

## Dating an Early Dominican Missal

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The Bergendal Collection of mediaeval manuscripts took its inspiration and inception in the nineteen-seventies at the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies in Toronto. Its guiding light from the beginning was the late Father Leonard E. Boyle, O.P., who taught at the Institute from 1961 to 1984. The author was a student of Father Boyle, and profited from his love for and extraordinary expertise in all things mediaeval, especially in the manuscript sciences of palaeography and diplomatics. In 1984 the present Holy Father Pope John Paul II appointed Father Boyle as Prefect of the Vatican Library. The catalogue of the Bergendal Collection was published just before Father Boyle's death in Rome in 1999. The Collection that he inspired and that grew under his direction is the largest to be found in private hands in the Americas. That many of its manuscripts originated in the mediaeval Order of Friars Preachers is no coincidence, since Father Boyle was himself a priest of the Dominican Order. There is no similar private collection in Canada nor in the United States of America. There are three or possibly four larger private collections in Europe.

The catalogue entry for MS 113 in the Bergendal Collection<sup>1</sup> is dated 6 August 1998. The manuscript itself, however, was bought at auction thirteen years earlier on 26 November 1985. The Sotheby's catalogue for that sale described the item as thirty-one leaves from a Dominican missal of the early fifteenth century from the south of Italy and possibly Naples. This relatively late dating did not arouse any great excitement or even interest in the mind of the cataloguer. Thus the folios were just allowed to sit on a library shelf for a dozen years or so in the very envelope in

which they had arrived from England. A note on the envelope simply reported that it contained 31 leaves from a Dominican missal from about 1400. In due course, having worked his way through apparently more interesting material, the cataloguer decided the time had come to examine the contents of the envelope.

A surprising and encouraging first impression was that the leaves seemed quite a bit earlier than the first part of the 1400's. Actually the fly track extensions for the initials bore a fair comparison with the initials and extensions found in the Collection's MS 12, a missal done in Bologna and dated conclusively to between 1315 and 1325. It was fairly obvious then that one was not dealing with a missal from the fifteenth century. The first task was to put the thirty-one loose folios in order. When compared to the several complete or nearly complete missals in the Collection, one is able to estimate that the original missal had comprised approximately 265 folios. Once arranged in order, and bound in full red goatskin over soft pasteboard, the thirty-one folios were seen to consist of the calendar pages for January, February, July, and August, parts of the temporal from the second Sunday in Advent to the second Sunday after Easter, then parts of the sanctorale from the feast of Saint Urban on 25 May to the feast of All Saints on 1 November. The feast of Saint Stephen, pope and martyr, appears in the calendar of this missal on 2 August, and the feast of the finding of the proto-martyr Saint Stephen is at 3 August. One must be careful not to be trapped into any consideration of 26 December when examining folios 24r and 24v, where these two feasts are found in what is left of the sanctorale.

When dating an early Dominican liturgical manuscript, it is useful to have at hand the article by Father Boyle entitled *The Date of the San Sisto Lectionary*.<sup>2</sup> From it one learns that the feast of Saint Alexis for 17 July was not confirmed and properly entered into the Dominican calendar until the general chapter held in Strasbourg in 1307.<sup>3</sup> Now on folio 2r we have the calendar for July with no mention of Saint Alexis on the 16<sup>th</sup> kalends of August (17 July). Our manuscript thus antedates 1307. Likewise the feast of Saint Louis IX, King of France, was confirmed, for celebration on 25 August, at the general chapter held in Cologne in 1301.<sup>4</sup> On folio 2v we have the calendar for August with no mention of Saint Louis on the 8<sup>th</sup> kalends of September (25 August). Our missal then also antedates 1301. These two examples clearly confirm the first impression that the missal was made much earlier than the fifteenth century. Can one go back even further?

The Boyle article also tells one that the general chapter held in Montpellier in 1265 confirmed the addition to the Dominican calendar of the feast of Saint Edward the Confessor, King of England, for celebration on 13 October. Now the calendar page for October is not to be found in our missal, but what is most intriguing and possibly much more useful is that on folios 27r and 27v are to be found the prayers for the feast of Saint Denis on 9 October followed immediately by the prayers for the feast of Pope Saint Callistus on 14 October. The prayers for the feast of Saint Edward the Confessor, on 13 October, do not appear between those two saints' days. But in the lower margin of folio 27v in a very neat and decidedly thirteenth century hand we do find an addendum for *beati eduardi*, clearly marked that it be inserted prior to the feast of Saint Callistus. One could not ask for a clearer indication that the missal was made prior to 1265. This then becomes our *terminus ante quem*. For a *terminus a quo* one need only look at the calendar page for August where we find on first nones (5 August) an original entry in red ink for *Beati Dominici confessor totum duplex*. Pope Gregory IX canonized Saint Dominic on 13 July 1234. Thus we have determined the leaves are from a missal made between 1234 and 1265. Is it possible to seek yet greater precision? Father Boyle certainly did when in his article he concluded that either 1300 or 1301 was the date for the composition of the San Sisto Lectionary. One notes with both sympathy and amusement his chagrin at not being able to determine conclusively that the year was actually 1300. This is so evident from the thrust of his article.

