The Liber ordinarius of Nivelles

Liturgy as Interdisciplinary Intersection

Edited by
JEFFREY F. HAMBURGER
and EVA SCHLOTHEUBER

Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation
111

Mohr Siebeck

Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation

Studies in the Late Middle Ages,
Humanism, and the Reformation

edited by Volker Leppin (Tübingen)

in association with

Amy Nelson Burnett (Lincoln, NE), Johannes Helmrath (Berlin),
Matthias Pohlig (Berlin), Eva Schlotheuber (Düsseldorf)

111

The Liber ordinarius of Nivelles

(Houghton Library, MS Lat 422)

Liturgy as Interdisciplinary Intersection

Edited by
Jeffrey F. Hamburger and Eva Schlotheuber

Mohr Siebeck

Jeffrey F. Hamburger is Kuno Francke Professor of German Art & Culture at Harvard University MA, USA.
orcid.org/0000-0002-1103-1692

Eva Schlotheuber is Full Professor for Medieval History at the University of Düsseldorf.
orcid.org/0000-0003-3762-2818

ISBN 978-3-16-158242-4 / eISBN 978-3-16-158243-1
DOI 10.1628/978-3-16-158243-1
ISSN 1865-2840 / eISSN 2569-4391 (Spätmittelalter, Humanismus, Reformation)

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliographie; detailed bibliographic data are available at *http://dnb.dnb.de* abrufbar.

The book was typeset by epline in Böblingen using Minion typeface, printed on non-aging paper by Gulde-Druck in Tübingen, and bound by Spinner in Ottersweier.

Printed in Germany.

Acknowledgments

The editors are deeply grateful to the Radcliffe Institute of Advanced Study for having sponsored the exploratory seminar at which the contributors to the volume were first convened. Two days of intensive discussion and debate at Radcliffe laid the groundwork for this volume. We also owe a great debt of thanks to William Stoneman, then director of the Houghton Library, who with his characteristic good will regarding both the research and teaching missions of the University responded with alacrity and determination to Professor Hamburger's suggestion that the Library seek to acquire so extraordinary and unique a witness to the history of such an important institution. Essays originally written in German were translated into English by Jeffrey F. Hamburger and, in the case of that by Eva Schlotheuber, by Julie Hotchin (Canberra), whom we thank for her careful, conscientious translation. Last, not least, we wish to thank the Houghton Library for having made possible the acquisition and, no less, for having made the manuscript available to us and our colleagues on more occasions than we care to count.

Table of Contents

Introduction

Jeffrey Hamburger / Eva Schlotheuber

In the collection of his papers, *Liturgica Historica* (1918), published almost exactly a century ago, Edmund Bishop, the famous historian of Catholic liturgy, posed the question: "Is the subject 'An Old Prayer Book' a 'dull' one?" Tongue-in-cheek, Bishop wrote that he would prefer the dullest form possible, namely, a tabulation of its contents, adding that "any subject is sure to prove dull to somebody". By Bishop's sardonic definition, a *Liber ordinarius*, which itself offers little more than a list, albeit a complicated one, constituting the *ordo* or order of the liturgy for a given church or community, itself would be a very dull book indeed. This collection of essays, however, devoted to a single, if outstanding, example of the genre, seeks to demonstrate the contrary.

To judge from the recent outpouring of scholarly publications on *Libri ordinarii* – books that, much like the script of a play, lay out the order of the liturgy, complete with instructions regarding its performance, props, staging and setting – such documents, of which a great many survive, currently enjoy a renaissance of interest across a wide array of academic disciplines, including not only the history of liturgy per se, but also of music, monasticism, art and architecture, and religion, in particular, religious institutions. Consisting of little more a seemingly endless series of cues, organized in various ways according to the liturgical calendar, the contents of *Libri ordinarii* are by their nature skeletal in character. Yet they offer a sufficient wealth of information to have permitted those who used them in the past and those who study them in the present to flesh out that skeleton and lend it life. Read attentively, these books provide far more than a mass of raw information, itself a goldmine for scholars interested in the basic historical challenge of reconstruction, whether of the liturgy itself or the architecture and liturgical furnishings of a particular community. More broadly, they also provide critical insight into the history of ideas, attitudes, and mentality as well as the relationships among the various groups that constituted a given community and the liturgical interactions among them, all of which were freighted with social as well as religious significance. In the case of female monastic communities, such as that at Nivelles, a *Liber ordinarius* also sheds light on constructions of gender and conceptions of ritual as they related to gender in the social, political and religious spheres. Detailed descriptions of how ceremony unfolds in time and space, they permit at least a partial reconstruction of elements of historical experience that are otherwise inherently ephemeral.

