drilled holes grow out of the base. The second capital is ornamented by flatly carved buds filled with berries that take the abstracted form of small squares. Both capitals are carved on three sides and are still connected to the large blocks of stone that would have originally projected far into the wall, a reminder of their important structural function.

These two capitals reputedly originate from the Abbey of Grelonges, a nunnery built in the 12th century. Although the complex was destroyed when the island of Grelonges on the Saône was flooded in the 13th century, an example from the Abbey that bears close similarities to these two is preserved in the Musée de Chalon-sur-Saône. What is more, the churches of Saône-et-Loire still contain carvings, made of the same type of yellow limestone, which bear close relation to the present capitals.

Particularly close carving can be seen in an impost now in the Vezelay Lapidarium, which features similarly carved abstract buds and drilled ornamentation (fig. 1). Examples which still survive in-situ can be found in the choir of Paray-le-Monial, which features several capitals that exhibit the same type of abstract yet bold carving (figs. 2 – 4).



Fig. 1 (above)
Impost from a Sacristy
France, Vezelay
12th century
Lapidarium of Vezelay



Figs. 2-3
Capitals in the choir of Paray-le-Monial
France, Saône-et-Loire
c. 1130



Fig. 4
Capitals in the choir of Paray-le-Monial
France, Saône-et-Loire
c. 1130





A mourning monk

54.5 x 16 x 11.5 cm; fine grained limestone, surface abraded through years of weathering, fingers of right hand and upper part of ointment jar now lost

Apleurant in the guise of a monk holding an ointment jar which would have once decorated a tomb. The figure is tonsured and wears a hooded habit. In his left hand he holds a large cylindrical object which most likely represents a jar of ointment for embalming bodies. Mary Magdalene is often depicted holding similar jars, see for example the figure from Champagne, of the first quarter of the fourteenth century, in Reims, Musée Saint-Remi.¹ The poise of the monk is restrained yet clearly expressive. He leans forward over the ointment jar and gestures with his hand in the same direction. His pose expresses at once sadness and humility, suited to a mourner beneath a tomb. Both the scale and the hewn back of the carving are also indicative of the figure's original purpose as a mourner on a tomb.

The fine quality of the carving and the strong yet restrained pose are reminiscent of the beautiful phase of Parisian sculpture which occurred around 1300 in Paris. The figures of Isabelle of France now in Poissy, Collégiale Notre-Dame and the figure of the Count of Alençon now in Paris, Musée national du Moyen Âge (inv. no 23408; Gaborit-Chopin, 1998, cats 40 and 41, pp. 87-89) exemplify this style. The crisp and regular folds of the drapery, which are very sheer at the top and widen as they go down, are comparable. Diffusion of the formal language of Parisian sculpture was broad and its influence can be found in northern and eastern regions of France. The square jaw and distinctive slit-eyes of the present work point to Lorraine as the origin of the piece, one of the regions closely aligned with Parisian sculptural style. These features can be found for example on two figures of Saint Eustace from Lorraine, 1290-1300, from the parish church in Vergaville and the Benedictine Abbey church of

Provenance
Private Collection, Netherlands

Saint-Peter in Widersdorf, both in Moselle.² They can be seen again on the head of a bishop from the Parsonage in Sillegny, Moselle, of 1320.³ Lastly the face shape and drapery fold style, can be seen on a figure of Saint Lawrence in the church of Saint Lawrence in Malaincourt, Vosges, which is broadly comparable to the present figure (fig. 1).⁴



Fig. 1
Saint Lawrence
France, Vosges, Church of Saint
Lawrence in Malaincourt
c. 1330/40

¹ Inv. no. D.963.2.6; exhibition catalogue, Danielle Gaborit-Chopin etc., *L'Art au temps des rois maudits Philippe le Bel et ses fils 1285-1328*, Paris, 1998, cat. 58, p. 111

² J. A. Schmoll gen. Eisenwerth, *Die Lothringische Skulptur des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Petersberg, 2005, cat. 125, pp. 183-186.

³ Eisenwerth, 2005, cat. 206, p. 316.

⁴ Eisenwerth, 2005, cat. 242, p. 380.



A monumental corbel of a grotesque with a male head from the Abbey of Belleperche

73 x 80.6 x 53.3cm; limestone, losses to the nose and the ends of the beard, surface wear typical of sculpture of this age

Provenance

Abbey of Belleperche, Tarne-et-Garonne, France, last documented 1895 (see photo below);
Joseph Brummer Collection, acquired from Nicolas Brimo 1937;
Parke Bernet Galleries, June 8 and 9, 1949, III, lot 611;
The Cloisters' Collection, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, until 2004.

Published in

Joseph Brummer Collection sale catalogue, Parke-Bernet Galleries, New York, Part III, June 8-9, 1949, no.611.
Metropolitan Museum of Art Eightieth Annual Report of the Trustees for the Year 1949, p.23.

This massive carved corbel comes from the Cistercian Abbey of Notre-Dame-de-BellePerche. It is decorated by a grotesque figure, probably a mantichore, with the head of a man, the tail of a scorpion and a hoofed leg. The creature has a long beard, slightly open mouth and a defeated facial expression with deeply furrowed brows. A hood, which covers its head and shoulders, might be a reference to the monastery which it once adorned. The long spiny tail of the creature is curled up underneath its body as it supports itself with its hoofed leg. Although the corbel is now orientated in a way that the large supporting block is underneath the sculpted figure, it would have originally been on its side with the figure looking down below and the six colonette bases facing above. These bases would have supported a cluster of colonettes that carried the ribbed vault, as noted on a historic photo from 1895, when the sculpture was still in-situ (fig. 1).¹

Belleperche Abbey, now in ruins, lies on the banks of the Garonne River. It is about six kilometres south of Castelsarrasin, Tarn-et-Garonne, and about fourteen kilometres from the Abbey of Moissac. Benedictine in its foundation, it became a Cistercian abbey in 1147. A new refectory was built at the abbey at the end of the thirteenth century and beginning of the fourteenth century. Our corbel came from the interior of this vast hall, which measured 26 x 10 metres. Ruined at the end of the 16th century, the refectory retains three spans of its eastern wall, parts of the west wall, its arched door and the remains of the window of the south gable (fig. 2).² It was built of alternating brick and stone beds, the latter made up of massive blocks comparable

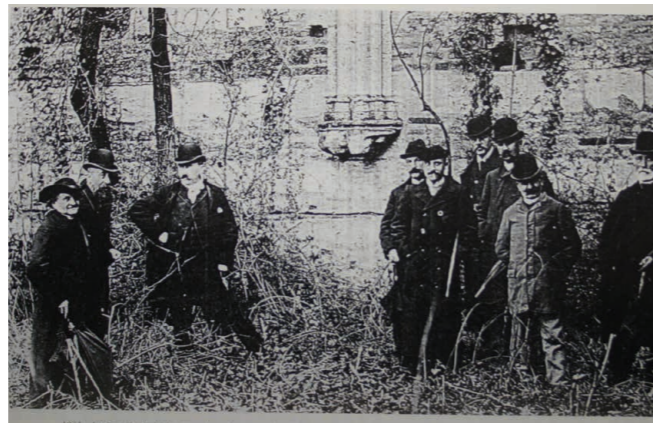


Fig. 1 (above)
Photograph of the corbel in situ in the remaining wall of the refectory France, Abbey of Belleperche Photograph 1895



Fig. 2 (below)
Photo of the remains of the refectory France, Abbey of Belleperche c.1300



¹ We would like to thank Jean-Michel Garric for providing these photos to us.

² Jean-Miche Garric, 'Belleperche (commune de Cordes-Tolosannes), abbaye cistercienne,' in *Congrès archéologique de France*. Eds. Arnauld-Cancel, Marie-Paule (Paris, 2014), p. 69.

to the present example. The refectory was covered with ribbed vaults, which were carried by grouped colonettes with 'vigorously' sculpted corbels.³ Marcel Aubert writes that the corbels were sculpted with foliated scroll ornament: 'Le réfectoire de BellePerche du XIV^e siècle, était couvert de voutes d'ogives portées par des groupes de colonettes aux chapiteaux ornés de feuillages très découpés posées sur des consoles sculptées.'⁴ The six colonettes that would have carried the vault in the refectory correlate with the six bases of our sculpture and a photograph of the sculpture in-situ exists from 1895 (fig. 1). Although badly eroded, one other sculpted corbel remains on the refectory wall (fig. 3).

The style of our sculpture and of the refectory's architecture fits well into the years around 1300. As Jean-Michel Garric noted, the height and momentum of the vaults as well as the novelty and lightness of the supports distinguished the architecture of the refectory radically from other buildings in the region and referred directly to the Gothic of the Ile-de-France [Rayonnant], which must have been adapted by a southern contractor.⁵ Rayonnant gothic is also reflected in our manticores, which speaks the language of late 13th century sculpture. It can be compared to a series of kings and prophets from the Abbey Charroux, dated to the last quarter of the 13th century (fig. 2). The furrowed brows, stylised beards and almond-shaped eyes of these figures find close parallels with our corbel.

While Cistercian churches are celebrated for their engineering ability and vastness, they are also known for their austerity. Figurative sculpture, such as this example, is therefore rare in these foundations. Still, it is not completely absent as is illustrated by the sculpture that survives from the Cistercian Abbey of Fontenay. Moreover, by the 14th century, the austerity that ruled these foundations started loosening its grips and more figurative sculpture entered the churches. Our sculpture is an example of that trend, which also attested to the wealth of Cistercian abbeys in the later Middle Ages.



Fig. 3 Above)
Last remaining corbel on the refectory wall
France, Abbey of Belleperche
c. 1300



Fig. 4 (below)
Prophet figure
France, Charroux Abbey
c.1269 - 1300



3 Garric, p. 275.
4 Marcel Aubert, *L'architecture Cistercienne en France* vol.2 (Paris, 1943), p.105.
5 Garric, 2012, p.69.



Saint Nicaise

104 x 37 x 30 cm; fine-grained limestone with traces of original polychromy.
Neck cracked and restored, areas of back, fingers and tip of nose part restored.

Provenance
With Jacqueline Boccador, Paris, 1990

Published in
J. Boccador, *Les Maîtres du Temps; Du Moyen Age a la Renaissance*, Paris, 1990,
p. 86, no. 73.

This sculpture of a cephalophor, or head-carrier from the Greek, probably depicts the fifth-century martyr and bishop of Reims, Saint Nicaise. Saint Nicaise is said to have been decapitated at the hands of the invading Vandals in 406 just as he was reading psalm 119. He read the line *Adhaesit pavimento anima mea* (My soul is attached unto dust) and then continued with *Vivifica me Domine secundum verbum tuum* (Revive me, Lord, with your words) even though his head had fallen to the floor by this point. For this reason, he is often shown holding his own head. Although some representations show him as a bishop holding the entire head with a mitre, he is presented in our example with only the top half of his tonsured head in his hands. He wears a simple bishop's robe of a red chasuble over a white alb, with a stole over his left arm. He is clean shaven, has a prominent nose, almond-shaped eyes and distinctly tight curls that are positioned around his head in two rows. Presented as a youthful man with no other attributes, we cannot rule out the possibility that this figure originally represented a different saint.

A comparable figure of Saint Nicaise can be found in the church of Notre-Dame, Écouis, produced in Normandy or the Île-de-France, 1311-1313 (fig. 1).¹ Just as in our example, the saint here is shown clean shaven, holding the top of his tonsured head. In this example, however, Saint Nicaise wears a mitre. Stylistically, this figure can also be compared to the statue of Saint Peter in the parish church of Le Fournet, Calvados, Normandy or the statue of St John from the MET Cloisters (fig. 2).² Nicaise's delicate facial features, thick neck and short stance are typical for Northern French sculpture of this period, which grew in court circles. A famous example of the style is the figure of Isabella, daughter of Saint Louis, which survives from a sculptural cycle at Poissy (fig. 3). The elegant and serene nature of sculptures such as these defined the court style of the period around 1300.



Fig. 1
Saint Nicaise
France, Écouis, Notre-Dame
1311-1313



Fig. 3 (above)
Isabella
France, Poissy, Notre Dame
c.1300

Fig. 2 (left)
St John
France
Early 14th century
MET 25.120.261



¹ Danielle Gaborit-Chopin ed., *L'art au temps des rois maudits: Philippe le Bel et ses fils*, Paris, 1998, cat. 55, p. 108

² Brigitte Beranger-Menand, *La statuaire médiévale en Normandie occidentale: La Vierge à l'Enfant, XIII-XVI siècle*, Manche, 2004, p. 128.

A Monastic Saint, possibly Robert of Molesme

81 x 31 x 21 cm; limestone; parts of the hand, the staff, folds of his habit, and the tip of the nose broken, fractures repaired

Provenance
Private collection, Germany

Robert of Molesme (c.1027–1111) was a Benedictine monk, abbot and one of the founders of the Cistercian order. After being a prior of the Abbey of Montier-la-Celle near Troyes and subsequently the abbot of the Abbey of Saint-Michel in Tonnerre, he concluded that the Benedictine Order needed reform. He therefore founded a monastery in Molesme, which was meant to adhere to a stricter lifestyle and rule. However, as word spread about the monastery and as it acquired more wealth, Robert found it difficult to maintain discipline and to keep true to the communities' original values. This led him to resign from Molesme and to settle in a desolate valley with a group of his followers where they founded Cîteaux Abbey in 1098. Robert eventually returned to Molesme, where he was buried and canonised in 1222 by Pope Honorius III. In art, he is often represented wearing a habit and holding one or two buildings that represent the two monasteries that he founded. Our sculpture of a monastic saint is consistent with this iconography. Robert is represented wearing a habit with the hood placed over his head; he holds an episcopal staff in one hand and a small building in the other – a symbol of his role in founding Molesme abbey and Cîteaux Abbey. His face is clean shaven, and his head displays a tonsure. His large ears and small chin are contrasted by his furrowed brows and realistically carved skin, which is delicately wrinkled.

Stylistically, our figure of Robert of Molesme can be compared to sculpture from North-eastern France. In the early part of the 15th century, a style flourished in this area which combined the simplicity of earlier French sculptures, such as elegant faces with almond-shaped eyes and heavy broad-fold drapery, with a realism that was developing in Germany. Our sculpture's sharply carved facial features and heavy drapery folds find close parallels with this style. These characteristics can be compared to the figure of Saint Paul from the Boccador Collection (fig. 1) or the figure of Joseph of Arimathea from the Toledo Museum of Art (fig. 2). While the sculpture of Saint Paul is carved in a more severe style, the carving of his eyes, furrowed brow and drapery is closely reminiscent of our sculpture. By contrast, the figure of Joseph of Arimathea, which was probably executed a decade or two later, is carved in a softer style but with similarly carved eyes and drapery folds. Joseph's fleshy facial features and a distinct focus on the carving of skin also find parallels with our sculpture.

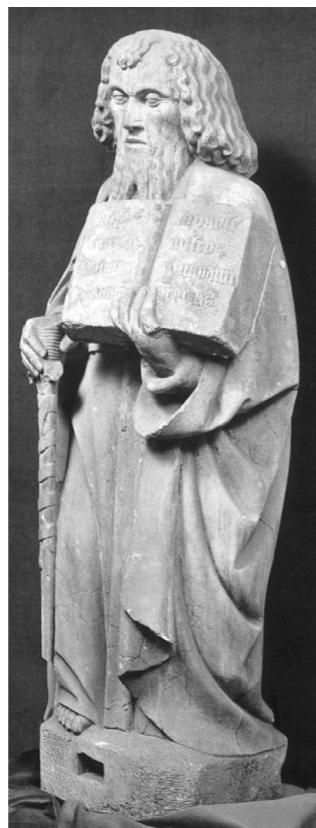


Fig. 1
Saint Paul
France, Burgundy
c.1400
Collection of Jacqueline Boccador



Fig. 2
Joseph of Arimathea
France, Picardy
Early 15th century
Toledo Museum of Art 1933.2



A reliquary bust of one of the 11,000 Virgins

43.5 x 32 x 21 cm; walnut, splits repaired carefully

Provenance

Private Collection, Germany

Related Literature

U. Bergmann, *Die Holzkulpturen des Mittelalters (1000-1400)*, cat. Schnütgen Museum, Cologne, 1989, pp. 75, fig. 82, pp. 311-314, no. 87

An idealised reliquary bust of a young woman in prayer. Her delicate waves fall over her shoulders and down her back, which is fully carved in the round. Her eyes are subtly carved to show the upper lids and fleshy bags beneath, and her brows form arcing ridges left subtly proud from the surrounding timber. The nose is fine and long, and the mouth is drawn into a clipped smile. She holds her hands together in prayer, her sleeves revealing a delicate row of buttons. Her belly is pierced with a circular traceried window, through which a relic would have originally been seen.