Possibly we too can find somewhat similar precision in our exercise, but to do so one must put aside the help of the late Father Boyle and turn now to Father Philip Gleeson, O.P., of Dublin, and his article *Dominican Liturgical Manuscripts from before 1254*.<sup>5</sup> After all Father Boyle in his article was only concerned with the dating of a manuscript from the first quarter of the fourteenth century. We are dealing now with one from the middle of the thirteenth century.

Father Gleeson's article informs us that the Dominican calendar was first determined when Humbert of Romans was Master General of the Order in 1256. The prototype missal has been edited by Father F.M. Guerrini, O.P.<sup>6</sup> An exemplar of the antiphonary-breviary incorporating the 1256 calendar, known as Santa Sabina MS XIV, is conserved with the general archives of the Dominican Order in Rome. The Gleeson article tells of three still extant Dominican missals that can be dated prior to 1256, the date of the prototype. However from the work by Felix Heinzer and Gerhard

Stamm,<sup>7</sup> we learn of a fourth, dated c.1250, now in the Badische Landesbibliothek in Karlsruhe. If Bergendal MS 113 is similar to the prototype, then it follows that its *terminus a quo* is not 1234 but rather 1256.

The four missals that were made prior to the prototype of Humbert of Romans of 1256 are the Missal of Paris, the Rau missal, Lausanne Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts, VL 80, MS 10,<sup>8</sup> and the one in Karlsruhe. All four of these missals have the feast of Saint Dominic for 5 August and so may be dated between 1234 and 1256. The Rau missal derives its name from its purchase in 1960 by a Mr Arthur Rau who then sold it to an unknown buyer in 1971. Sadly its present whereabouts is not known. The Lausanne missal is possibly the earliest of the three but this has yet to be determined conclusively. Certainly it is very close to the Paris missal as to date of composition. Not one of these four missals is fully complete, but all are substantially more so than is the subject of this article.

There are two opinions as to whether Bergendal MS 113 follows the Humbert prototype or not. If it does not, then its folios are from one of the five earliest known Dominican missals and thus could even be from the first Dominican missal ever transcribed. If it does follow the Humbert prototype, then it was preceded by the four pre-Humbert missals and can claim at best to be the fifth earliest, as it must then be dated to between 1256 and 1265. Most definitely it is not from the first part of the fifteenth century as described by Sotheby's in its 1985 catalogue.

That it follows the Humbert prototype seems to be the sounder opinion. Father William R. Bonniwell, O.P., in his book *A History of the Dominican Liturgy*, New York, 1944, has given us the calendar as it appears in the prototype.<sup>9</sup> Now the four calendar leaves from Bergendal MS 113 differ from the Humbert calendar only in the slightest of details, such as whether a feast has or does not have three lessons, or whether a feast is classed or not classed as *simplex*. There is not a single case of a feast in the calendar of the manuscript being celebrated on a day that differs from that shown for the Humbert calendar. If anyone wished to argue that it does not follow Humbert, he could point to there not being a memorial of Saint Martha in the calendar for 22 July as required by an inchoation of 1251. This objection is answered by noting that in spite of the inchoation of 1251, the feast of Saint Martha was not finally confirmed until the Dominican general chapter held in Pisa in 1276,<sup>10</sup> at which chapter the feast was confirmed for 27 July and not 22 July. For some time now the feast has been celebrated on 29 July.

Dominican missals prepared after 1256 and before say 1275 are very rare. There is the one of Cardinal Hugues de Billom, now known as MS Clermont-Ferrand 62 and dated c.1265, and Karlsruhe Badische St Peter pergament 46 that is dated c.1261. Our Dominican missal, being composed after the 1256 reform of Humbert and before the inclusion of the feast of Saint Edward the Confessor in 1265, may thus be dated c.1259. Father Boyle attained greater precision than that with his lectionary, coming as he did to within one or two years instead of our nine years. However he had a complete volume of 194 folios with which to play. We have had barely more than one-tenth of a missal from which to extract clues as to date of composition. The conclusion, though, is that this tenth is part of what is likely the fifth oldest Dominican missal still extant. The four pre-Humbert Dominican missals are not complete either, and thus might also be described technically as fragments.