The *Liber Ordinarius ostendens qualiter legatur et cantetur per totum anni circulum in ecclesia Nivellensis* (i. e., The *Liber ordinarius* showing how [the liturgy] is read and sung through the entire cycle of the year in the church of Nivelles) or, for short, the *Liber ordinarius* of Nivelles (LON), which was acquired by the Houghton Library at Harvard University in 2010 and assigned the shelfmark MS Lat 422, served as a guide to the corporate prayer of a community, in this case, the canonnesses of the abbey of St Gertrude in Nivelles in modern-day Belgium. Located between Brussels and Charleroi and no more than about twenty miles from the border with France, the abbey, which today still dominates what is now the rather sleepy town of Nivelles, was, through much of the Middle Ages, a strategically located center of power, closely associated in turn with the Merovingian, Carolingian, and Ottonian imperial houses. Among extant manuscripts, that purchased by the Houghton Library, which had previously been privately held, is the oldest known to survive from an institution that exercised tremendous power and influence over the course of many centuries.

Nivelles was founded in Gaul in the middle of the seventh century, by Ida, the window of Pippin the Elder, and her daughter, St Gertrude. For its time, the foundation was a typical initiative for a widow of the high aristocracy acting under the influence of Irish missionaries. The two female founders mandated the adoption of a fixed rule and enclosure. Among the principal duties of the community were the care of strangers and administering to the needs of the poor, widows, and orphans. The charitable ministration associated with the various hospitals linked to Nivelles had a significant and lasting impact on the abbey throughout its history. Founded on lands that had belonged to the powerful Austrasian *major domus*, Pippin the Elder, Nivelles evolved into one of the most important dynastic monastic houses of the later Carolingian dynasty, which was deeply involved in the Pippinids's retention of power during the difficult period following Grimoald's so-called coup d'état in 656. Nivelles thus acquired its enduring status in cultural memory as the "cradle of the Carolingians," and for many centuries the abbesses of Nivelles most likely remained the most powerful territorial rulers in the region. When in 1798, during the French Revolution the abbey was dissolved, the community of women could look back on a history of approximately 1150 years.

Gertrud and Itta had placed the pastoral care of the women in the hands of Irish monks for whom they founded the monastery of Fosses. With time a community of canons with the unusually high number of thirty members was established in Nivelles; its role was to support an aristocratic community of approximately forty canonesses. The *Liber ordinarius* of Nivelles, including the documents and records that it contains, reflects the formative beginnings of the monastery, its important traditions and rituals as well as its religious, political, and charitable functions into which both the female and male communities were integrated. Given its liturgical function, the manuscript necessarily documents

the performance of the liturgy in great detail. More than that, however, it permitted the community not simply to preserve but also to shape and structure its memory and understanding of itself in terms defined by liturgy. The manuscript permits us to see how the liturgy was put to use not only for religious but also for political and social reasons. Indicative of this context was the decision of the Chapter of Nivelles to add to the *Liber ordinarius* crucial documents regarding the interaction of the female and male communities that for the most part are not documented elsewhere.

The abbey's religious, political, and social importance alone would suffice to make its *Liber ordinarius* a document of commanding interest. It takes on added significance, however, in light of what is now over a generation of scholarship devoted to questions of gender as they relate to the history of medieval monasticism. One salient feature of the *Liber ordinarius* of Nivelles is that its contents are addressed primarily to the requirements of its primary community of canonnesses rather than those of its secondary community of canons. Rarely does a document provide such direct insight into the particularities that distinguished a female from a male community as well as the many ties that bound them together.

When it originally surfaced at an auction at Sotheby's, London, in 2008, the *Liber ordinarius*, which the catalogue described in misleading fashion as the "Hausbuch" of the Abbess Elizabeth de Bierbais, was dated to within her lifetime, ca. 1280, in large part on the basis of documents included among the liturgical texts proper. Such a date would link the *Liber* to period of tremendous turmoil in the abbey's history, years which witnessed quarreling not only between the abbey and citizens of the town over taxes (the proverbial town-gown struggle), but also among the abbess and the canonesses over jurisdiction and management of the abbey's considerable estates, the complicated relationship to the dukes of Brabant as well as other duties and obligations. These struggles culminated with the opening of the tomb of St Gertrude by Abbess Elizabeth de Bierbais on 8 July, 1292. To situate the *Liber* within, let alone characterize it as a witness to, these dramatic events certainly lends the book a certain melodramatic character. Its origins, however, prove to be much more complicated – and perhaps still more interesting – in ways which underscore that the liturgy, far from the timeless reflection or embodiment of eternal praise, which is how it is described in idealizing accounts, in fact represents a highly contested and ever-changing field of social as well as religious action.