This striking effigy represents one of the 11,000 Virgins who, along with Saint Ursula, the daughter of an English king, were slaughtered by the Huns during the siege of Cologne in A.D. 238. As told in the Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine, Ursula led a large 'army' of Virgin women on a march from England to Cologne, accompanied by pope Cyriacus, the bishop of Basel, and other dignitaries. They accepted the 'crown of martyrdom' when 'the barbarians saw them, rushed upon them with wild yells, and, like wolves ravaging a flock of sheep, slew them all.'¹ During the first half of the 14th century, there was an extraordinary explosion in devotion to these saints following the believed discovery of their bones in Roman grave fields near the city walls.²

Although around 100 of these busts are known to survive, devotion to Saint Ursula seems to have remained relatively confined to the upper Rhine-Westphalia region and the city of Cologne itself, and as a result reliquaries and shrines devoted to the martyrs have traditionally been situated within the context of that immediate geographical orbit. The largest surviving group of reliquary busts of the present type still resides in the Goldene Kammer of the chapel of Saint Ursula, Cologne, a reliquary chapel containing the bones and other



Fig. 1
Reliquary bust of one of the
11,000 Virgins
Germany, Cologne
c. 1350
44 x 33 x 23 cm; walnut with
gilding and polychromy
Cologne, Museum-Schnütgen,
inv. A 97

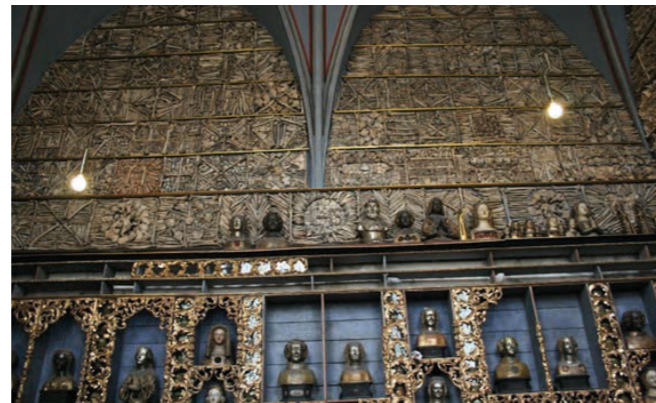


Fig. 2
The Goldene Kammer, or 'Golden
Chamber'
Cologne, Church of Saint Ursula



¹ W. G. Ryan trans., *Jacobus de Voragine; The Golden Legend*, Princeton and Oxford, 2012 ed., 644

² See A. Legner ed., *Die heilige Ursula und ihre elftausend Jungfrauen*, Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz Museum, 1978, especially pp. 9-14

relics of Saint Ursula and the 11,000 virgins (Fig. 1 - 2). Several closely comparable examples can also be found in the Schnütgen Museum (fig. 1), including a group with similar pierced trefoil and quatrefoil windows, full-length hair that falls in waves down the backs of the figures, and long, almond eyes with thin upper lids delineated by parallel chisel marks (see U. Bergmann, *Schnütgen-Museum; Die Holzskulpturen des Mittelalters (1000 - 1400)*, Cologne, 1989, especially Cat. Nos. 72, 74, 79, 87).

As is consistent with the wider group, the head and corpus of the present bust are completely hollowed in order to hold the saint's bones, which could be viewed by lifting a hinged top or looking through the piercings in her belly. Alongside busts of the Virgin martyrs, other saints were venerated with objects of the same format (see Fig. 3), and their lifelike, tangible qualities seem to have found huge popularity for a number of applications. For example, groups of these busts were also incorporated within larger relic altarpieces, often including other forms of statuary and decoration above, such as an example from the Cistercian abbey church of Marienstatt, created in c. 1360 (Fig. 4).



Fig. 3 (above)
Reliquary bust of a male saint
Germany, Cologne
c. 1330 -1350
Cologne, Chapel of Saint Ursula,
Goldene Kammer

Fig. 4 (below)
The Marienstatt Altar
Germany, Cologne
c. 1360
Marienstatt, Cistercian Abbey
Church



Saint Benedict

98 x 29 x 21 cm; baltic oak, minor woodworm damage throughout and small losses to the top of the figure's hood, to his fingers and to his feet

Saint Benedict of Nursia was founder and abbot of the monastery of Monte Cassino and one of the most prominent monastic figures from the Middle Ages. Often regarded as the founder of western christian monasticism, Benedict was a theologian, writer and a monk. His most important achievement was his *Rule of Saint Benedict*, written in 516 AD, which outlined a set of rules for his monks to follow in two parts: how to live a spiritual life as a monk and how to run a monastery efficiently. This rule was adopted by most christian monastic communities and therefore influenced the way that many people in the Middle Ages lived their lives. His body was enshrined at the abbey of Saint-Benoit-sur-Loire, Fleury, south of Burgundy, and it is there that a number of capitals portray scenes from his life. Depictions of Benedict naturally occupy some of the most important surviving sculptural programs of the twelfth and 13th centuries, but these are nevertheless surprisingly restricted in number. As in our example, he is often shown clean-shaven, wearing his monastic habit and holding a book, which represents his *Rule*.

Stylistically, the figure has much in common with late 13th and early 14th century sculpture from the Baltic sea region. Benedict's elongated body and small head, the style of his drapery folds and his physiognomy can be compared to figures such as the Virgin and Child from Kessin or the Virgin and Child from Viöl (figs. 1 – 2). The Virgin in the latter example also exhibits the same stern expression and the same angular carving around the face. While it is difficult to be more precise about the localisation of this sculpture, we can imagine that this figure may have occupied a monastic setting, where the image of this important figure would have served as an example for the community.

Provenance
Private Collection, England

Related Literature
Von Fircks, Juliane. *Skulpture im südlichen Ostseeraum: Stile, Werkstätten und Auftragneher im 13. Jahrhundert*. Petersberg, 2012.



Fig. 1
Virgin and Child
Germany, Kessin Parish Church
c. 1300



Fig. 2
Virgin and Child
Germany, Viöl
Late 13th century
Flensburg, Städtisches Museum



A massive choir stall with an image of a Dominican

119.5 x 72.5 x 10 cm; oak; some splitting to the timber along its grain; a modern (19th-century) fillet runs vertically along one edge of the stall.

Provenance
Private Collection, UK

This massive carving was commissioned for a wealthy religious house in the late 15th century, and originally decorated the eastern end of a monumental choir stall. It takes the form of an upright rectangular panel composed from multiple planks of thickly cut oak, and whose upper and outer edges are softened by way of slender columns and curved mouldings. Its front face is dominated by a full-length figure standing within an arched niche-like space. It shows a figure in the robes of the Dominican order, and may represent the Order's founder, Saint Dominic (1170-1221). Smaller figures grouped into pairs straddle the horizontal moulding which caps the panel's upper edges. The panel is carved on its reverse face with a pattern of rebated grooves originally used to join it to the timbers of a long run of stalls, which would have included rows of hinged seats (of a type known for their often mischievously-decorated misericords), sloped back rests and bracing, structural rails.

Stylistically, the choir stall can confidently be localised to France. It can be compared to the stall-ends at Castelneau, Breteueu, or at Flavigny, Cote D'Or (fig. 1 – 2). As Charles Tracy noted in an unpublished report, 'one conclusive piece of evidence, which confirms that the stall-ends are of Gallic manufacture, is the occurrence of "tramlines" on the back. These are common characteristics of French choir-stalls from the birth of the Flamboyant style until sometime around 1530.¹ Because choir stalls are typically positioned on the boundary of a choir space, physically bracketing its entrances and framing its central area, the primary face of our carving would have been clearly visible to anyone entering from the nave or aisles, and would have acted as a symbolic guardian as well as a didactic tool. Its prominent placement and central role in the liturgical life of the building meant that many such stalls were singled out during periods of iconoclasm and brutally disfigured. Our stall stands as startling and vivid witness to the iconoclasts' passion; all figures had their faces chiselled off in a bitter echo of the carver's art.



Fig. 1
Choirstall at Castelneau
France, Breteueu
Late 15th century



Fig. 2 (below)
Choir stalls with figures atop
mouldings
France, Flavigny, Cote D'Or
15th century



¹ Charles Tracy, 'The Fenland choir sub-stall ends: An Assessment,' Unpublished report (Ipswich, 2011), p. 7.

Saint Cosmas or Damian

Workshop of Hans Klocker (fl. 1478-1500)

75 x 21 x 14 cm; polychromed gilt wood; in good condition with minor retouching, some fingers broken and re-bonded, a few small cracks.

Provenance
Auction, Dusseldorf

Related Literature
G. Scheffler, *Hans Klocker*, Innsbruck, 1967.
Theodor Müller, *Gotische Skulptur in Tirol*, Bozen, 1976.

A standing male figure holding a book, wearing a golden habit lined in blue and a red rounded hat, worn by doctors, suggesting this might be Saint Damian or Saint Cosmas, the Roman doctor saints. The figure's head is slightly inclined to the right and he has a sombre expression. The artist has paid careful attention to detail, rendering the saint as middle aged, with down-turned eyes and a weak chin, a ruddy complexion and a shadow beard. His ample habit falls in broken folds which create a complex play of light and shade across the surface. The habit that the saint wears is not unusual because he is represented as a doctor, and doctors in the Middle Ages often wore robes that were similar to the robes worn by priests or monks. The reason for this was that just like them, doctors often dealt with people on the verge of death.

Stylistically this figure relates to the work of Hans Klocker (fl. 1478-1500), and is likely to be by a member of his workshop. Klocker was the most distinguished sculptor in the generation after Michael Pacher in Brixen, Southern-Tyrol. The ample cloth of the saint's robe, rendered in broken folds, revealing little of the figure beneath, and painted in gold, is characteristic of Klocker's work. The figures of Mary and Joseph, Vienna, Museum Mittlalterlicher Österreichischer Kunst, by the hand of Klocker, provide comparable examples (fig. 1). Another comparable sculpture is the bust of a bishop, attributed to Klocker from the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection (fig 2). Here we see a similar treatment of the flesh of the bishop's face and indeed of the hood of the habit.



Fig. 1
Hans Klocker
Joseph
c. 1500
Museum Mittlalterlicher
Österreichischer Kunst



Fig. 2 (below)
Hans Klocker
Bishop Saint
c.1500
Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection



Saint Anthony Abbot

41.9 x 14.5 x 5.3 cm; alabaster with traces of polychromy. The upper section of the background broken and missing around the saint's head. The Tau-shaped cross staff or walking stick once held in his right hand also missing. Smaller chips to the surface and abrasion to the polychromy layers consistent with age and handling.

Saint Anthony (c. 235-340 A.D.), a hermit Saint who lived during the reign of Constantine, is here identified by his traditional attribute, a pig, which lies at his feet as a reference to his purported taming of a wild boar while living a life of seclusion in the desert. The saint wears a girdled, full-length robe with a hood covering his shoulders as well as a stole whose stiff, pleated fabric falls vertically down the front of his body and terminates at the level of his knees. He holds a book in his left hand and turns his head subtly towards it as he gazes down and to our right.

The life of Saint Anthony, recorded by Saint Athanasius, is one of devotion in the face of temptation and sin. When he was twenty years old, he attended a church sermon, during which he heard the preacher state that 'If thou wilt be perfect, go sell what thou hast and give to the poor'. From this moment onwards, he vowed to lead a life of humility, charity, and poverty, selling his possessions and taking up the life of a hermit. He was most commonly associated during the Middle Ages with 'Saint Anthony's fire', a condition now known as ergotism that afflicted wide swathes of the European population during the period, on account of the growth of ergot spores on wheat and rye, and for whose treatment a number of hospitals were founded from the late 11th century onwards by the Order of the Brothers of Saint Anthony.

The carving of alabaster, mostly quarried in Tutbury and Chellaston near Nottingham, took on industrial proportions in England between the middle of the fourteenth and the early sixteenth centuries. The market for altarpieces and smaller devotional images was a large one. It included not only religious foundations but also the merchant classes. Many hundreds of English alabasters were exported, some as far afield as Iceland and Santiago de Compostela in north-

Provenance

With Galerie Heim, Paris, c. 1910;
Wright S. Ludington, Santa Barbara;
On loan to the Santa Barbara Museum of Art;
His sale, Christie's New York, 26th September 2001, lot 241;
With Marc Antoine du Ry, London, 2003;
Private collection, London;
Their sale, Old Master Sculpture and Works of Art, Sotheby's London, 10th July 2014, lot 39;
Wyvern Collection, London, until 2022

Published in

Francis Cheetham, *Alabaster Images of Medieval England*, Woodbridge, 2003, no. 5.
Williamson, Paul. *The Wyvern Collection. Medieval and Renaissance Sculpture and Metalwork*. London, 2018 (Cat. 131).



Fig. 1
Saint Fiacre
England, Midlands
c. 1450
40.6 x 13 x 4.8 cm; alabaster
New York, Metropolitan Museum
of Art, The Cloisters Collection,
inv. 25.120.227



west Spain. Many aspects of this beautifully carved and well-preserved example indicate that it was carved by the famous 'alabaster men' who worked across a swathe of the Midlands and who exploited the rich potential of the local alabaster quarries. The style of the figure's clothing, columnar fold patterns, and spade-like lower edge of the stole, as well as the raised, crisply carved, and slightly dished treatment of the beard all offer close analogies to a figure of Saint Fiacre dated to the middle of the fifteenth century and now preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (fig. 1).¹ Like Saint Fiacre, the crispness and technical virtuosity of our figure help to support a date of creation within the traditionally defined 'central period' of English alabaster statuary, usually considered to be 1440 to 1460. Its size is another clear indication of origin, since it corresponds extremely closely with one of the main standard formats of alabaster known to have been used in the Midlands workshops around this time. Two figures of almost identical size², one showing Saint Lawrence and the other Saint Denis, now in the Musée de l'Ancien Evêché, Evreux, show just how common and standardised this format seems to have been.

Originally, our figure could have been part of a larger altarpiece ensemble depicting multiple saints, the type of which is perhaps best represented by the Victoria and Albert Museum's magnificent altarpiece of the twelve apostles, although his size would have made such a piece more substantial than the majority that survive. His format, proportions and design are perhaps more appropriate for a form of altarpiece representing passion imagery at its centre, many of which are flanked by larger single saint figures that act as columnar aesthetic punctuations for the scenes between them. Figures of this type can be found on some of the finest alabaster retables to have survived intact, including a two-tiered example preserved in the Hôtel de Ville, Compiègne, Oise (Fig. 2).³

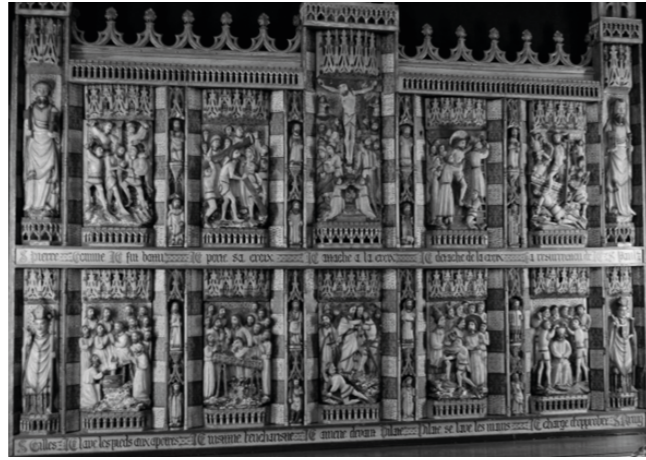


Fig. 2
Altarpiece of the Passion of Christ,
from the chapel of the Grand
Conseil de l'église Saint-Germain-
l'Auxerrois, Paris
England, Nottingham?
Alabaster
Oise, Compiègne, Hôtel de Ville



1 See also Francis Cheetham, *Alabaster Images of Medieval England*, Woodbridge, 2003, p. 40.

2 Saint Lawrence; 42 x 13 x 5 cm, Saint Denis; 42 x 12 x 5 cm. See also related figures of Saints Peter and Paul in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Inv. Nos. A132/3-1946): Saint Peter; 42.2 x 13.2 cm, Saint Paul; 42.2 x 13.3 cm.