There remains the determination of the immediate provenance of the leaves. Could it be that they were once in the inventory of Otto F. Ege (1888-1951), who in the 1930s was an infamous vandal of mediaeval manuscripts? His practice was to disassemble several codices from which he would put together sets of leaves that he would sell at a considerable gain over the cost of the codices he had torn asunder. His catalogue of such things lists a surprising number of boxed sets of leaves from mediaeval manuscripts acquired from many and varied sources. Certainly, MS 69 in the Bergendal Collection has been identified as a large remnant of a missal from Warburg from which Ege had created folders entitled *Fifty Original Leaves from Medieval Manuscripts*. If he had had the help and guidance of the late Father Boyle in identifying the source and in dating the leaves in his boxed sets, he would hardly have torn apart what was probably the fifth earliest Dominican missal. As such it would have commanded a price far in excess of anything he was asking for scattered leaves from broken-up codices. But then the occasion for the writing of this article would not have arisen. Whatever one might think these days of Ege, the sets were his idea of educating an American public. This conviction, joined to his entrepreneurial sense, brought fascination to many hundreds who would otherwise never have set eyes on a mediaeval manuscript.<sup>11</sup>

Digging deeper into the matter of provenance, we know that the great Saint Thomas Aquinas was in the Roman province of the Dominican order from 1259 to 1265.<sup>12</sup> This is both the time and the very district whence came our manuscript leaves, which therefore might well have been used for the celebration of mass by a

member of the Dominican Order there. On folio 16r there is a fifteenth-century scribble referring to the town of Marsico, which is some 110 kilometres south-east of Naples and thus well within the boundaries of the Roman province where Saint Thomas lived and taught. During this period he was appointed both to Viterbo and Orvieto, where there are priories<sup>13</sup> of the Dominican Roman province. Could our missal have been used at one of these places by Saint Thomas himself? This would indeed enhance its importance and the joy of this writer in dating the leaves to the time of his presence there. Thus is raised the tantalizing possibility that Bergendal MS 113 has a direct connection with, and might even be termed to be a relic of Saint Thomas Aquinas. If so, what greater and happier excuse could there be for the writing of this article?

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#### **Notes**

- 1 Joseph Pope, *One Hundred and Twenty-five Manuscripts – Bergendal Collection Catalogue*, (Toronto: Brabant Holdings, 1999).
- 2 Leonard E. Boyle, O.P., “The Date of the San Sisto Lectionary,” *San Clemente Miscellany* (Rome: Collegio San Clemente, 1978), II: 179-194.
- 3 *Acta Capitulum Generalium Ordinis Praedicatorum*, ed. B. Reichert, MOPH IV, 24, 28-30 (1307), (Rome, 1899).
4. *Ibid*, I, 302 (1301), II, 21-3 (1306).
- 5 Philip Gleeson, O.P., *Dominican Liturgical Manuscripts from before 1254*, *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, vol. XLII, pp. 81-135, Istituto Storico Domenicano di S. Sabina, (Rome, 1972).
- 6 F.M. Guerrini, O.P., ed., *Ordinarium juxta sacri ordinis fratrum praedicatorum jussu rev.mi patris fr. Ludovici Theissling eiusdem ordinis magistri generalis editum*, Collegium Angelicum, (Rome, 1921).

- 7 Felix Heinzer und Gerhard Stamm, *Die Handschriften von St. Peter im Schwarzwald*, part two, *Die Pergamenthandschriften*, (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrasowitz, 1984).
- 8 Robert Amiet, O.P., "Un missel copié vers 1240 pour le couvent dominicain de la Madeleine à Lausanne", *Revue historique vaudoise* (1982), pp. 9-19; and Ansgar Dirks, O.P., De liturgiæ dominicanæ evolutione, *Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum*, LIV, pp. 39-82, Istituto Storico Domenicano di S. Sabina (Rome, 1984).
- 9 William R. Bonniwell, O.P., *A History of the Dominican Liturgy*, Joseph F. Wagner, Inc., New York, 1944.
- 10 Boyle, op. cit., p.185.
- 11 Christopher de Hamel, *Cutting up Manuscripts for Pleasure and Profit*, The 1995 Sol. M. Malkin Lecture in Bibliography (1996; reprinted 1998).
- 12 James A. Weisheipl, O.P., *Friar Thomas D'Aquino*, Doubleday & Company, New York, 1974.
- 13 Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P., *Saint Thomas Aquinas Volume 1 The Person and His Work*, Trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), p. 117.

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