Such changes are not simply reflected in but shaped by the material record in the form of manuscripts. The *Liber ordinarius* from Nivelles provides one very concrete and vivid example of this phenomenon. One striking feature of the manuscript is that all of the documents incorporated into its pages can be dated to the second half of the thirteenth century; the latest date that can be attached to any of them is the year 1300. The dating of this material to the latter half of the century contradicts the date assigned to the Lambert Table. If credence can be

lent to an inscription in the calendar as well as the accompanying Lambert Table for calculating the date of Easter, both of which provide the date 1346 (and both which are written in the same script, if not necessarily the same hand, as the rest of the manuscript), then the entire book dates not to the later thirteenth, but rather to the middle of the fourteenth century, a shift of at least half a century.

The history of the manuscript's creation and the transmission of the materials it contains can briefly (if somewhat summarily) be reconstructed as follows. As occurred quite frequently, the liturgical customs of the abbey of Nivelles owe their having been recorded to ongoing conflicts within the community. Very often, significant information is only set down and codified when it is, for whatever reason, perceived as being in peril. In the particular circumstances that gave rise to the manuscript, a struggle broke out between the abbess and the Chapter of the canonnesses and the canons of Nivelles, which at its heart revolved around the ancient status of the abbey as self-governing under the Empire. It appears that the compilation of the liturgical customs of the abbey, i. e., the original version of the *Liber ordinarius* that in turn most likely was based in part on still older models and that served in turn as the exemplar for the extant manuscript, was assembled and commissioned by the Chapter of women during the second half of the thirteenth century. Into this manuscript, which no longer survives, were entered the internal decisions of the Chapter in these years. The *Liber ordinarius* thus served to record the collective memory of the Chapter of Nivelles and of the decisions and debates that marked its conflict with the abbess. In a certain sense, then, the *Liber* represents the beginning of the Chapter's independent administration of its own affairs. By documenting its own self-governance, the Chapter took an important step in the direction of taking over responsibility for the complex fabric of Nivelles's ritual and, by extension, political life and, in so doing, challenging the abbess's sovereignty. With the exception of two documents and the record of the opening of Gertrude's grave in 1292, the added documents contained in the manuscript are otherwise unknown. Together with a critical apparatus and a translation, they receive their first edition as an appendix this volume of essays.

As the conflict between the Chapter and abbess regarding the abbey's position in the Empire once again came to the fore in the middle of the fourteenth century, it would appear that the Chapter commissioned a more or less exact copy of the *Liber ordinarius*, the manuscript that is now housed as MS Lat 422 at the Houghton Library of Harvard University. This manuscript contains extensive traces of use and in the fifteenth century received a new binding. As this binding demonstrates, no later than the fifteenth century and possibly earlier, the *Liber ordinarius* was secured to a lectern by a chain, i. e., in a place where it would have been accessible equally to the communities of canonnesses and canons, possibly within the church of St Gertrude. The editors know of no comparable example of a *Liber ordinarius* that was chained in comparable fashion; such books were nor-

mally housed in the sacristy. The manuscript's singularity in this respect underscores the extent to which the manuscript had come to serve a special, indeed, exceptional function. A remark made by Geldolphus van Ryckel, abbot of St Gertrude in Louvain and author of a life of the saint printed in 1637, indicates that the women's choir at Nivelles housed one or more lecterns with chained books of which one contained a record of the opening of Gertrude's tomb ("Haec ex libro qui catenatus extat ad stallum dominarum in choro").[1] From the seventeenth century there also survives a text, printed by Jules Fréson in 1890, which alludes to detailed instructions in "the ordinal of the Ladies" (*l'ordinaire des Damosselles*) regarding the abbess's obligation to provide the canonnesses with salmon cut according to precise specifications (no doubt the text in MS Lat 422, f. 95r).[2]

The manuscript's relatively modest decoration, in the form of flourished penwork initials, discussed briefly by Jeffrey F. Hamburger in his description of the manuscript, supports or at least in no way contradicts a dating of the manuscript to the middle of the fourteenth century. As detailed in the contributions to this volume by Albert Derolez and Rowan Dorin, the manuscript is almost certainly a copy; there is no other satisfactory way to explain the manuscript's particular combination of scribal and codicological irregularities. If accepted – and in this volume Walter Simons's essay represents a dissenting voice – the manuscript's dating not to the late thirteenth but rather to the middle of the fourteenth century has profound implications, not only for how it was made, but also for the historical circumstances of its making, which here are discussed in greatest depth in the essay by Eva Schlotheuber, together with the historical background and the development of the charitable institutions that also shaped the community‹s identity and therefore were also reflected and negotiated in its liturgy on an ongoing basis.