3 F. Cheetham, *English Medieval Alabasters*, Oxford, 1984, pp. 55, 158. See also A. S. Tavender, 'Three Mediaeval English Alabasters in French Churches', *Speculum*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Jul., 1949), pp. 397-402

Christ in Glory Adored by Franciscan Friars

A leaf from a choirbook with historiated initial 'A'

483 x 370 mm; leaf from an illuminated manuscript on parchment

Provenance

Paris, Les Enluminures, 2005;
McCarthy Collection since 2006.

Published in

Freuler, Gaudenz. *The McCarthy Collection: Italian and Byzantine Miniatures*. London, 2018, 154 – 156.

As Gaudenz Freuler has noted in his commentary on this exceptionally large initial A, ‘despite its monumental size and its ornate presentation, the general appearance of the initial remains – in line with Franciscan spirituality – unpretentious, well-structured and simple.’¹ The text that the initial animates is *Ad te levavi animam deus meus*, the introit to the Mass for the First Sunday of Advent. Set in front of a deep blue background, the initial shows a crowd of Franciscan friars, who are presented in a dramatic scene as they look up towards a group of God the Father, the Virgin Mary, and St John the Baptist – depicted outside the frame of the initial. The bodies of the friars are elegant and elongated. Leading the crowd – represented as a sea of tonsured heads – are St Francis and St Anthony of Padua, who gesture to the three figures above. Just as some of the most intense Umbrian illumination from this period, ‘the body of the initial is articulated and contoured by blue tendrils which form here and there complex geometric knots.’² The four knots at the ends terminate with symbols of the four Evangelists – each one supported by prophets holding scrolls.

Freuler argues that the leaf originates in the last decade of the 13th century, which was probably the ‘most creative and innovative period in early Italian painting, when a highly talented group of painters under the leadership of Cimabue were set to decorate the walls of the Upper Church of San Francesco in Assisi. Under the guidance of Cimabue and Jacopo Torriti these painters started to modernize their non-Byzantine formulae’ translating them into ‘a new artistic vocabulary uniting classicizing tendencies with a new outlook on the tangible world.’³ Just as in the upper church of San Francesco, these new tendencies can also be seen in this initial – especially when comparing the faces of the figures with those in the upper church (fig. 1). The naturalistic draperies of the robes worn by the friars can also be related to early Giotto, especially his frescoes dedicated to the Life

of St Francis, though Giotto’s monumentally conceived figures are contrasted here by the friars’ elongated bodies. This connection shows our artist experimenting with a new fashion but at the same time, he stays true to his origins. As Freuler concludes, ‘our illuminator must have been a highly talented artist of the same generation as Jacopo Torriti and Cimabue. His art must have evolved at the crossroads of the many tendencies propagated by the artists active in the Upper Church of San Francesco, and his vision must have been sharpened by the revolutionary pictorial world of Giotto, the most accomplished of them all. Given all these considerations, we must rule out any date earlier than about 1298 – 1300.’⁴



4 Freuler. *The McCarthy Collection*, 156.



1 Gaudenz Freuler. *The McCarthy Collection: Italian and Byzantine Miniatures* (London, 2018), 154.

2 Freuler. *The McCarthy Collection*, 156.

3 Freuler. *The McCarthy Collection*, 156.

Master Honoré (fl.1288-1318)

Psalter

134 x 94mm; manuscript on parchment; viii (paper) + 148 + i (paper) leaves, 18 lines, illuminated initials with flourishing extending into borders opening the Psalms, red and blue penwork initials throughout, rubrics in red, illuminated line fillers, one large historiated initial (rebound at a later date and lacking perhaps 30 leaves, including 7 with historiated initials for major divisions of the Psalter at Psalms 1, 26, 38, 68, 80, 97 and 109, small horizontal tear at f.139, occasional marginal thumbing and cockling); 19th-century red morocco

This charming Psalter from the late 13th century contains an exquisite miniature by one of the greatest figures in French book painting: Master Honoré (fl.1288-1318). Although probably originally written as a book of private devotion for an aristocratic layman or woman, by the 18th century it had passed into monastic hands in France.¹ We can deduce this from the text on the flyleaves at the beginning of the volume: it begins with a heading 'At matins on Sundays', followed by the appropriate psalm and hymn, and the psalm and hymn for Lauds, then the psalm and hymn for Monday, Tuesday, etc. through to Saturday, followed by the Matins benedictions and an antiphon and prayers for Easter day ('*Cum rex gloriae infernum debellaturus intraret ...*'). Matins and Lauds are the first two 'hours' of the monastic Divine Office, performed one after the other, starting in the early hours of the morning and ending around dawn. The same 18th-century owner has written marginal inscriptions throughout the book, suggesting that he used it as part of his daily cycle of worship, although within a few years of joining a monastery he would probably have known the psalms by heart, since all 150 of them were chanted every week. In the Divine Office the psalms were not recited in numerical order (at Sunday Matins, for example, Psalms 94, 1-3, and 6-20 were sung), and this may perhaps partly explain why the leaves of the volume are bound out of numerical sequence.²

The historiated initial by Master Honoré with the Fool opening Psalm 52 decorates folio 35v. It begins with: *Dixit insipiens in corde suo non est Deus* (The fool said in his heart: There is no God). In the historiated initial by Master Honoré, the fool hysterically raises a stick in the air as he looks ready to hit a dog that is looking at him. He is covered with one piece of fabric that swirls around his naked body, exposing his chest

Provenance

Monastic setting in France by 18th century;
Faded and illegible inscriptions in pencil on upper board and opening flyleaf;
Inventory number '3609' on end leaf;
Private collection, Switzerland

as it seems to fall. His mouth is open, his brows dramatically furrowed and his hair flutters frantically in the air. He seems so deranged that even God, who looks on from a cloud above, seems upset by the situation. The figure of God, separated from the fool by wavy clouds, is shown in the upper right part of the historiated initial. Holding an orb in one hand, he raises his other hand to his face in a gesture of disbelief. The initial is decorated by blue and red leaves and a complex pattern of interlace, while the background behind the fool is a diamond pattern of blue and gold – typical for the work of Master Honoré (figs. 1 – 2).

Born in Amiens probably around 1250, Master Honoré established himself as an important illuminator by about 1288. By the 1290s, he was employed by Philip the Fair and on retainer for the Crown.³ Often called the first Gothic painter in France, Honoré was a profoundly influential figure in the evolution of late 13th- and early 14th-century French manuscript illumination. The expressive and sculptural modelling of his figures, the rendering of the features by a few elegant pen-strokes and the three-dimensional way he captures the light as it plays on the bodies and robes – all hallmarks of his style – are evident in the present miniature. There is only one documented manuscript by Honoré: a copy of Gratian's *Decretals*, now Tours, Bibliothèque municipale, ms. 588. A few other manuscripts can be confidently attributed to Honoré and his circle: among these are a volume of Gratian's *Concordantia Discordantium* in the State Archive in Olomouc in the Czech Republic (ms. no. C.D. 39).⁴ This manuscript was probably purchased by King Wenceslas II of Bohemia in the late 13th century, who sent out Cistercian missionaries to Paris at that time to purchase manuscripts

¹ We would like to thank Peter Kidd for studying the manuscript and for writing this part of the description.

² Ibid.

³ Peter Kidd, *The McCarthy Collection: French Miniatures III* (London, 2021), 178.

⁴ A. Melnikas, *The Corpus of Miniatures in the Manuscripts of Decretum Gratiani*, 1975.





ixat insup
ens in cor
de suo: nō
est deus.
Corrupti
sunt et
abhomina
biles facti
sunt in i

iquitatibz: nō est qui faciat bonū.

Deus de celo prospexit sup filios ho
minum: ut uideat si est intelligens
aut requirens deum.

Omnēs declinauerunt simul inuti
les facti sunt: nō est qui faciat bo
num nō est usq; ad unum.

Nonne sciēt omnes qui operan
tur iniquitatem: qui deuorant ple

In manu tua Domine: Omnes fines terre.

bem meam ut cibum pauis.

Deum inuocauerunt: illic uepida
uerunt timore ubi nō fuit timor.

Om̄ d's dissipauit ossa eoz qui ho
minibz placent: confusi sunt qm̄
deus spreuit eos.

Quis dabit ex syon salutare israhel:
cum aūterit dominus captiuitatē
plebis sue exultabit iacob et letabit
israhel. *ps. 134.*

Deus in nomine tuo saluum
me fac: et in uirtute tua iudi
ca me.

Deus exaudi orōnem meam: au
ribz p̄ceuerba oris mei.

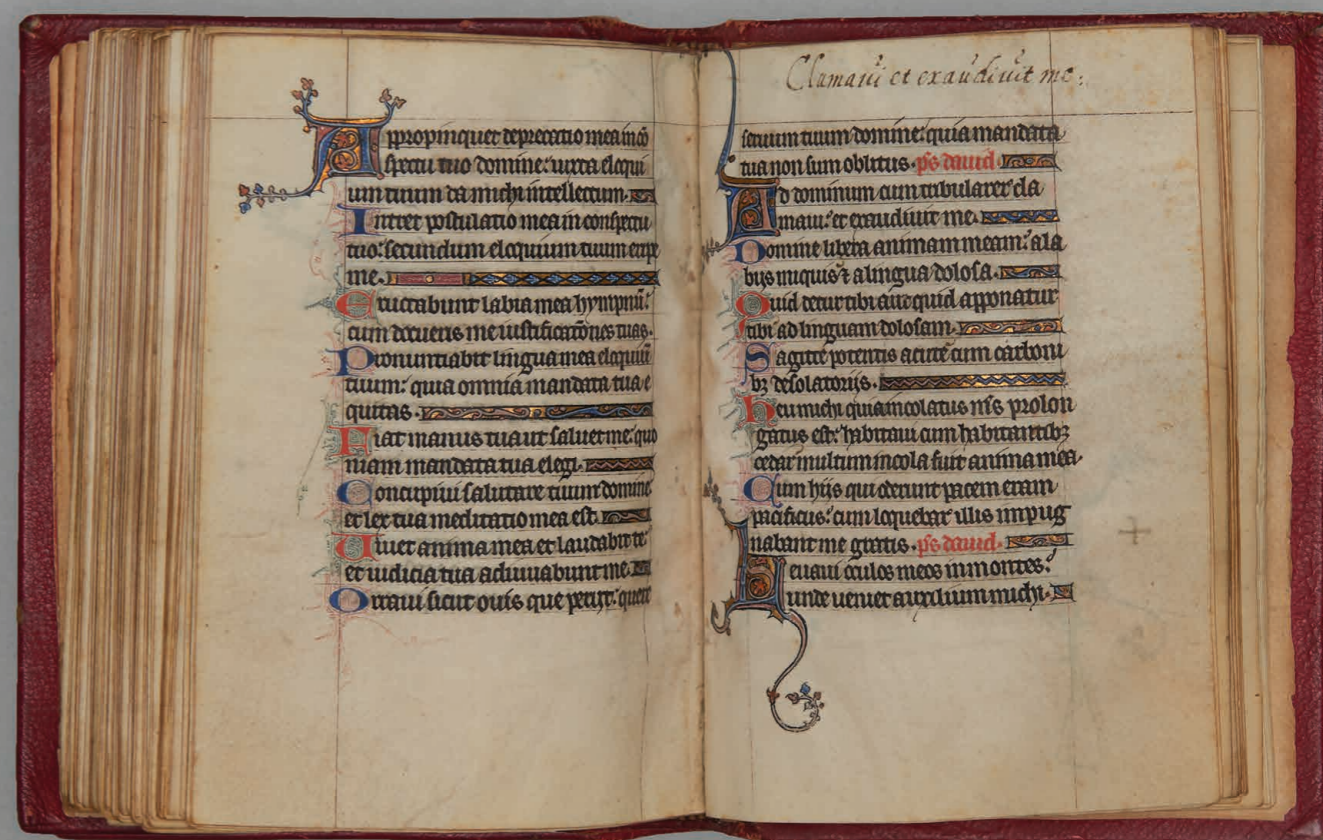
Om̄ alieni insurrexerunt aduer
sum me et fortes quesierunt aiām
meam: et nō p̄posuerunt deum ante

for the monastery.⁵ One leaf from this parent manuscript is now in the McCarthy Collection (fig. 1).⁶ There is also a Gospel Lectionary in the British Library, add. ms. 17341; The Breviary of Philip the Good, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 1023; *Somme le Roy*, in the British Library, Add. ms. 541806 (fig. 2); the Bible of Jean de Papeleu, Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, ms. 5059; and two leaves at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (Ms. 192 et Ms. 368). The present miniature contributes to this group and is a vanishingly rare example of the work of Master Honoré, the most important illuminator of Paris at this time. It can easily be classed among some of the best French illuminations at the turn of the 14th century.



Fig. 1 (above)
Master Honoré
Miniature on a bifolium from a
glossed Decretum Gratiani
France, Paris
c.1290
McCarthy Collection BM 2535

Fig. 2 (below)
Master Honoré
Folio 97 verso (detail)
La Somme le Roi
France, Paris
c.1295
British Library MS 54180



⁵ Peter Kidd, *The McCarthy Collection: French Miniatures III*, 178.
⁶ For the McCarthy Collection, see Peter Kidd, *The McCarthy Collection: French Miniatures III*, no 51.

Petitioning Monks

A leaf from a richly illuminated manuscript of the Decretum Gratiani

425 x 290 mm; leaf from an illuminated manuscript on parchment

Provenance
Private collection, Germany;
McCarthy collection, London, since 2006

Published in
Kidd, Peter. *The McCarthy Collection: French Miniatures* (London, 2021), pp. 235 – 243.

This large leaf is decorated with an illuminated miniature depicting lawyers and a monk petitioning a seated pope and tonsured men petitioning a seated lawyer. This manuscript leaf comes from a copy of the *Decretum Gratiani*, a legal textbook written in the first half of the 12th century by a jurist known as Gratian. The textbook remained an essential source of canon law until the early 20th century and this particular leaf recounts case 25, in which different payments of tithes in the same diocese are disputed between a secular church and a monastery.¹

The lavishly illuminated miniature in the upper left part of the leaf depicts an abstracted building represented by an arch with crenelated turrets in the spandrels. Inside the architectural framework, an enthroned pope sits on the left hand side in a lavish red robe, his left leg crossed over the right. He raises his hand in blessing as he speaks to two lawyers holding a long scroll and a monk kneeling behind them. On the other side of this space is an enthroned lawyer, who is petitioned by two tonsured men as they hand over a document or a book. The background of the scene is decorated with a pattern of large diagonal bands of gold, blue and red. Below the scene is the historiated initial S with a lion in motion.

The leaf belongs to an important group of leaves known to survive from a richly illuminated manuscript of the *Decretum Gratiani*, written in Toulouse, which was a major centre for the study of law in the middle ages. It is believed that 42 miniatures would have been included in the original manuscript and out of this number, more than half have been published. They are kept in both private and public collections, including MS McClean 201.7 at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Y1040 at the Princeton Art Museum, Inv. 1926.245 at the Cleveland Museum of Art (fig. 1 – 2).



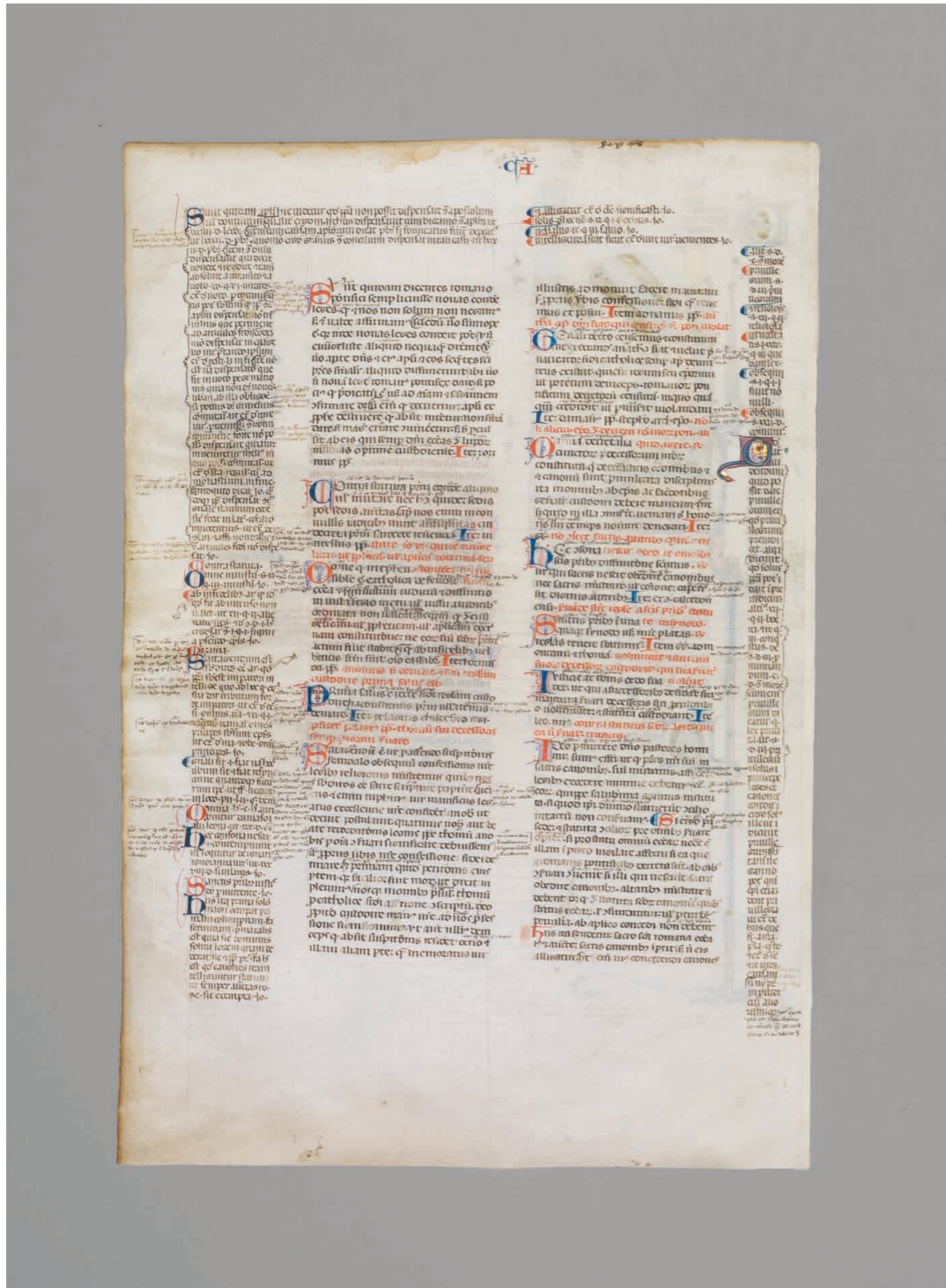
Fig. 2
Leaf Excised from a "Decretum"
by Gratian: Initial C
Southern France, Toulouse (?)
c.1320
The Cleveland Museum of Art
1926.245



Fig. 1
Letter Q: Court Scene and Initial
Q with Grottesque Figure with
Organ from a Decretum Gratiani
Southern France, Toulouse (?)
c.1320
The Princeton Art Museum Y1040



1 Published in Peter Kidd, *The McCarthy Collection: French Miniatures* (London, 2021), pp. 235 – 243.



ca romana oritur primo ut epini adicuntur. In
ut dicuntur quoniam monachos. Hec est oratio harum quoniam
ostendit quod primo quod dia non possunt se deffen
de s' dicunt epini per tale privilegium quod ad hoc introduct

una ist
eo quod
n potu
pare ta
privile
um.
onfi
dum
ntere
ibus
eter e
bum
testati
lt po
q. i. c.
lath
to d;
utroq
testa
desi
at. ut
o' d' sp
u. tua.
utroq
ibus
q. ut
d. un.
utroq
ibum
tatis
u. q. ix.
port
deodi
uapri
lesib'
tuse



A E R D
S A P E
A R D M
A P A E

clesia quodam baptismale; etiam suis
munuit privilegia; de amatione sue do
ocesis ex integro sibi attribuens. **I**t
quodam monasterii sibi munuit. **B**ui

The Osservanza Master

Saint Augustine granting the monastic rule

145 x 112 mm; cutting from an illuminated manuscript on parchment

Provenance

Florence, Enrico Frascione.
1997-2015, Private Collection, Austria

Exhibited in

Da Jacopo della Quercia a Donatello. *Le Arti a Siena nel Primo Rinascimento*, Siena Santa Maria della Scala; Pinacoteca di Siena; Siena Opera Metropolitana, 26 March – 11 July 2010, No C 32 c.

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Gaudenz Freuler, 'Studi recenti sulla miniatura rinascimentale italiana. Appunti su una mostra americana' (parte III), in *Arte Cristiana*, XCH, 2004, pp. 397-408.
Gaudenz Freuler, in Max Seidel (ed.), *Da Jacopo della Quercia a Donatello. Le Arti a Siena nel Primo Rinascimento*, Siena 2010, pp.260-262.
Gaudenz Freuler, in Gabriele Fattorini (ed.) Sano di Pietro. *Qualità, devozione e pratica nella pittura senese del Quattrocento*, Milan 2012, pp. 25-42.
Nigel Morgan, Stella Panayotova, Suzanne Reynolds eds, *A Catalogue of Western Book Illumination in the Fitzwilliam and the Cambridge Colleges*, London 2011, S. 62.
Friedrich G. Zeileis, *Più ridon le carte* (3.ed.), Rauris 2014, pp. 252-255.

This historiated initial 'L' depicts the bestowal of the Augustinian Order by the founder of the order himself, Saint Augustine, to a kneeling nun and a kneeling monk. One of four cuttings known to have survived from a dismembered Augustinian antiphonary (choir book) possibly commissioned by the Church of Sant'Agostino in Siena and painted around 1430-1440, this miniature is one of the earliest examples of the work of the illuminator known as the Osservanza Master. Other cuttings from the same manuscript survive in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Robert Lehman Collection). The close stylistic affinities between works attributed to this enigmatic master and another Siennese painter, Sano di Pietro, may indicate that they represent a single artistic identity, a theory proposed by several scholars in the more recent literature on the oeuvre. It is of course also possible that the works attributed to the Osservanza Master are the product of a collaborative workshop to which both artists belonged. The treatment of the figures' faces eloquently reveals the artist's direct contact with the work of his immediate contemporaries Masaccio and Sassetta.



Master of the Budapest Antiphoner (fl. c. 1450)

Saint Francis preaching

125 x 140 mm; cutting from an illuminated manuscript on parchment of the historiated initial 'O' with Saint Francis preaching, palette of pastel colours within a burnished gold frame, the body of the letter in green with tracery, with floral extensions that are partly cropped. Losses in the halo of St Francis delicately restored; blue background slightly smudged. Fragmentary text in black ink in a large gothic liturgical script, and fragmentary stave of music with black notes on red staves on verso.

A fine miniature from a large choir book showing Saint Francis, in the brown habit of the order, standing in a pulpit preaching to a group of well-dressed followers. The background is painted with the expensive blue pigment azurite, which sparkles in the light. Flesh tones, facial features and hair are all rendered in a tender light brown and highlighted with white. Garments are shaped with fluid colour shading: blue, pink and ochre are modelled with white, orange and green with yellow, white with green.

The miniature was painted by the hand of an artist defined by Mirella Levi D'Ancona as the Master of the Budapest Antiphoner, a highly important Lombard miniaturist active around 1450, who takes his name from a Franciscan manuscript in Budapest, National Library, Clmae 462.¹ Another example of his work is found in the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 1). According to Levi D'Ancona, the delicacy of drawing and purity of line is typical for his early works, while more serene and static qualities are characteristic of his later works, which combine elements of the International Gothic style with those of the Renaissance.

The artist's style resembles that of the Master of the Franciscan Breviary, to whom some of his illuminations have been attributed in the past. His conception of space, figural style and border decoration are inherited from Michelino de Besozzo and Giovannino de Grassi, two of the great painters who dominated Lombard art in the early fifteenth century under the patronage of the Visconti, and who were famous for their naturalistic representation.



Fig. 1
Master of the Budapest Antiphoner
Manuscript illumination of Saint
Francis
Italy, Lombardy
c. 1450
V&A Museum 4928

Provenance

Carlo Prayer (1826-1900), Milan, stamped twice in the lower corners (see Lugt 2044);

'Maria Erika(?) Mia Hendy de Besuascom(?) 1977' inscribed in blue ink on verso;
Fritz Zeileis Collection, Austria



¹ Mirella Levi D'Ancona, *The Wildenstein Collection of illuminations: The Lombard school*, Florence 1970, p. 29-34.

The Assumption of the Virgin with a kneeling friar

Historiated initial 'V' from an Antiphoner

117 x 156mm; cutting from an illuminated manuscript on parchment, slight rubbing

Provenance
Private Collection, Switzerland

This large initial 'V' in red and blue encloses a scene of the Virgin in prayer rising upwards from a stratified hill tended by three angels on either side. Elaborate penwork surrounds the initial in red and black. A marginal figure of a friar in a brown habit kneels to the left of the initial with a banderole which is inscribed with: *O mater dei memento mei* (Oh mother of God, remember me). The initial certainly comes from the invitatory 'Venite adoremus' at the opening of Matins, feast of the Assumption, which is celebrated on 15 August. Cut from an Antiphoner, the verso of this fragment has a part of 3 lines of the text in a gothic liturgical hand and of music on a 4-line red stave.



detail of kneeling friar



The Newton Hours

illuminated by the Mildmay Master in Bruges for an Englishman, probably Richard Newton

113 x 83 x 49 mm, binding included; illuminated manuscript on parchment, 449 folios (92 x 74 mm), 62 illuminated miniatures (including 44 FULL PAGE miniatures); binding 17th century, miniatures showing evidence of use, generally in very good condition

Of exceptional richness, the present manuscript bears unusually extensive evidence concerning its original owner, probably Richard Newton of Newton, Cheshire, who appears four times in the volume, once with a rebus that reveals his identity. This manuscript survives as an excellent example of what must have happened frequently: a wealthy, landed gentleman from the countryside special-ordered a manuscript from a London bookseller who in turn passed on the directions to a supplier in Bruges. From the workshop of Willem Vrelant, our illuminator – identified as the Mildmay Master – frequently carried out commissions in Bruges for export to England. He is even named for one such book. Richly illuminated, the Newton Hours has sixty-two miniatures, of which forty-four are full-page, eight are half-page, and ten are historiated initials, along with numerous illuminated and burnished gold initials. Its intimate scale, fitting neatly in the hand, underscores its special, highly personalized devotional nature.

Provenance

Peter Kidd has identified a marginal image accompanying the first miniature that depicts the owner in prayer (fig. 1). In the lower margin, a sheep, marked with the letter 'N', suckles its lambs, perched on a barrel. These motifs make up a rebus – a form of riddle or puzzle composed of letters, pictures, and symbols to depict words, phrases, or names – otherwise attested in several English manuscripts, as well as in finger-rings, of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The letter 'N', the sheep (“ewe,” in Old English) and the barrel (“tun”), thus suggest the surname “Newton” (“N + ewe + tun”).

The decorative cycle of the manuscript gives particular importance to St. Erkenwald of London, St. Edward the

Related Literature

Rogers, Nicholas. “Books of Hours Produced in the Low Countries for the English Market,” M. Litt. Diss. University of Cambridge, 1982.

Saenger, Paul. *Catalogue of the Pre-1500 Western Manuscript Books at the Newberry Library*, Chicago, 1989.

[Exhibition] Brussels, Royal Library of Belgium, and Paris, BnF, *Miniatures flamandes 1404-1482*, Brussels and Paris, 2011 (catalogue by B. Bousmanne and T. Delcourt)

Confessor of Westminster, St. Thomas of Canterbury, and St. John of Beverley. The image of St. Erkenwald, who was the bishop of London in the seventh century, is extraordinary, and to the best of our knowledge unprecedented (fig. 2). It depicts the saint on the towers of a burning church within the walls of a city conspicuously labeled “Londinium.” This must refer to the fire in 1087 of St. Paul’s Cathedral, which miraculously spared Erkenwald’s relics, eventually to be removed from the crypt and installed on the high altar, where they were constantly enriched by donors through the fifteenth century. While Saints Erkenwald, Edward the Confessor, and Thomas of Canterbury would seem to point to an origin in London for our manuscript, the unusual presence of both a prayer to and image of St. John of Beverley, an eighth-century bishop of York, suggests the north of England.

So, who was Mr. Newton, the patron of our manuscript? The Newton family is from a northern county, Cheshire, not London. Our hypothesis is that he is Richard Newton of Cheshire (b. 14 March 1442; died 1497), who was married to Jane Lowe (died 1498) of Denby in Derbyshire. Jane was from a family of means as the daughter of Geoffrey del Lowe of Macclesfield. Richard was the eldest son and heir of Oliver Newton, who died of the plague in 1452. He was a significant landowner in Cheshire and played a prominent role in local affairs. He was sworn many times on civil juries, sometimes on grand juries, was the collector of subsidy for the Macclesfield hundred, and held local offices in Cheshire, from which he was eventually exempted in 1494. The couple had at least six children, but only one son, Humphrey (1466-1536), who is much better known than his father and who became the sole heir of the Newton estates, married well, and accumulated additional wealth in lands. Humphrey became



a writer of some renown, his work surviving in manuscripts, and it is thanks to studies on Humphrey's writings that we have some limited information about the Newton family. The Newtons were well-educated landed gentry of substantial means (Humphrey knew both Latin and English). Association with the Newton family may help explain the presence of the bishop John of Beverley of York, since the county of York bordered just to the northeast Cheshire (Richard) and Derbyshire (Jane).

The patron is depicted four times in the manuscript, which is quite unusual. In each instance he is in prayer, and these are not prayers of adoration (e.g., to the Virgin), but of contrition – in confession, fighting temptation, begging for final peace in death. His dress confirms his status as a wealthy landowner; he wears a tunic with a cinched waist, a flared skirt with pleats that tops right below the buttocks and puffed shoulders. With his black hose, he wears pointed shoes. On the ground in the first miniature are two hats, the red one worn first, and a fur one over that (what appears to be a hat badge or pilgrim's badge is pinned or sewn to the fur hat). In the fourth miniature only the fur hat rests on the ground. He has a dagger and a purse. A date in the early 1460s is wholly consistent with this dress. Depicted as still a young man in the miniatures, Richard Newton would have been in his early twenties.

The rebus for "Newton" fits a pattern of identification of the English gentry (those without arms of nobility). Other medieval manuscripts whose owners are revealed by pictorial puzzles include *Roman de la Rose* for the Stoughton family (British Library, Harley MS f. 45v-46) with a fish and a stock in a barrel. A Book of Hours belonging to Richard Shearman reveals the owner's identity with the letters 'ry,' a cart, a letter 'd', a pair of shears and a man (British Library, Royal MS 2 A XVII). Similar word play occurs on gold signet rings of the period: an eagle above a barrel for Egleton, a hop-fruit and barrel for Hopton, and a key and a bell for Keble (Oman, 1974). We can tie the use of the insignia of the barrel directly to the Newton family through Humphrey. A stained glass window donated by Humphrey Newton in the Jesus chapel at the north chancel of the church of St. Bartholomew in Wilmslow, where Newton family members were buried, includes his personal insignia, a barrel or ton (tun). His effigy in the same church is in the middle of three tons with the inscription, "Newton [father], Milton [grandmother] and Phiton [wife] To which I am heir."

At a later, unknown date, the manuscript traveled to France, when it was evidently in possession of the Norman family, the Doulcet family of Pontecoulant. Their coat-of-arms (silver ecu with the sand cross, fleurdelisee d'or) is added in the lower margin beneath the miniature of St. George (p. 57).