To unpack the ordinal's potential as an historical witness proves an exceptionally complicated task, one requiring collaboration among a large group of historians representing many different areas of specialization: hence the subtitle of this volume: "Liturgy as Interdisciplinary Intersection". The abbey's ordinal provides an unexpected opportunity to shed light on the social and political setting, the shaping and interaction of gender in space, architecture, furnishings, customs, music and, not least, the liturgy of one of the most important female monastic houses in all of medieval Europe. Whereas Andreas Odenthal's essay mines the ordinal for liturgical data that can be used to reconstruct the layout

[1] Van Rijkel, Historia (1634), 406.

[2] Fréson, Histoire (1890), 41: "Premes que la Dame sa vie durant paierat des ore en avant les herens crus; Item payerat le pièche de Saumon crue, de telle longheche, et largesche, entre le boudine et le teste, sans queue et sans teste, que contenu est en l'ordinaire des Damoss[s] sans point detrainer ne debestournerwetet, mais tout ouvert deseure et desoubs, si on ne trouve du contraire par bonnes gens qui a ce se cognoisteront." Our thanks to Walter Simons for bringing to our attention both this passage as well as that in van Ryckel, cited in the previous note.

and function of various spaces within and among the churches that constituted its immediate "family," Klaus-Gereon Beuckers explores the building against the broader historical foil represented by older and contemporary structures. By recounting the history of the relics of St Gertrude, Bonnie Effros traces her cult to its origins in the Merovingian period and through successive transformations, of which the events documented in the ordinal were among the most dramatic in its history. Alison Beach analyses the very interesting and detailed information given in the documents about the election and investiture of the abbess of Nivelles in late thirteenth century. Margot Fassler and Louis van Tongeren investigate different aspects of the community's traditions of ritual performance: Fassler, the cult of St Gertrude as expressed in a previously unexplored corpus of chant (both music and texts), van Tongeren with a focus on the celebration of Easter, an examination brought into sharp focus through systematic comparison with the Easter rites specified in other *ordinaria* from the region. Looking out from the abbey towards its urban and rural contexts, Charles Caspers inquires into the processions that radiated out from the abbey and which inscribed into local topography the networks within which it was embedded by ritual and legal obligations. Drawing in part on information provided by the *Liber ordinarius* of Nivelles, Walter Simons's detailed discussion of the region's beguinages, which represent a radically different tradition of female religious practice, as well as the interaction of these much more modern institutions with the great and venerable abbey, succeeds in shedding new light on accepted narratives regarding the very origins of the beguine movement.

Over and above the rich vein of liturgical information it supplies, which fills a notable gap in our knowledge of Nivelles, the documents in both French and Latin that the ordinal includes along with its more conventional liturgical texts undoubtedly represent its most unusual feature. It was, of course, hardly uncommon for documents of all kinds to be inscribed in blank spaces within manuscripts, whether inside the binding, on fly leaves or on blank folios. Parchment was precious, and occasionally the documents thus included were actually pertinent to and augmented a book's contents. The documents incorporated into the *Liber ordinarius* of Nivelles, however, of which this volume includes both an edition and a translation, are anything but casual additions. Codicological and paleographical evidence indicates that they are of a piece with the rest of the manuscript. They therefore represent a carefully considered supplement whose content can only be explained by the particular political circumstances of the manuscript's making. These circumstances are explored here in the essays by Eva Schlotheuber and Rowan Dorin. To their analysis, which situates the manuscript amidst the crisis of governance faced by the abbey in the mid-fourteenth century, Thomas F. Kelly supplies an analysis of the abbey's personnel as referenced in the *Liber ordinarius* and the terminology used to do so, to which Virginie Greene adds a consideration of the legal language deployed in the documents written in

the manuscript's particular version of the French vernacular, detecting in it literary as well as purely linguistic and legalistic elements. In turn, Hannah Weaver provides the necessary linguistic analysis of the French, disentangling the various strands that lend it its local accent.

The contributors, all of whom attended a workshop originally convened in the Spring of 2015 by Jeffrey F. Hamburger and generously made possibly by Harvard's Radcliffe Institute, have taken the brief represented by the book's subtitle as seriously as it was intended. To the extent that there is overlap among the essays, it is in ways that are mutually reinforcing. As the contributions make clear, the history of the liturgy, far from being an obscure adjunct to other areas of historical inquiry, is central to an understanding of medieval history in many of its facets. In the case of the *Liber ordinarius* of Nivelles, those facets include topics as varied as the ordering of the liturgy in all its layers, the processions that extended beyond the family of churches that connected the abbey to the surrounding urban landscape, and relations between the laity and the abbey in the High Middle Ages as well as between the canonesses, an ancient form of female community, with the more modern form represented by the beguines. Ecclesiastical and liturgical history are closely intertwined. To these topics are added other areas of focus, all interrelated: the architecture of the church, which was frequently rebuilt and remodeled throughout its history and which was so grievously damaged during World War II; the layout and function of liturgical furnishings, not to mention the terminology employed to describe them; the complex spatial ordering of a church shared by female and male communities as well as, on occasion, the laity; the music that would have resounded in these spaces, articulating and lending resonance to the community's devotions; and the community's cult of the saints, which in turn was rooted in its ancient history and political affiliations.