Close inspection reveals that the shield is painted differently and that it partially covers at its edges the floral and foliate border, which appears to be partially erased. Thus, the shield appears to be a later addition. The Doulcet family, originally from Savoy, was established in Lower Normandy at the end of the fourteenth century (Rietstap 1861, p. 559).

It was then in the collection of Jean-Baptiste-Florentin-Gabriel de Meyran, marquis de Lagoy (1764-1829), by descent. Nephew and executor of the will of the Marquis de Méjanès, whose collection constituted the first collection of the public library of Aix-en-Provence, the Marquis de Lagoy distinguished himself mainly by his collection of Old Master drawings.

Illustration

Sixty-two miniatures make up the decoration of this manuscript. Forty-four full page miniatures (52 x 35 mm.) introduce the different sections of the text. Eight half page miniatures (32 x 36 mm.) introduce the different sections of the Hours of the Virgin, juxtaposing moments in the Passion narrative with scenes from the Infancy cycle. Ten historiated initials depicting the commemorated saints introduce the brief prayers inserted after Lauds of the Hours of the Virgin.

The miniatures in the Newton Hours and Prayer Book are attributed to the Mildmay Master, who specialized in Books of Hours for the continental and English market. Nicholas Rogers gave the artist his name in 1982 after a lavish Book of Hours, also produced for the export market, which includes notes of the family of "Sir Thomas Myldmaye, knight" whose relatives were later connected with the court of Elizabeth I (Chicago, Newberry Library, MS Case 35; also Saenger 1989). The Mildmay Master worked in the style of his contemporary Willem Vrelant of Bruges (arrived in Bruges in 1454; died 1480/1481), who, while maintaining a workshop, may also have functioned as a sort of *libraire* or stationer, assembling artists, scribes, decorators, and binders for diverse commissions. The deep reds and blues and the wide palette of greens are all typical of Vrelant and his associates and followers, and many of the compositions repeat Vrelant's well-known patterns.

Extraordinarily productive, the Mildmay Master favored figures with markedly blushed cheeks and women and young men with slightly pointed chins. His intimate miniatures evoke Bruges painting of the day, especially those of Hans Memling, the Annunciation, the Presentation in the Temple, and the Last Judgment. In our manuscript, the artist paid special attention to the depiction of the handsome young patron, who is remarkably individualized, with a rounded face, long rounded nose, small graceful hands and torso. From



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

miniature to miniature, we can be sure that the same person is depicted, even when he has haphazardly discarded his clothing to get into bed and pray. This group of donor miniatures, as well as exceptional images such as St. Erkenwald, raises questions about the practicalities of manuscript production: how did an artist in Bruges get specific instructions to enable him/ her to paint a highly personalized Book of Hours for a patron in Cheshire? This small manuscript remains one of the most richly illuminated and one of the most personalized within the artist's *oeuvre* and will certainly be at the center of attempts to answer this question.

The manuscript joins an ever-growing group of manuscripts in the Vrelant circle, which has become a kind of “catch-all” for manuscript illumination in Bruges in the third quarter of the fifteenth century (see exhibition Brussels and Paris, 2011, p. 242). In 2011, Bousmanne and Delcourt proposed an alternative to the complex commercial operation; they hypothesized the existence of a small family structure, in which anonymous hands, such as the Master of the *Vraie Cronicque descose*, were members of Vrelant's family. Vrelant's widow Marie (the Master of the *Vraie Cronicque descose*?), for example, continued to pay dues to the guild in Bruges until 1490-1491. The place of the Mildmay Master – whether a member of the family or part of a commercial network – with his/ her appealing colorful style in this “Vrelant” group has yet to be sorted out satisfactorily.¹

¹ We are grateful to Gregory Clark, Peter Kidd, and Roger Wieck for sharing their knowledge with us.



A Funeral Procession

38 x 52mm, cutting from an illuminated manuscript on parchment; some rubbing to the upper half

Provenance
Private Collection

In this tiny illumination, a procession of tonsured priests and acolytes lead the pall bearers carrying a blue-draped coffin out of a church into a graveyard. The figure of the priest in his golden cope carried an open book, while one of the boys in the front carries a processional cross. The church in front of which this scene takes place is only represented by a portal flanked by two shadowy sculptures on either side. A sexton on the bottom right of the cutting steps out of the grave he has dug, the handle of his shovel in one hand and his pick-axe on the ground. The top left of the scene shows, beyond the wall of the churchyard, a townscape. The arch-framed cutting has a burnished gold border; it is mounted on card, and the surround is painted out in black.

Although small and partly rubbed, this is a miniature of high quality in the style of the Master of Mary of Burgundy, with the little moving figures in a hazy landscape characteristic of his style. The composition is highly original and enclosed within a tiny space.



actual size



A Ceremonial and Tonary with the Constitutions of the Nuns of St. Mary Magdalene of the Augustinian Hermits

233 x 162 mm; decorated manuscript on parchment, 68 folios, in an exceptional blind-stamped binding with a late 15th century Siennese painting; in Italian and Latin

Provenance

Richard Bladworth Angus (1831-1922);
Sold at Sotheby's, 26th November, 1985, lot 99;
H. P. Kraus, N.Y. (collation in pencil: H.P.K. NY, 20.10.1987; UDNXLR*);
Martin Schøyen (b. 1940), Spikkestad, Norway.

Religious communities of women held an important role in the social history of Siena because remarkable percentages of the female population (10 – 12%) lived in convents. Although their activities in the convents are not always very well documented, manuscripts such as this rare copy of the Constitutions and Ceremonial created by the nuns of St. Mary Magdalene of the Hermits of St. Augustine give us a glimpse into their lives. The manuscript also represents an example of a manuscript that was made by and for medieval women, and it includes not only the chant and liturgy but also chapters which outline the rules that governed the daily life in one of the most illustrious convents in Renaissance Siena.¹ Given the importance of religious women for the history of music in Italy, the prodigious content on liturgical chant in this manuscript is also an important survival because many of the most skilled female musicians lived in convents at this time. The remarkable punched binding of the manuscript includes a painting of the convent's patron, St. Mary Magdalene.

The Convent of St. Mary Magdalene in Siena was founded in 1339 at the southern edge of the city.² The roots of the Hermits of St. Augustine (now known as the Augustinian Friars) go back to a number of eremitical groups in Italy in the twelfth century. After the approval of their Constitutions by Pope Alexander IV in 1256, the Order grew quickly and founded many houses throughout Europe.

Since Pope Pius III is mentioned on folio 4v, the original section of the manuscript (ff. 1-46v) can be dated to between 1503, the date when Pius III died, and 1510, the date when the Franciscan order was imposed on the nuns by Petrucci, after

which the nuns were forced to abandon St Augustine's Rule and follow the Franciscan one (see Jackson, p. 6 and n. 48). The *Constitutions*, found on ff. 1-13v, were re-copied in an elegant italic script on ff. 47-67v, while Girolamo of Naples was the Vicar General of the Augustinians, this Girolamo can possibly be identified as Girolamo Seripando (1493-1563), and the time of this part of the manuscript narrowed down to between 1539-41, when he visited all the Augustinian houses under his charge.

The Convent was destroyed in 1526, to prevent Papal troops from using the convent during the battle of Camollia. Nothing is known about the state of affairs at the Convent of Mary Magdalene during these years, although we can assume they were difficult ones for the nuns. We do know that the convent was rebuilt inside the city walls, and continued to be a place where the nobility sent their daughters.³ The convent was suppressed in 1782, but its archives remained in place, until it was finally moved to the Archivio di Stato in 1865; this manuscript may have been removed between 1782 and 1865.

The manuscript includes the Constitutions, or the rules governing life in the community, as well as the Ceremonial, which described the community's liturgical life. The Constitutions, (ff. 1 – 13) include topics such as confession, dress and bedding, silence in the cell, sins of various degrees, and the election of the Abbess. One example, in the chapter called 'Of Life Outside Fasting Time' (f. 3v), notes 'When the food is ready, the sister in charge of such duty rings the bell, [and] all the nuns go swiftly and composedly to wash their hands and congregate in silence according to their rank.' Another example notes that 'The nuns maintain total silence while eating, and if in need to speak, they do so in short and at low voice.... If any nun makes a noise, laughs, acts disorderly or makes agitated gestures or similar, the abbess reprimands and corrects her accordingly' (folio

¹ The nuns of St. Mary Magdalene copied and illuminated religious books for the Ospedale della Scala and the Opera del Duomo in Siena in 1440 and 1470. See Scipione Borghesi Bichi, *Nuovi documenti per la storia dell'arte senese, raccolti da S. Borghesi e L. Banchi*, (Siena, 1898), 210.

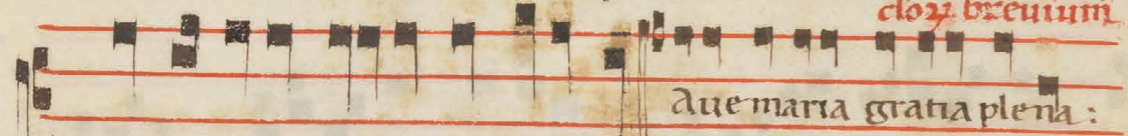
² David Gutiérrez, *The Augustinians in the Middle Ages, 1256-1356 Vol. 1* (Pennsylvania, 1984), 207; Fabrizio Nevola, *Siena: Constructing the Renaissance City* (New Haven, 2007), 197-198; Colleen Reardon, *Holy Concord Within Sacred Walls: Nuns and Music in Siena, 1575-1700* (Oxford, 2002), 10-11.

³ Reardon, *Holy Concord Within Sacred Walls*, 10.





Rorate celi desuper et nubes pluant iustum *Ton' omniuz usi-
cloz breuium*

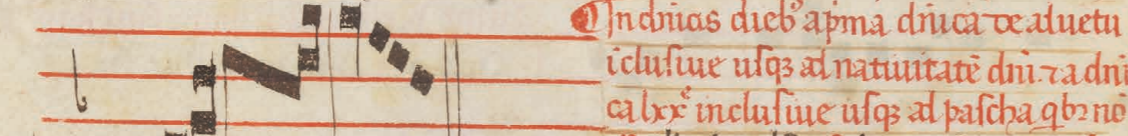


Aue maria gratia plena :

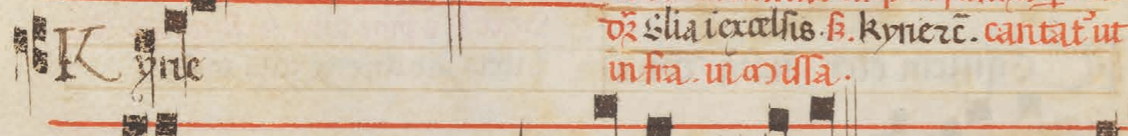
Homo pacis mee in quo sperabam. *Ton' usidoy maiorz intriduo
ante pascha refrectois*



Adiuu uoce te celo dicentem mihi. *Ton' usidoy maiorz ioffo mo-
tuoz*



*In diebus dieb' apma dnica de aluetu
iclusiuue usqz ad natuuitate dni. et dnica
ca b'x' iclusiuue usqz ad pascha qb' no
oz glia i excelsis. s. kynerc. cantat ut
infra. in orula.*



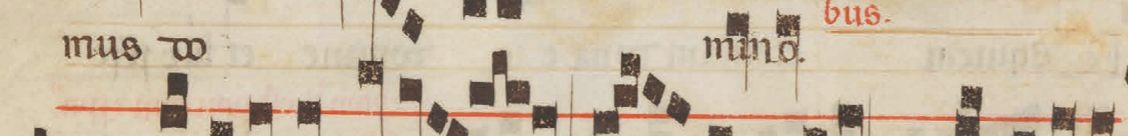
Kyrie



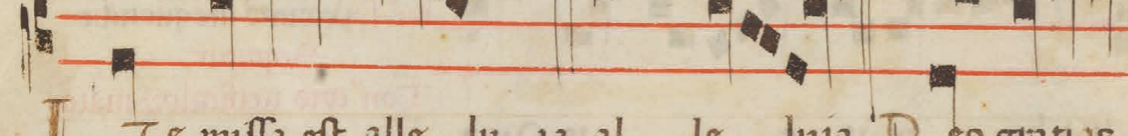
San ctus. **A**gnus dei qui. **B**enedica



*Seqns. Ite missa e. or
refrectionis imissaz
duobz seqntibz die
bus.*



mus to mino.



Ite missa est alle lu ia al le luia. **D**eo gratias



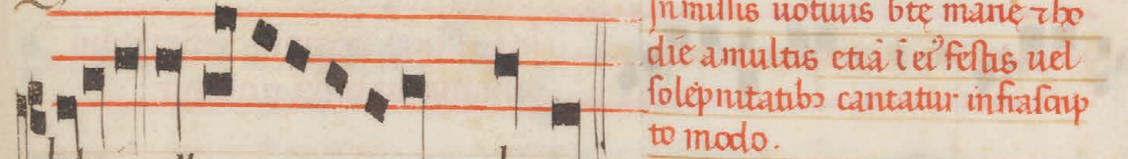
alle lu ia al le luia.

*Seqns. Ite missa est. or fena. iij
ebdomade refrectois et teiceps
usqz ad sabbatu in albis iclusi
ue tantum.*



Te missa est alleluia alle luia. **D**eo gratias al

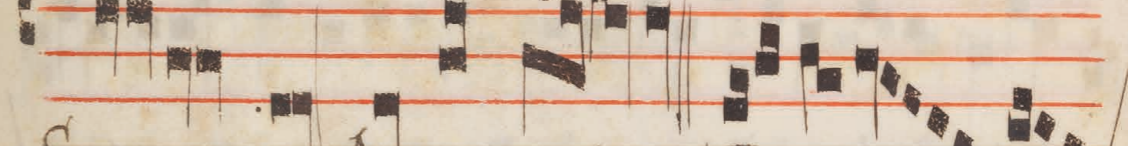
*In missis uotius hie mane et ho
die a multis etia i ei' festis uel
solempnitatibz cantatur infra sup
to modo.*



leluia alle luia.



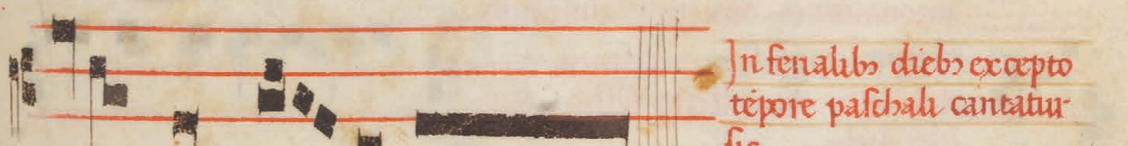
Kyrie leison. **G**loria in excelsis de o.



San ctus. **A**gnus dei qui. **I**te mis



sa est. **I**te missa est. **B**ene.



dica mus to mino

*In ferialibz dieb' excepto
tepoze paschali cantatur
sic.*

4r). This part of the manuscript is an important direct source of information about the life in the convent.