And then there is the physical fact of the manuscript itself: in its original binding, but somewhat battered and unassuming in appearance, certainly not a lavish liturgical manuscript of the kind that undoubtedly adorned the abbey's altars. These books – the abbey's graduals and antiphonaries, missals and breviaries, not to mention a host of other service books – have largely been lost over the course of the centuries. Their disappearance and destruction, however, lends the surviving of the *Liber ordinarius* that much more significance. Its content permits, if not a complete, then at least an extensive reconstruction of portions of the abbey's ritual, ceremonial and musical life. Written in an idiosyncratic script, the manuscript offers little for the eye beyond the regular alternation of simple red and blue lombard initials of a kind commonly found in Gothic manuscripts, of which a few are enlivened by elaborate fleuronnée decoration, to which must be added among the manuscript's most endearing features, its inclusion (in two versions) of a measure, painted prominently in red, for the salmon that the abbess is to distribute to the canonesses during Lent [Pl. 12,

p. 496, f. 95r]. Moreover, the manuscript's structure, a sequence of utterly regular gatherings, combined with the irregular organization of its contents, provides a genuine historical conundrum. Why, must one ask, is the content of a liturgical book clearly dated 1346 interrupted by not one but two sets of documents placed between the Temporale and the Sanctorale and, again, at the end of the Sanctorale. And why are these documents, which deal largely with the obligations of the both the abbess and the *custos*, as well as the conflict between Abbess Elizabeth de Bierbais (r. 1272–1293) and the chapter of Nivelles, which by the time the manuscript was made, lay quite far in the past, recorded in Old French? Why this particular selection of documents, too scanty to have formed part of a customary? Why the strange character of the script, for which no precise parallels are forthcoming, either in other surviving documents from Nivelles or in other manuscripts of the period? Why are certain ceremonies included and others not? Each of these questions generates still more. These are just some of the puzzles for which the following pages propose possible answers.

The Manuscript

Codicological Description of the *Liber ordinarius* of Nivelles (Houghton Library, MS Lat 422) and the Date of its Decoration

Jeffrey F. Hamburger

ff. 1v–8r: Calendar and Lambert Table; f. 8v blank.
ff. 9r–56v: Temporale, followed (f. 54v) by documents.
ff. 57r–103v: Sanctorale and Common of Saints, followed (f. 93v) by documents.

Parchment (heavily rubbed and stained, showing signs of extensive use, small tears repaired by sewing), ff. 103, 305 × 225 (230 × 165–170) mm, calendar ca. 260 x 195 mm, trimmed, in 11 regular, undisturbed gatherings of 8 leaves each (I–XII^{8}; XIII$^{8-1}$ [viii, stub between f. 103 and the rear pastedown, to which a separate piece of parchment also trimmed, has been attached in the lower part of the gutter]) catchwords or quire mark (IV, indicated as III^{9}, as the calendar is not included in the numeration) in all but gatherings I and VI; modern pencil notation (f. 54v) noting that the text between ff. 55v and 56r is not continuous]. Written below top line by a single scribe in both Latin and Middle French and in different shades of brown ink ranging from near black to light brown in variations in a single, schooled, yet idiosyncratic book hand.[1] Single vertical and double horizontal bounding lines (often no longer visible), ruled in brown ink (first gathering, long lines) or hard point (remaining gatherings, double columns), pricked for 36 lines, but in some cases ruled and written with as many as 39 or as few as 30 lines, varying even within gatherings and sometimes from recto to verso; pricking in inner margins and occasionally (ff. 58–59, 65–72, and 101) in the outer and lower margins.[2]

12- to 10-line *I* initials (ff. 9r, 54r, 90v) with red and brown fleuronnée decoration, sometimes (ff. 54r and 90v) adjoining display script in alternating red and blue majuscules with brown or red fleuronnée; and 6- to 5-line initials (ff. 8r, 57r) with puzzle patterns in red and blue. 2- and 1-line initials (occasionally, as on f. 46va, with guide letters) in red or blue with alternating brown or red fleuronnée, which is consistent throughout the manuscript. Rubrics in majuscules stroked in red; all liturgical instructions crossed in red; helical line fillers in red or blue. Titles of documents sometimes boxed in double or single red lines. No

[1] For analysis of the script, see the contributions by Albert Derolez and Margot Fassler in this volume.

[2] For discussion of this "extraordinary" feature, see the discussion by Albert Derolez in this volume.

illustration besides the measures for salmon, drawn in red in the first column and outer margin of f. 95r (and erased on f. 94r).