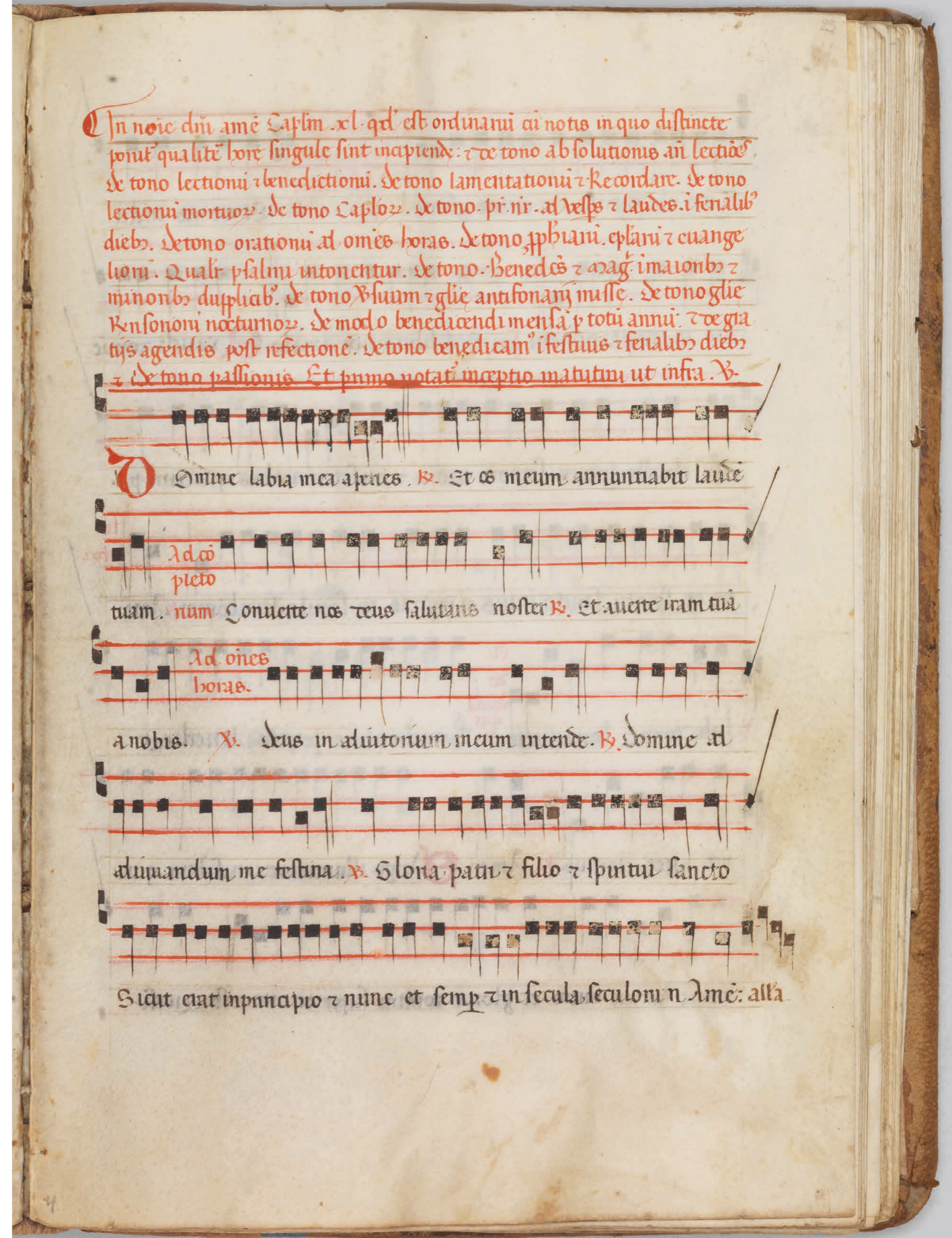
The Augustinian Ceremonial consists of thirty-nine chapters, followed by a tonale of common tones.⁴ A tonary sets forth the various musical settings, or psalm tones, used in Gregorian chants for the sung texts of the Mass and Office. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in Siena, as in Milan, Bologna, and Rome, and other Italian cities many of the most skilled female musicians lived in convents.⁵ Given the importance of religious women for the history of music in Italy, the amount of information about the liturgical chant at the Convent of St. Mary Magdalene found in this manuscript is of particular interest.

The original brown leather-stamped binding probably dates to the last quarter of the fifteenth century. When it was re-used for this manuscript, a painting of the Convent's patron, St. Mary Magdalene, also dated to the late 15th century, was inserted into the back cover. It was subsequently re-backed in brown leather. The painting depicts Mary Magdalene holding her jar of ointments, finely painted in colors and gold on a gesso ground with a pink border. The saint stands full-length, in a light-yellow robe, with a deep red over mantle with a vivid green lining, partly exposed over her shoulder, on a green and deep blue ground, with touches of gold. The figure of Mary Magdalene can be compared stylistically to a full-length Mary Madgalene with one hand raised in blessing, the other holding the ointment jar, found in the Altarpiece in the Bichi Chapel in Sant' Agostino painted by Luca Signorelli, ca. 1489-90 (fig. 1).

Although the study of the history of women in religion in the Middle Ages and the early modern period has flourished in the last decades, direct sources that were created by nuns themselves are comparatively difficult to find. This manuscript, therefore, is an important direct source of information of the rules that governed daily life and the liturgy at one of the most illustrious convents in Renaissance Siena.



Fig. 1
Luca Signorelli
The altar in the Bichi Chapel in S.
Agastino
Italy, Sienna
1491



4 P. C. Langeveld, *Historica cum aestimatione relatio documentorum ad caeremonias pristinas intra Ordinem Eremitarum s. Augustini vigentes pertinentium*, fasc. 1, *Ordinationes et ordinariu cum notis O.E.S.A.* (1960), 51ff.

5 Reardon, *Holy Concord Within Sacred Walls*.

A lustred jug with Saint Francis kneeling in Prayer

12.1 cm (diameter) x 21.3 cm (height); Tin-glazed earthenware with red and copper lustre and cobalt blue decoration over a dark buff clay, with a pear-shaped body raised on a short, everted foot ring cut away with a tight cavetto at its base. The interior lightly tin-glazed with evident throwing marks. The strap handle connecting the neck to the lower body, and 3.5 cm of the outward flaring rim restored.

A slender pear-shaped jug, or cruet, decorated with the image of a tonsured saint, most likely identifiable as Saint Francis, kneeling in prayer before a Crucifix with rays of sunshine emanating from the sky above his head. The scene takes place in front of a small hermit's hut in a hilly landscape strewn with flowers in bloom. Above and below this central scene, geometric and classicizing ornament encircles the jug in thick horizontal bands divided by rings of cobalt blue. Rich, gold-hued copper lustre is used to fill in many of the design's large details, but smaller and masterfully applied accents of vivid red lustre pick out motifs including the saint's 'widow's peak' tonsure, his thick disc-like halo, and the hillock on which he kneels.

The secret of the lustre technique, first introduced to European kilns via Spain during the early Middle Ages, was fiercely guarded by Muslim potters who, in shortly after 1300, moved north from the Nasrid centres of Malaga and Almeria to the wealthy trading port of Valencia. From there, they ingeniously cornered the market for luxury ceramics in Europe for over a hundred years until Italian potters, who had travelled to Spain as spies to learn the recipe, successfully started to use it on local wares in the second half of the fifteenth century. Artists in the Umbrian town of Deruta were the first in Italy to successfully harness the technique at a large scale, and in the years around 1500 both they and their contemporaries in the nearby town of Gubbio augmented the gold hue of traditional lustre with an even richer blood-red variant. It is in these towns that the story of Italian Renaissance lustreware finds its greatest narrative.

A small number of very similarly shaped vessels preserved in collections including the Victoria and Albert Museum and the musée du Louvre have in most instances been localized to Deruta.¹ However, the town's potters seem to have more or

Provenance

The Cyril Humphris Collection, Sotheby's New York, 10th January 1995, lot 44; A. Alfred Taubman (1924-2015), acquired at the above; His estate sale, Sotheby's New York, 13th April 2016, lot 321

less abandoned the use of red lustre by the time our vessel was produced in the 1520s, and it is much more likely therefore to have been manufactured in Gubbio.² Saint Francis was a popular subject for potters in both centres since his home and the site of his veneration – Assisi – is only a few miles away.



¹ Bernard Rackham, *Victoria and Albert Museum: Catalogue of Italian Maiolica*, 1940 (1977 ed.), no. 467.

² Timothy Wilson, *Italian Maiolica and Europe*, Oxford, 2017, p. 241; for a recent study of Gubbio lustre see Elisa Sani, 'Reflections on early Gubbio Lustreware' in Elisa Sani and J. v. G. Mallet, *Maiolica in Italy and beyond: Papers of a Symposium Held at Oxford in Celebration of Timothy Wilson's Catalogue of Maiolica in the Ashmolean Museum*, Oxford, 2021, pp. 82-94.

A footed 'crespina' depicting Saint Nicholas of Tolentino

6 cm (height) x 23.8 cm (diameter); tin-glazed earthenware on a deep buff-coloured clay, with blue, yellow, orange, black and green decoration. A repaired break passing through the lower-left quadrant of the dish, but missing the central roundel.

Saint Nicholas of Tolentino (c. 1246-1305), dressed in the black robes of the Eremitani Augustinians, turns to our left and stands at three-quarter length against a vivid yellow background, with a green-bound book in his left hand and a slender crucifix in his right. Radiating designs of slender vines and foliate sprays encircle the medallion in which he appears, picked out in white and pale blue within alternating fields of intense orange and deep cobalt.

The saint's chest is emblazoned with a delicate sunburst, an emblem thought to refer to his vision of a star which moved miraculously from Castel Sant'Angelo in the Romagna to the altar in the city of Tolentino, where he celebrated mass and where he was to spend much of his life as a mystic and peacemaker.¹ During the Middle Ages, Nicholas became known for his preaching and teachings, and offered Christians a prime model for the curative power of prayer since he is considered to have used lengthy periods of prayer (often associated with fasts) as a tool for treating the sick and expiating the souls of those suffering in Purgatory. One legend recounts how he cured the sick with bread over which he had prayed to the Virgin Mary. The saint's veneration began shortly after his death in 1305, but increased greatly following his canonization by Pope Eugene IV on 5th June 1446. Though his remains are preserved in the Basilica di San Nicola da Tolentino in the Marche and he is most strongly venerated in his home region, images of him (usually accompanied by the star and/or other attributes associated with his life) proliferated right across Europe during the subsequent years, often incorporating supplicants kneeling at his feet in prayer (fig. 1).

In his 1557 treatise 'The three books of the potter's art', Cipriano Piccolpasso refers to a class of wares produced in ornately shaped moulds as crespine (from *crespa*, meaning wrinkled or puckered), and as a result they have come to be described by this name in most modern scholarship. Like all such dishes, this example was made by pressing the clay into a mould and allowing it to become leather-hard before attaching its shapely foot and firing it in the kiln to

Provenance

Collection of Valentin Weisbach (1843-1899);
Swiss private collection

fix its elaborate shape in place. Despite the reproducibility of moulded crespine no two dishes are the same, since each one was decorated by hand with an extraordinary variety of scrolling leaves, tendril sprays, banderoles, and grotesques picked out against backgrounds of alternating colours, a scheme known as a *quartieri*. Faenza formed the epicenter of the production of these vessels in the early sixteenth century, although Piccolpasso also refers to them being produced in Castel Durante too (information influenced no doubt by his familial connections to the town).

Most modern scholars agree that the majority of the surviving group of bowls and dishes of related form and decoration to our crespina can be attributed to Faentine workshops and that they were likely created within a few years of one another in the second quarter of the sixteenth century. Faenza crespinas preserved in the MIC in Faenza², the British Museum, the Ashmolean Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and other collections thought to have been produced around 1530-1540 share our example's use of colour (particularly its vivid orange) and its refined lexicon of sinuous foliate sprays, and together offer compelling evidence that this was a golden moment for the artform and one in which the novelty of their forms and the beguiling variety of their decoration found widespread appeal among contemporary patrons.³



Fig. 1
Saint Nicholas of Tolentino
accompanied by three supplicants
in prayer
Germany
c. 1450-1460
25 x 19 cm; woodcut with hand
colouring
London, British Museum, inv.
1872.0608.318

² No. 93; our thanks to Elisa Sani for bringing this example, depicting San Domenico, to our attention.

³ Dora Thornton and Timothy Wilson, *Italian Renaissance Ceramics: A catalogue of the British Museum collection*, London, 2009, nos. 98, 100; Timothy Wilson, *Italian Maiolica and Europe*, Oxford, 2017, nos. 39-40; Timothy Wilson, *The Golden Age of Italian Maiolica-Painting: Catalogue of a Private Collection*, Turin, 2018, no. 67.

¹ See most recently Louise Marshall in *San Nicola da Tolentino nell'arte: corpus iconografico*, Ed. Valentino Pace and Roberto Tollo. Vol. 1, *Dalle origini al Concilio di Trento*, Tolentino, 2005.





A communion chalice

made for a Dominican foundation and commemorating the patrons Daniel and Giacomina Portinari alongside two Dominican brothers

18 cm (height) x 13 cm (diameter at base) x 12.5 cm (diameter at rim); cast, chased, raised, engraved and gilded copper, with gilded silver calyx and nielloed silver inserts. The calyx replaced.

Provenance

Collection of Neville Davison Goldschmid (1814-1875), 's Gravenhage, by 1863

Published in

Hendrik Cornelis Rogge, *Album: Verzameling van afbeeldingen der merkwaardigste voorwerpen ingezonden voor de tentoonstelling van Oudheden, gehouden te Delft in July en Augustus 1863*, Exh. Cat., Delft, 1863, p. 16, fig. 5

Inscriptions

On the four oval medallions of the knop:

*D[OMINICVS]*DANIEL*DE*PORTENARIIS

*F[RATER]*IACOBVS*DE*PLACENCIA

*F[RATER]*SIMON*DE*PLAC[E]NCIA

*D[OMINA]*IACVMINA*DE*PORTENARI*

On the hexafoil base, accompanied by figures identified as follows:

DOMINVS DANIEL DE PORTINARIIS

*SANCTVS*DOMINICHVS*

*FRATER*SIMON DE*PLACENCIA*

*D[OMI]NA*IACOMINA PORTINARIIS*

*SANCTVS*ROCHVS*

FRATER IACOBVS DE PLACENCIA*

Not one in one hundred late-medieval chalices record any details concerning their patronage or genesis. Extraordinarily, not just one but two distinctive communities are commemorated on this example, explicitly named in inscriptions in two places – knop and foot – and by engraved figurative representations of them at prayer on the latter. The people who paid for the object were a wealthy patrician couple, Daniel and Giacomina (or 'Iacomina' as it is spelled here) Portinari, members of the prominent Portinari family of merchant bankers who were instrumental in relations between Flanders and Italy during the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The carefully observed details of their dress perfectly highlight their privileged status; Daniel wears a crimped camicia underneath a panelled garment, and holds over his praying hands a merchant's berretta, while his spouse wears her hair in an ornate circular headdress (of the kind that populate Lorenzo Lotto's sumptuous society portraits from the 1520s onwards – see fig. 1¹) and is clad in a dress with puffed shoulders and tight sleeves whose fabric buckles and breaks as if made from velvet. They turn towards one another and are both shown praying towards the figure of Saint Dominic, who holds a book and lily stem while turning in three-quarter profile to the right. Between the saint and Giacomina herself, however, is a tonsured monk identified by the accompanying inscription as Simon de Placencia. He is not alone, but appears on the opposite lobe of the chalice's foot to another similarly clad and tonsured monk called Jacobus, whose shared



Fig. 1
Lorenzo Lotto
Portrait of Marsilio Cassotti and
his Bride Faustina
1523
71 x 84 cm; oil on canvas
Madrid, Museo del Prado, inv.
P00240

¹ We are very grateful to Dr Paula Nuttall for her thoughts on the dating of our chalice and its relationship to contemporary portraiture.



surname – de Placencia – suggests that the two were related. Jacobus alone prays to a full-length figure of Saint Roch, who appears on the opposite foot to Saint Dominic, and points to his traditional attribute, the wound on his leg. Roch was often invoked against plague and by plague sufferers during the later Middle Ages, and it is possible, considering the fact that Jacobus is isolated in praying to the saint while all three of his counterparts look away and towards Dominic, that his is meant as a posthumous portrait intended to memorialise. Both patrons and their Dominican brother counterparts are named on nielloed silver medallions which punctuate a knop deeply engraved with rose flowers and criss-cross ornaments. It is intriguing that the figures so explicitly named and represented on the foot of the chalice should require further identification on its knop, but there is no evidence of physical tampering or any indications of alteration and it can only be concluded therefore that they were always meant to be singled out from their saintly counterparts in this manner.