Corrections from the later fourteenth or fifteenth century on ff. 34va, 36ra, 44vb, 47va, 47vb, 71rb, 71va, 73rb, 74rb; early modern annotation on f. 55v indicating that the text continues on f. 93r (in fact, f. 94r).

Binding, fifteenth century, tanned leather, brown, rubbed and with portions missing, especially on spine, and with simple blind tooling in the form of double and triple fillets framing a rectangular title window; turned in with tongues over boards, squared, with some wormholes; 6 raised bands over leather sewing supports (spine with traces of 10 raised bands, not including trimmed head band, from previous binding), with single straight sewing over a slit band; head- and tail bands missing; attached to boards with tawed thongs in channels; pegs not visible beneath parchment pastedowns; two straps, anchored on back cover by brass plates, the fastenings in lighter (alum-tawed?) skin, each originally with two brass clasps with simple tooling attached to pins on front cover, some claps and pins missing; lower strap with an additional hole for another pin, also missing; five brass bosses on front and back cover, extensively rubbed, indicating that the book was kept open on a pulpit or reading desk for extensive periods of time; two holes for an additional brass fitting, most likely a chain attachment, at the center of the tail edge of the back board.

Fleuronée decoration: The manuscript's fleuronnée decoration performs two primary functions: making the otherwise uniform succession of liturgical information more legible by breaking it up into sections and adding hierarchy by highlighting at least some of the most important moments in the calendar. These include the opening of the Temporale [Pl. 5, p. 489, f. 9r], the feast of Corpus Christi [Pl. 6, p. 490, f. 54r], the opening of the Sanctorale [Pl. 8, p. 492, f. 57r], and the Translation of St Gertrude. [Pl. 9, p. 493, f. 63v] The uniformity of the fleuronnée as well as other elements of the decoration throughout the volume, in both the Latin and the French sections as well as the calendar, indicates the entire book must have been carried out in a single campaign during or just prior to 1346, the date indicated by the inscription above the Lambert Table (f. 7v), written by the same scribe responsible for the rest of the manuscript.[3] [Pl. 4, p. 488] In one instance (f. 52r), even a marginal correction receives a comparable fleuronnée initial. [Derolez, Fig. 4, p. 25] To the extent that dated comparanda can be identified, nothing about the fleuronnée decoration precludes such a date. In fact, to some extent the evidence reinforces it. If one turns to the relevant volume of the *Manuscrits datés* for Belgium in search of the fleuronnée's most distinctive feature, namely, the broad oak leaves, occasionally inhabited by birds or rabbits, alongside or within the finer filigree (ff. 9r, 10v, 17v, 57r, 58r, 63v, 73v, 81v) [Pls. 5, p. 489, 8, p. 492, and 9, p. 493], the following examples can

[3] For a dissenting view regarding the date, see the essay by Walter Simons in this volume.

be found: n°. 43 (Brussels, BR, ms. 270, dated 1340); n°. 63 (Ghent, UB, ms. 942, dated 1367); and n°. 78 (Liège, BU, ms. 348C, dated 1381).[4] Another tell-tale feature, the small, stylized blossoms within the filigree extensions in the form of a circles surrounded by dots, also occurs in mid fourteenth-century manuscripts (e. g., *Manuscrits datés*, n°. 43, as above).

[4] Masai / Wittek, Manuscrits (1968–1991), vol. 1.

Codicology and Palaeography of the *Liber Ordinarius of Nivelles*

Albert Derolez

I. Codicology

The following observations necessarily have a somewhat provisional character, as they are based on the descriptions of the codex provided by two successive auction houses and on the digitized reproduction of the manuscript. Whatever the qualities of the latter, only a thorough study of the original would allow to make an entirely reliable codicological description of the structure and the page layout (the two points that interest us here).

I.1 Structure

The LON is a parchment codex measuring 305 × 225 mm and containing 103 leaves, bound in a fifteenth-century blind-tooled brown leather binding over wooden boards. As will appear from the Table at the end of this article, its construction is absolutely straightforward: it consists of 13 quires, all quaternions; the last blank leaf of quire XIII was used as a pastedown. Apart from the first quire, which contains mainly the Calendar, and the last one, all quires are marked by horizontal catchwords at right on their last pages; quire IV (ff. 25–32) has no catchword, but instead the quire mark 'III^{9}' (the opening quire containing the Calendar is normally not included in the numbering of the quires, so our quire IV rightly received the quire mark III); quire VI too has no catchword; on quire VII no catchword was necessary.

The quires are grouped in three codicological units with basically the same features:

(1) Quire I (ff. 1–8), containing the Calendar and the Lambert Table and ending on a blank page.
(2) Quires II–VII (ff. 9–56), containing the Temporale followed by a series of documents.
(3) Quires VIII–XIII (ff. 57–103), containing the Sanctorale and the Common of the Saints, followed by a second series of documents.

I.2 Layout

All quires present a vertical row of prickings in the inner margin; the corresponding row of prickings in the outer margin has mostly been lost at the cropping of the codex; it is still visible on ff. 58–59, 65–72, and 101. Without having access to the actual codex, it is an endless task to count the number of prickings on all leaves, especially as in the digitized reproduction quite a number of leaves show no prickings. In most quires, however, it seems that their number is 37, the last but one being a double pricking (for the tracing of double horizontal through lines at the bottom of the text area). If this is right, then in principle the major part of the manuscript would have been ruled for two columns of 36 written lines below top line.

Quire I has ruling in light brown ink for long lines; the grid of the Lambert Table on f. 7v is traced in red ink. [Pl. 4] All the remaining quires appear to have lead-point ruling for two columns, which on most pages is now almost invisible. For one or other reason the ruling pattern is only visible on the first text page, f. 9r, which has ink ruling.[1] [Pl. 5] It is amazing to see in how many cases the ruling appears to deviate from the 36-line scheme supposed by the pricking pattern visible in most quires. The number of lines on each page varies from 30 to 39, and is quite often even different on recto and verso of the same folio. The only quire presenting a uniform ruling of 36 lines on all pages is quire IV. This extraordinary feature: quires pricked in view of the ruling, but the latter deviating from the pricking pattern, needs an explanation: it cannot be due to slovenliness or inattention, as on all pages both columns have the same number of lines and the variation in line numbers is unobtrusive. I will return to this in the conclusion.

I.3 Decoration

The Houghton *Liber ordinarius* presents a very homogeneous and in its liturgical parts quite extensive decoration.[2] It consists of red headings, red stroking of majuscules, red crossing of all liturgical and other instructions, a few red or blue paragraph-marks, and various types of initials: (1) bold black 1-line versals are used for the Sunday-letters in the Calendar and in the Lambert Table and its key [Pls. 3–4]; (2) red and blue 1-line versals (plain initials) occur in the text, mostly alternating, on some pages only; (3) the normal initial type is the 2-line flourished initial alternately red and blue, with delicate penwork in the contrasting colour; these initials are half-inserted, so that letters with ascenders (like *H*) or

[1] It is possible that the scribe or his or her assistant already on this first page became aware of the difficulties which ink ruling would cause if its application was continued in a manuscript with such a peculiar page layout as LON.

[2] For further discussion of the decoration, especially as it bears on the date of the manuscript, see the discussion by Jeffrey F. Hamburger in this volume.

descenders (like *P*) can be given their normal form; they have long penwork extensions in the left margin or in the intercolumnar space.

II. Palaeography

II.1 General features

The entire manuscript appears to be written in one and the same handwriting, which has most peculiar features. It is a documentary form of northern *gothica textualis libraria*.[3] The individual minuscule letter forms present almost no angularity, the compression in the horizontal sense is moderate, and fusions, as far as these are recognizable as being intentional, are relatively rare: *de*, *do*, *pe*, *po*. The ascenders vary in length between 2.5 and 1.5 minims. The script is upright or slightly sloping to the left. The forking at the top of the ascenders, triangular if the execution is careful, can be exaggerated and develop into strokes from the left. I will discuss this feature at a later moment. Descenders, on the other hand, end straight without such forking. As to the individual letter forms, the following may be said:

- *a* has an almost vertical shaft and the top of the latter generally turns very little over to the left; there is no upper bow; in many cases the shaft is so short that the letter may be called a single-compartment *a*.
- *c* is interesting insofar as its upper stroke tends to be straight and horizontal, thus approaching *c* to *t*; this is especially so when its first stroke crosses the upper stroke.
- *d* has always the uncial form, with a relatively long sloping ascender.
- *g* has a closed lower bow, which has approximately the same size or is slightly larger than the upper bow.
- the limb of *h* goes well under the line and turns to the left.
- *i* is short or long (*j*). The short *i*'s are often topped by conspicuously long strokes, not only when they occur next to letters like *u*, *m*, *n*. *J* can be found at the beginning of words, and in that case often extends above the headline as well as below the baseline; *j* (not extending above the headline) is also used as the second letter of double *i* (*ij*, both letters always stroked).
- the treatment of the feet of *m* and *n* is either indifferent, or brings these letters close to what has been called *textus rotundus*: in that case the feet turn upwards and touch the subsequent minim. I will have to return to this distinction. Normal *m* is often replaced by the uncial form, a feature typical of documentary script. It occurs very often at the opening of words, especially of

[3] The palaeographical terminology adopted in the present essay is found in Derolez, Palaeography (2003).