Chalices (vasa sacra) formed a key part of the liturgical utensils used during the celebration of the Eucharist, when the body and blood of Christ, which he sacrificed to cleanse the sins of the humanity, are symbolised by the consumption of bread and wine before the altar. Since the early teachings of Pope Gregory I, the process of Transubstantiation, a phenomenon whereby the Eucharistic bread and wine are miraculously turned into the actual body and blood of the Lord during Mass, and are protected in these lavish and precious metalwork objects, has been one of the key tenets of Christianity. Nevertheless, in Roman Catholic communion services, only the priest was allowed to drink from the chalice, while the congregation received just the host, a practice abolished by Luther following his influential ‘Sermon on the New Testament’ of 1520. Chalices were usually made from gold or silver, although less valuable examples were made of base metals such as copper, which could then be silvered. The calyx, however, was always made of precious metal because of its function in the holding of sanctified wine. Precious metals were also used for reasons of hygiene, as base metals could contaminate the wine. Like many chalices of the period, the present example would originally have been accompanied by a shallow silver-gilt paten, used to hold the wafer, which could be placed on top of the calyx of the chalice to keep the wine within protected. It is not yet known which foundation or religious house our chalice was made for, but that it was associated with the Dominicans and populated by Dominican brothers seems clear from their overt inclusion in its unusually elaborate decoration.



An Opus Anglicanum embroidered panel depicting Saint Etheldreda

34.7 x 17 cm; Linen ground embroidered with silver-gilt and silver metal-wrapped thread in underside and surface couching, with coloured silk threads in split stitch. The brown-black outlines to the figures reinforced and fragmentary. Rubbing to the metal-wrapped threads in places. The dyes faded somewhat throughout.

Provenance

The Berkeley collection, Spetchley Park, by 1905;
Acquired from the above in 2019

Exhibited in

Burlington Fine Arts Club, 1905
V&A Mediaeval Art, 1930, No. 455
Royal Academy, British Art, 1934, No. 4
Commemorative Exhibition of the Art Treasures of the Midlands, City of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, 1934, No. 420

Published in

'Spetchley Park -I. Worcestershire, The Seat of Mr. R. V. Berkeley', *Country Life*, 8 July 1916, p. 45, illustrated in the Drawing Room;
Commemorative Exhibition of the Art Treasures of the Midlands, *Exh. Cat.*, City of Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, 1934, p.105, No. 420; lent by R.G.W.Berkeley, Esq.

Saint Etheldreda (originally Aethelthryth), daughter of King Anno of East Anglia and later the Abbess of Ely, is believed to have been born around 636 AD near the Suffolk market town of Newmarket and lived in and around Ely for most of her adult life. She is perhaps the most widely venerated of all medieval English female saints, with more vernacular accounts of her life to her name than any other.¹ One of four siblings who all retired from courtly life in order to found abbeys, she married twice, first to Tondberct, ealdorman of South Gyrwas (modern-day Fens), from whom she was gifted the Isle of Ely before his death in 655. According to legend she married again five years later, this time for the sake of a political union, to Ecgrith of Northumbria, but she wanted to remain a virgin (having been allowed to do so by her first husband) and refused to conjugate the marriage. Etheldreda fled back to Ely, where in 673 she founded a double monastery on the site of what is now Ely Cathedral, and which flourished for over two centuries until its ruination during the Danish invasion (fig. 1). It is believed that she died of the plague, along with several of her fellow nuns, in around 680. According to Bede, her remains were disinterred 17 years after her death by her sister Seaxburh (who succeeded her as Abbess of Ely), and were apparently found in a miraculously incorrupt state. Seaxburh had them reburied in a white coffin made from spoliated Roman marble found at Grantchester, and transferred to the new church at Ely. Her shrine quickly became a popular pilgrimage site, drawing thousands of pilgrims to the city.

Produced by English craftsmen at the turn of the fifteenth century, Etheldreda is depicted in this panel with her two key



Fig. 1
Attributed to Robert Pygot of Bury
St Edmunds
Scenes from the life of Saint
Etheldreda
c. 1455
121.5 x 54.5 and 122 x 52.5 cm;
oil on oak panels
London, Society of Antiquaries



¹ Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "Rerouting the dowry: the Anglo-Norman life of St. Audrey by Marie (of Chatteris?)", in Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth MacLean, *Power of the weak: studies on medieval women*, Urbana, 1995, pp. 27-56.

identifying attributes; the crown of her status as a princess, and the crozier of her role as the Abbess of Ely, the latter accompanied by her traditional wimple and veil. She stands at full length in a blue dress belted high at the waist, pulling a pink mantle across her midriff with her free hand. She is framed by chamfered columns which rise to support an ornate ogival arch, the uppermost mouldings of which sprout elaborate green hawthorn leaves and other foliate sprays.

England was famed right across Medieval Europe for the skill of its embroiderers, who drew the patronage and adulation of kings, popes and cardinals across the continent over several centuries. They perfected a style of embroidery commonly known today as *opus anglicanum*, or English work, after the manner in which they are found described in early inventories. Our panel was produced in around 1400, during the last great moment of *opus anglicanum* production in this country, and is related in its format, stylistic treatment, and decorative language to a small group of examples surviving from this date and now preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London (fig. 2). As is typical for its type, the backgrounds of the panel is carefully enlivened with gold metal-wrapped thread laid over the surface of the support and fixed in a trellis-like pattern using a technique known as underside couching, which was perfected by English embroiderers during the period. Originally, the precious, shimmering effect of the metal, undulating across the surface of the embroidery in rhythmical forms, would have been brilliantly set off by further embroidery using silver metal-wrapped thread in the spaces around the foliate sprays above each arch, the surface of which has tarnished to a gun-metal grey over time. The richness of the two materials and their incredibly skilful employment together marks these embroideries out as high-status commissions of great refinement. Its choice of imagery indicates that it was probably made for use in a convent or foundation associated with Saint Etheldreda, perhaps even for Ely itself or for a site in the surrounding region, and would originally have adorned the front and back of a dalmatic or chasuble (types of liturgical vestment worn by priests and deacons for the performance of Mass).



Fig. 2
Saint Anne teaching the Virgin
to read
England
c. 1390-1410
*Linen ground embroidered with
silver-gilt and silver thread in
underside and some surface
couching and coloured silk threads
in split stitch and some raised
stitches.*
London, Victoria and Albert
Museum, inv. S-1892



A cope of red velvet embroidered with Opus Anglicanum

142.2 x 289.5 cm: silk floss and spangles on linen supports applied over red velvet, with further detailing embroidered directly onto the velvet. Eighteenth-century additions in crewelwork and applique on red velvet, along with green voided velvet trim and a pink, watered silk lining.

Provenance

The Berger Collection (acquired by William M. B. Berger [1925-1999] and Bernadette J. J. Berger [1940-2015], 1990s), on long-term loan to Denver College Museum of Art until 2018

A large cope emblazoned with embroidered motifs including fleurs-de-lys, angels in flight, and foliate sprays against a red velvet ground. The straight hem (which would have been most visible during use since it falls down the front of the chest of its wearer) is used to support two long orphrey panels, which run continuously from the outer edge to the central hood cloth at the back of the neck. They both depict standing Apostles around a central image of God the Father, enthroned on a golden bench and raising both hands in a gesture of blessing that would have echoed that used by the wearer to bless the congregation and the altar table in turn.

Only a tiny handful of late-medieval copes of English manufacture have come down to us, owing in no small part to the wholesale losses wreaked on liturgical works of art and vestments in this country by iconoclasts, both during the Reformation of the 1540s and again during the Civil War a century later. Our example has been lovingly restored and kept in continuous use through the addition of layers of figured green velvet, and applied crewel-work, which served to enlarge the garment (perhaps on two separate occasions) for taller wearers.

Contemporary commissions across a range of media, including stained glass (cf. the figure of Anne and the Virgin at St Mary's Kempsford) and manuscripts, show how popular foliate motifs were for English artists of the period. By the time our cope was produced these motifs' functions had been essentialised to providing a dramatic display of colour and line against the rich backdrop of textured velvet, their symbolic meaning and impact much reduced.





Velvet chasuble back with the Crucifixion

131.5 x 70.5 cm: The vestment's present configuration, with thick twisted silk cords and gilt metal-wrapped thread tassels around the neck, dates to the eighteenth or early nineteenth century. There is even and widespread abrasion to the surface of the silk and restorations to Christ's crocheted flesh and bouclé silk hair. Areas of silver-gilt thread have lost their gilding and have become tarnished over time

Provenance

Marczell von Nemes, Munich, until his sale, Helbing, Munich, 16–19 June 1931, lot 167;
Adolfo Loewi, Venice;
Lucie and Walter T. Rosen, New York, acquired 1941;
Caramoor Centre for Music and the Arts, New York

Published in

Sale, Sammlung Marczell von Nemes, Textilien, Skulpturen, Kunstgewerbe, Hugo Helbing, Munich, 1931, lot 167, p. 76 and pl. 41

At the centre of this richly embroidered chasuble back the crucified figure of Christ is depicted at a large scale, with the figures of the Virgin and Saint John grieving below. Christ's body is naked save for a long silver perizonium knotted over his loins, its loose ends fluttering upwards as if borne by the wind. He is nailed to a tall, slender cross driven into a stepped, rocky outcrop strewn with a skull and bones. In the late Middle Ages it was believed that the skull positioned at the foot of the cross was that of Adam, the first man, but it was also a common feature of Crucifixion scenes since all four Gospels recount that the name Golgotha means 'place of the skull'.¹ The figures of the Virgin Mary and John the Evangelist, both clad in mantles richly worked in silver thread, stand behind the foot of the cross on either side. Strikingly, however, the embroiderer has conflated two separate visual traditions, since the event appears to take place both outdoors on Golgotha and within a room with a tiled floor and a trelliswork wall-covering (represented in laid and couched gold metal-wrapped thread).² John is shown overlapping both spaces, with one foot on the tiled floor and his other stepping on to the hill. He and the grieving Virgin both look upwards towards Christ, the Virgin with her hands clasped in prayer and the Evangelist with his arms crossed over his chest. Echoing their gestures are two praying angels who kneel in tiled-floored spaces directly adjacent to the arms of the cross, their long-sleeved robes studded with sequins and their mantles completely covered in silver- and gold

metal-wrapped thread. In a subsidiary scene, separated from the Crucifixion above by an architectural canopy, a throng of people gather in what appears to be a liturgical ceremony. The foremost figure, identifiable as a canon from the tasselled, fur-like almuce covering his shoulders, kneels at the front of the group. He appears to be stabbing, or touching with the blade of a dagger, a processional cross in his left hand and causing it to emit a blood-like liquid. The meaning of this scene is yet to be identified, but it would appear to depict a specific event of a miraculous nature (one connected to the worship of the Crucifix or the Holy Blood) undoubtedly significant for the congregation for whom the chasuble was originally made. The embroideries are mounted on to a late fifteenth-century, green voided silk velvet decorated with pomegranate motifs, five-lobed leaves and vines entwined with friars' knots.

The unusually complex style of embroidery enlivening the surface of our textile is known as raised work, in which figures, architectural mouldings and other motifs are given a thick, boldly three-dimensional effect, through the use of patterns cut from linen or wool and padded with coarse linen fibre bundles, before being covered with silk and metal-wrapped thread. Occasionally, details could even be built up using fillets of wood, as was the case for the lintel of the architectural canopy surmounting the lowest scene on our example. Once completed, each of the padded and embroidered motifs was attached to a support decorated with silk and laid metal

¹ Wardwell 1976–77, pp. 177–221.

² Wardwell 1976–77, p. 191.



threads, whose surface typically constituted the background or architectural setting. Additional touches, such as the details of our figures' outspringing locks of hair, were evoked by winding silk floss or metal-wrapped thread over twisted copper wire that appears to float above the surface of the fabric. Finally, the strings of tiny freshwater pearls lining the edges of Christ's golden halo and the tituli above his head were an optional extra for medieval embroideries that would have greatly increased their cost.³ Two areas of our orphrey's gold background are interrupted by silver thread laid in blocks alongside the gold. This was evidently an unintentional effect, and must have resulted from the mixing of metal-wrapped thread made of gilded silver with a more costly batch made with pure gold. Whether this adulteration was an accident or a cost-saving exercise, wear and oxidation to those areas embroidered with silver-gilt thread have caused them to stand out from the surrounding surface over time.

This remarkable style of embroidery seems to have been the specialty of central European and Bohemian workshops during the last decades of the fifteenth century and the early years of the sixteenth, and perhaps represents the medium's greatest leap towards a sculptural art form. When worn and viewed in continuous motion, a constantly changing interplay of light and shadow brings the richness of its surface texture to life. Similarly rich and densely worked examples survive in the treasuries of Chur Cathedral in Switzerland, the monastery of Jasna Góra at Częstochowa in Poland, the so-called Black Church at Braşov in Romania (fig. 1) and Mariazell Basilica in Austria, as well as in a handful of museums including the Moravská galerie in Brno, Czech Republic, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago (fig.2).⁴ Most of these have been localized in recent scholarship to central Europe or Bohemia on the basis of style or provenance, and dated to the last two decades of the fifteenth century. Ours can be similarly dated, since several of its features recall compositions disseminated by printed books published in the years immediately before 1500 (fig. 3). Moreover, the architectural canopy surmounting its lowest scene is closely analogous in design and execution to those on the Braşov chasuble (dated c.1490–1500), both utilizing the same wooden bars to pad their distinctive upper mouldings.⁵ Two further fragments now in the Musée de Cluny in Paris, depicting angels kneeling against backgrounds whose decoration is identical to ours, must once have adorned a chasuble of comparable format and iconography, and it seems plausible to suggest that, along with the Braşov chasuble, they were executed in the same workshop.⁶



Fig. 1
Chasuble with raised-work cross
c. 1490-1500
Central Europe or historic
Hungary
134 x 114 cm
Treasury, Black Church, Braşov,
inv. 333

Fig. 2
Orphrey Cross
c. 1500
Southern Germany or central
Europe
109.2 x 61.2 cm;
Chicago, Art Institute, Emily
Crane Chadbourne Fund, inv.
1969.789



Fig. 3
Conrad Kachelofen
Christ on the Cross; cutting from
the Prague Missal, "Missale
emendatum juxta rubricam
Pragensis ecclesie"
Leipzig, 1498
28 x 17.5 cm; Woodcut with hand-
colouring
London, British Museum, inv.
1913,0617.6



³ Paolo Peri, *Bordi figurati del Rinascimento*, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence 1990, pp. 4, 32.

⁴ For further fragments, see Ruth Grönwoldt, *Parmenbesatz im Wandel der Zeit: Gewebte Borten der italienischen Renaissance*, Munich, 2012, pp. 261–64.

⁵ With thanks to Lisa Monnas for bringing this to our attention.

⁶ With thanks to Silvija Banić for discussing this with us.

Two Franciscan Saints – Clare and Francis

Saint Francis: 80 x 54 x 1.9 cm.

Saint Clare: 80 x 52.5 x 1.9 cm.

Blue, red, manganese, green, and clear glass with silver stain and vitreous enamel, set into matrices composed of grisaille foliate quarries and matted clear glass, in modern wooden frames.

Two Franciscan saints stand at full length on low grassy mounds. They turn to face one another, suggestive of their original arrangement within a larger glazing scheme, and appear beneath arches composed of red cartwheels silhouetted against blue. Both saints wear the robes of the Franciscan order, with deep purple-brown garments of a simple cut, and knotted cinctures encircling the waist. Saint Clare (1194-1253), identifiable by the large gold monstrance held aloft in her shrouded right hand, wears a rich purple garment beneath her mantle, its cut indicative of the robes of her order, but its colour a nod to her noble lineage. Born at Assisi, Clare was one of the first Italian followers of Saint Francis and was herself venerated for her role as a paragon of Christian charity. She founded the female-only Order of Poor Ladies, commonly known as the ‘Poor Clares’, and authored the first set of monastic guidelines known to have been written by a woman. Clare’s counterpart, a tonsured male saint who holds a cross staff in his left hand, is most likely identifiable as Saint Francis of Assisi himself. Born Giovanni di Pietro di Bernardone (c. 1181-1226), Saint Francis led a life of poverty as an itinerant preacher, and founded several monastic and conventual orders during his lifetime. His *vitae* details his ability to communicate with animals, such that he is often associated with the patronage of animals and of the environment, though he is undoubtedly best known for having received the Stigmata while praying to a miraculous image of the Cross.

The style of our windows is typical of stained glass produced in the early years of the fifteenth century, especially in the German speaking lands. Nuremberg was one of the

Provenance

Oettingen-Wallerstein collection, Maihingen Monastery, until 1945 when relocated to; Harburg Castle, Bavaria; Heinz Kisters collection, Kreuzlingen, purchased July 1971, and by descent until 2019

epicentres of glass production during the period, and its workshops were patronised both by an emerging patrician elite, and by wealthy monastic orders.¹ Our windows must stem from the latter context, and were most probably painted to decorate the windows of a monastery church associated with the Franciscans or Poor Clares. The grisaille quarries surrounding both figures can be dated a century prior to the figures themselves.