significant ones – so it may be considered a more solemn form of *m*, or a semi-majuscule.
- *r* is used in the normal double form: round *r* (*2*) after *b*, *d*, *h*, *o*, *p*, and straight *r* in all other positions. As in other manuscripts of the Gothic age, there is sometimes a tendency to adopt a semi-majuscule form of *r* in initial position.
- as is normal for manuscripts of this age, *s* equally adopts either the straight form (standing on the line), or the round form. Round *s* is very round and closed and is in shape not far away from cursive *s*. Due to its complicated form, it is generally made higher than the other minuscules and rises above the headline. Straight *s* may be used in all positions, at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of words; in the latter position its use is, however, very limited. Round *s* is normally found at the end of words, but in the present manuscript it is also often used in initial or in medial position (*supra*, *suffragia, psalmus*, etc.); as with uncial *m*, the question rises whether in initial position this form of the letter has not to be considered a semi-majuscule.
- the same duality exists for the letter *u* / *v*: the normal minuscule form *u* may be used in all positions, while the high and sharp *v*, which is of cursive origin, has its normal place at the beginning of words. Its first stroke slopes to the left and turns over in the same direction. In our manuscript, however, it is not rare to see it in medial position: so the word for "gospel" may be written *evangelium* or *euangelium*. The form *ewangelium* is also found, one of the rare instances of the appearance of the letter *w*.
- *w* may be used for "vu", for example in *wlt*.
- the first stroke of *x* is short; the other one, traced on the diagonal, is long and often broken into two strokes.
- *y* is always undotted.
- *z* has the shape of figure 3.

Ligatures are rare, but it is striking that the *et*-ligature or ampersand (&) plays such a prominent role in our manuscript and that it is used infinitely more frequently than tironian *et*. The latter sign is always crossed. See below more about the use of the two forms of the *et*-conjunction.
- the *ct*-ligature has the atrophied form, in which the top of the *t* is lengthened and curved to the left without touching the *c*.
- like in most other manuscripts of the Late Middle Ages, the *st*-ligature is constantly in use.

Abbreviations are frequent, at least in the Latin texts. A distinction needs to be made between general abbreviations and specifically liturgical ones. A few examples among the first:

do^{9}	*dominus*
ēcca or *ēccla*	*ecclesia*
3	*est*

Īhc	*Ihesus*
no^{a}ndum	*notandum*
ōmpc or *ōmps*	*omnipotens*
s̄pc	*spiritus*
x̄pc	*Christus*

The majuscules in the Houghton manuscript, extremely frequent in a text containing such a multitude of short quotations, deserve special attention. Much more than the minuscules, they adopt specific forms which, unlike majuscules in many other late medieval manuscripts, are almost always standardized, without allowing alternative forms. As we shall see, only for *N* and *S* the scribe(s) could choose between two forms.

The two techniques available for giving Gothic majuscules more "body" seem to have been used in our manuscript: duplicating or multiplying strokes on the one hand, and applying boldness to certain parts of the letter on the other.[4] It is to be noted that these bold parts or thickenings, which have approximately the shape of a crescent, are not obtained by exerting pressure on the pen, but artificially by drawing with the pen the outline and filling the interior with ink. This is obvious when the letter is rapidly executed and the filling has been omitted. The letters featuring these bold parts are *B*, *D*, *F*, *H*, *K*, *L*, *M*, *P*, *R*. Letters having only an additional vertical stroke within their eye are the "round" letters *C*, *E*, *G*, one form of *N* (see below), *O*, *Q*, *T*. These belong to types rather normal for their period. *V* has a peculiar duplication in the form of a loop (the duplication in *P* is made in the same way). *I*/*J* is undecorated, *X* is crossed. *N* has either a traditional straight form, consisting of two vertical strokes connected by a bar made of one or two sloping strokes, or a round form with an additional vertical stroke within the letter. *S*, on the other hand, has an easily recognizable upright form and a more horizontal form consisting of two or three superposed flattened letters *S*. *A*, finally, has a sharp triangular shape with sloping base-line and an additional wavy horizontal line from left at the top. It is to be noted that the decorative strokes in all these majuscules can be simple, double or triple.

II.2 Two "Hands"

It is majuscule letter *A* that offers the most striking criterion for making the distinction between two variants of the handwriting described hitherto and occurring in the Houghton manuscript. For practical reasons I will call these variants Hand 1 and Hand 2, although for the time being it is impossible to decide whether they are distinctive of two scribes or two forms adopted by the same scribe. In Hand 1, the more calligraphic variant, the line at the top of majuscule

[4] See a note on gothic majuscules in Derolez, Palaeography (2003), 183–84; the *S* in fig. 5 is similar to one of the two forms of that majuscule in LON.