¹ We are grateful to Dr. Uwe Gast and Dr. Hartmut Scholz of the Corpus Vitrearum Arbeitsstelle Freiburg for their help in localizing our windows to a Nuremberg workshop. Email correspondence 10th November 2020.

The Virgin Mary in Prayer

27.7 x 18 cm; clear and blue glass with silver stain and vitreous paint. There are repaired breaks to the blue glass, which has almost certainly been reused from another window to fit around the figure, and dates to c. 1510-1520.

A bust-length portrayal of the Virgin Mary, identifiable from her characteristic veil and wimple, turns in three-quarter profile to our right, the fingers of her hands gently touching in prayer at the level of her chest. She appears with her head nimbed by a large gold halo, its form embellished with a pattern of radiating flutes suggestive of hammered metalwork. She appears before a background simulating blue cloth, its fabric decorated with a pattern intentionally worked so as to evoke luxury velvets and damascened silks of the type consumed by the higher echelons of late-medieval society and somewhat at odds, therefore, with the Virgin's perceived modesty and humility.

The employment of a shading technique characterised by thick black hatching marks over a stippled ground tone is a defining feature of Bavarian glass painting from the latter half of the fifteenth century and the first decades of the sixteenth. It is used with virtuosity on a series of grisaille panels depicting scenes from the life of Saint Benedict, which were designed by Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) in 1501 for the Benedictine monastery of Saint Egidien and painted in one of Nuremberg's leading workshops (fig. 1). It is possible that our figure was also painted in the Bavarian capital, although its stylistic treatment suggest a date in the decades prior to 1500 when southern German and Austrian glaziers were producing a hard-edged style with figures clad in comparatively more blocky, linear draperies (fig. 2).



Fig. 1
A scene from the life of Saint Benedict, after a design by Albrecht Dürer
Germany, Bavaria, Nuremberg, made for the Benedictine monastery of St Egidien
Clear glass with silver stain and black vitreous paint
1501



Fig. 2
Lienhard Jöchl of Sterzing (Now Vipiteno, Italy) and his Sons Hans III and Andrew, with St. Andrew and the Arms of Jöchl
89 x 38 cm; clear, blue and red glass with silver stain, pink sanguine pigment, and black vitreous paint
Germany, Bavaria, made for the church of St. Andrew bei Sterzing, Tyrol c. 1480s
Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, inv. C30s6

Provenance

George Wigley, The Monastery Stained Glass, UK



A pair of stained glass windows with kneeling figures

53.1 x 37.2 cm (each panel); clear, green, blue, red, purple, and blue glass with silver stain and vitreous paint. Disturbance to the components of the arch above the male figure, and one of the capitals of the arch in the female figure's panel replaced. A light blue quarry replaced immediately behind the Virgin's shoulders. Abrasion to the painted surface in places, and some minor pitting on the reverse faces due to weathering and corrosion.

Provenance
Private collection Zurich, acquired by c. 1990;
thence by descent

Two figures kneel beneath ornate carved-stone archways within a hilly landscape bounded by houses along its far horizon. They both look up, their hands raised before their chests in model gestures of prayer, towards a deity or image out of our sight. Such poses suggest that they were originally made to function as part of a much larger glazing scheme, most likely one in which a figure of Christ Resurrected (perhaps appearing in his guise as Salvator Mundi at the Last Judgement) occupied a central position between and above them both. Small fillets of red glass painted to look like swags of fabric may offer evidence for the presence of further figures (perhaps angels in flight or the lower draperies of Christ himself) that are now lost. Both figures turn in profile towards one another and instead of wearing contemporary dress, the voluminous red and blue mantles that cloak their bodies lend them both the air of having a place in a biblical narrative, perhaps identifying them as Joseph and the Virgin Mary. Certainly, the latter's veiled hair is entirely iconographically appropriate for imagery of the Virgin created right across Northern Europe in the later Middle Ages. They are accompanied by large heraldic escutcheons which appear to stand superimposed onto the columns of the archways under which they pray. These almost certainly represent the donor of the window scheme, and would have been included in order to commemorate their patronage or benefaction for posterity.

The use of a strong, cool black pigment for the details of the figures' faces and the presence of arches – though admittedly disturbed and reconfigured in places – bordering the top and sides of each panel are both features that characterize Swiss glass painting during the early decades of the sixteenth century. The glazier Hans Funk (also spelled Funk and Funckh), a resident of the city of Bern, has been credited with a number of surviving panels with stylistic and technical parallels to our pair (see fig. 1, for example), and it is likely that it was produced in close proximity to his workshop, or by an associate of Funk's working in the years around 1520.



Fig. 1
Workshop of Hans Funk
Window with Saint Beatus
c. 1515
32.4 x 22.1 cm
Bern, Bernisches Historisches
Museum, inv. BE_1436

A Dominican in Prayer before the Christ Child

20.5 x 11.3 cm; clear glass with silver stain and vitreous paint

Provenance
Private collection, England

This remarkable fragment from a once complete roundel shows the figure of a tonsured monk kneeling in a simple tile-floored room before the Christ Child, who sits on a brocaded cushion supported by a throne and extends his hand towards the monk as if in blessing. A window cut into the wall behind looks out onto a landscape of trees, and just visible on the floor at the far left is a short length of fabric that probably belonged to the figure of the enthroned Virgin originally accompanying Christ to the left. A string of rosary beads terminating in a cross hangs from the monk's praying hands and is delicately picked out in silver stain.

The subtle shading of the monk's robes show that he is a member of the Dominican Order, a widespread religious confraternity that found particular popularity in the Low Countries and especially Brabant, where this roundel is likely to have been made.



Master of Riglos

A pair of altarpiece panels depicting scenes from the life of Saint Blaise

188 x 52 cm (each); polychrome and gilding on wood

Provenance

Bacri Antiquities, Paris, 1941;
Private Collection, Barcelona

Published

Gudiol Ricart, Joseph. *Pintura Medieval en Aragon*. Zaragoza, 1971 (p. 79, cat. 174).
Post, Ch. R. 'The Aragonese School in the Late Middle Ages.' In *A History of Spanish Painting Vol VIII*. Cambridge, 1941 (p. 29–32, figs. 10–11).
Velasco, Alberto. 'Revisant Pere Garcia de Benavarri. Noves precisions a l'etapa saragossana.' In *Locus Amoenus* 8 (2005-2006), 81-103.

These two panel paintings are attributed to Master of Riglos and depict scenes from the life of Saint Blaise.

Saint Blaise, depicted in the six scenes of our two altarpiece panels, was a physician and a bishop of Sebaste in modern-day Turkey. According to the Golden Legend, at one point in his life, 'when the persecutions of Diocletian compelled him to quit his bishopric, he took refuge in a cave, and there led the life of a hermit. The birds brought his food to him, and came to him in flocks, not flying away until he had blessed them. And when any of them was ailing, it came to him, and was restored to health.'¹ This part of his hagiography became a common way to identify and depict Blaise in art. It is also included in one of our two panels, which are composed of three scenes each and surrounded by a microarchitectural framework. Together, the panels show episodes from the life of Saint Blaise based on the Golden Legend: Blaise's consecration as a bishop of Sebaste, Blaise blessing the animals in the wilderness, his detention by the magistrate, his imprisonment, his martyrdom on the cross and his decapitation. They belong to a group of panels, which once belonged to a single altarpiece. The other panels from this ensemble include scenes from the life of Saint Lucy, now in a private collection in Barcelona, and a central panel depicting a standing figure of Saint Blaise, now in the Costa collection in Plainfield, New Jersey. A representation of Christ would have been at the top of this ensemble, which was also accompanied by a predella showing five scenes from the Passion of Christ.

The Riglos Master takes his name from the altarpiece of San Martín from the Riglos' church in Huesca (Barcelona, MNAC

and private collections). This master, who was influenced by the International Style and the Flemish style, above all in the physiognomies of the characters, in his architectural landscapes and in the embossed golden background, can be seen as a link between Blasco de Grañén and the painting influenced by Jaume Huguet. Although very little is known about the Riglos Master, a large number of altarpieces belong to this anonymous master who carried out his work in the Huesca region during the second third of the 15th century. His narrative skills can be seen in all of the scenes, both in the main characters from each scene as well as in the anecdotal sense that they are given through the costumes, colorful headdresses and imaginary landscapes.

Despite some ongoing debate in the scholarship around the identification of the Riglos Master and attributions in his name, this painting represents an important stylistic linkage between the earlier masters of Northern Spanish painting and the emergence of the late medieval Aragonese style in the middle of the 15th century.





Saints Severus and Simon

90.7 x 47 cm; oil on panel; the panel has been thinned and remounted to wooden support, minor losses across the surface of the panel, most notably in the figure to the right. A more detailed condition note is available upon request.

Identified by the inscriptions in their haloes, two male saints are represented before a gilded ground. The inscription on the halo of the saint shown on the left reads *sanctus senerus*, the second halo reads *sanctus simon*. While it is clear that the latter saint is meant to represent the Apostle Simon – Simon the Zealot – the identification of the bishop saint to the left is more problematic. He is most probably the fourth-century Bishop Severus of Ravenna, who was a simple weaver who visited the cathedral at Ravenna on the day of the episcopal election. According to the hagiographical legend, a white dove ascended and sat on his shoulder three times, which convinced the clergy to elect him as Bishop of Ravenna. Because of his humble beginnings as a weaver, Saint Severus became the patron saint of the wool-weavers, cloth-makers and fullers. Saint Severus is usually depicted wearing a bishop's vestments and holding a crosier and a book in his hands, and the present painting follows this convention. The saint is shown here alongside a dove. While this bird is not an obligatory element of Severus's iconography, it is not an uncommon companion: it appears prominently in the earliest known narrative cycle of the life of Saint Severus, a thirteenth-century mural in the church of Saint Severus in Boppard. Next to Severus, the apostle Simon the Zealot is shown engaged in debate with the bishop: their gazes meet as Simon, holding his wooden club in his right hand, gestures with his left and must be understood here as an indication that the figure is speaking.

Both Severus and Simon stand on a greyish-coloured stone slab, in front of which is a small wooden construction on which a cleric kneels. The cleric is clad in a white alb over a dark cloth and has his head covered with an elongated black hat similar to those worn by theologians or university doctors. In front of the kneeling donor a scroll is shown on which his prayer is literally unfolding; the words start at his joined hands and end at the mitre of Saint Severus. The written text, though incomplete, is the penultimate line of a hymn to be sung during the feast of the Holy Trinity that was part

Provenance

Private collection, United Kingdom

Related literature

Suckale, Robert. *Die Erneuerung der Malkunst vor Dürer*, 2 vols. (Petersberg, 2009), I, pp. 437–51, esp. pp. 437–42.
Stange, *Deutsche Malerei der Gotik*, 11 vols. (Munich and Berlin, 1934–61), IX, pp. 146–53; see also I. Sandner, *Spätgotische Tafelmalerei in Sachsen* (Dresden, 1993), pp. 68–69.

of a collection of *Sequentiae* attributed to the Benedictine monk Notker Balbulus of St Gall (c. 840–912) and reads: *Populu[m] cu[n]ctu[m] tu p[ro]tege salua libera [et eripe] et emu[n]da* (Protect thou, save, free, rescue and cleanse all the people). The selection of this particular verse, represented as the words of a prayer on the scroll, clearly invoked divine protection and redemption on behalf of the kneeling donor. The words would have been highly appropriate for someone who sought to provide for his hereafter with one or more endowments. Clearly, the choice of hymn indicates a theological and liturgical erudition that is most likely to have been found in universities, monasteries or chapter schools. Given the garments worn by the donor it is clear that the painting was part of a commission within an ecclesiastical context.

The present panel once constituted part of a larger altarpiece. The gilding indicates that the panel was placed on the inside of an altarpiece; it would have been visible only when the altarpiece was open. Since the prayer on the scroll was sung at feasts of the Holy Trinity it is not unlikely that it contained a representation of a *Gnadenstuhl* or Throne of Mercy Trinity.

There are some peculiarities in the painting that help to define the style. Both saints have somewhat elongated features. Saint Severus's mouth, eyes and nose are sharply outlined while the multiple wrinkles on his forehead, cheeks and neck are rendered with strong brushed lines, with occasional highlights. The shadows around the eyes are articulated with bold brushstrokes, as are the catchlights on the pupils. An idiosyncratic feature is the way that the painter terminates the eyes with three schematic curved lines indicating crow's feet. This feature, however, is absent in the depiction of the head of the donor, and it is possible that when painting a portrait rather than working from established visual types, the painter took a different approach. Another rather unusual feature is the way the painter depicts the left foot of Saint Simon as unusually thin and with a remarkable long toe. The artist took pride in



showing the left feet of both Severus and Simon overlapping the edge of the stone slab, a conventional illusionistic motif that had been widely adopted in the Netherlands and became commonplace in German painting towards the end of the fifteenth century. The wooden podium on which the praying donor kneels is also unusual. It is possible that this motif was introduced at the request of the patron, who – by physically detaching his image from the reality of the saints – presumably wanted to underline his pious humility. Though not a stylistic criterion this idiosyncrasy may aid the recognition of other works by this artist.

It has been suggested by Ludwig Meyer that the painting originated in Ulm,¹ on the basis of analogies between the inscriptions on the present haloes and those on the haloes of a Swabian painting of Saints Elizabeth of Hungary and Clara that traditionally have been assigned to the circle of Bartholomäus Zeitblom of Ulm (see figs. 1 and 2). A similar letter-type is used in both paintings and the surface of the gilded background was incised using a similar sharp tool to create a dense pattern in the ground. Although there are also marked differences, these similarities may indeed point to a common place of origin, where a school of painters (or gilders) may have employed this technique. It seems likely that the panel of Saint Severus and Saint Simon originated in a Swabian workshop on the basis above all of the saturated colours of the painting and the incised inscriptions in the haloes. Moreover, two further panels, originating in an altarpiece in the former capitular church ‘zu den Wengen’ in Ulm (today St Michael), may be adduced. They represent respectively Saints Cornelius and Cyprianus of Carthage and Saints Alexander, Eventius and Theodolus. The panels, dated by an inscription to 1504, are in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich.² The haloes of the saints in the two panels are very similar to the present ones, while their gilded brocade recalls the decoration of the panel of Saints Elizabeth and Clara. Their figure style is considerably more monumental and the patterns of draperies and folds are more broadly drawn and less angular. Since the Ottobeuren paintings can be securely placed in Ulm because of their provenance, and since they are dated 1504, they may help in assessing the date of the present panel.

It is clear that the conception of the figures and the pictorial space is much more conservative in the Saint Severus and Saint Simon panel than in the other examples cited here, as is the adherence to the old-fashioned Bedeutungsmaßstab in the representation of the donor. From this perspective alone, a date shortly before or around 1500 would seem plausible.



Fig. 1 & 2
Elizabeth of Hungary and Clara (Details)
c.1500
Ex Biberach Collection

Despite the fact that the style of the painter is very individual, it has been impossible to identify other works by his hand. The examples mentioned above concern the haloes and therefore secondary elements of comparison. It should be considered that the painting was made by a Swabian workshop around 1500 that worked across a wide region. Given that the painting shows Saint Severus, whose relics were venerated in and around Erfurt, the possibility that the painting not only might have been destined for Thuringia but also may have originated in one of the migrating workshops there remains to be further investigated.



¹ In a letter to the previous owner of the painting, Dr. Ludwig Meyer suggested in 2005 that the painting originated in Ulm (Swabia); see also sale catalogue, Christie's, London, 30 April 2010, lot 3.

² Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Staatsgalerie Ottobeuren, inv. 4562-63, oil on wood 132,3 x 44 cm. See R. an der Heiden and G. Golberg, Staatsgalerie Ottobeuren (Munich and Zurich 1991), pp. 43–44; while both panels have been traditionally been attributed to an anonymous artist from Ulm active in the circle of Zeitblom or of Martin Schaffner, Bernd Konrad thinks that the artist could be identified with Hans Maler.

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