



THEORY AND CRITICISM OF LITERATURE & ARTS

SPECIAL ISSUE

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BIBLIOCLASM & DIGITAL RECONSTRUCTION

ELEVEN SCATTERED MANUSCRIPTS
DIGITALLY REASSEMBLED THROUGH THE
WAYBACK RECOVERY METHOD©



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Cover

Selection of leaves from the Research Centre for European Philological Tradition manuscript collection

Editorial Coordination

Research Centre for European Philological Tradition

Editorial Director

Carla Rossi

Editorial & Press Office Management

Viviana La Monaca

Graphic Designer

Virginia La Monaca

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Deus in laudibus.
in adiutorium meum
intende. Domine ad

This special issue is dedicated to
the memory of Prof. Erik Drigsdahl

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The Rosenbaum Psalter-Hours

Adrienn Orosz

Psalter-hours, written in Latin in a Gothic bookhand, on vellum.

Origin: currently still undetermined.

Date: second half of the 13th century.

Dimensions: single *folia* between 175-179 x 125-136 mm, *bifolium*: 178 x 266 mm. Written area: between 145-150 x 86-90 mm.

Description: All leaves imperfect, cut in the upper margin and along the right edge, sometimes cropping decorative elements with penwork drolleries. Twenty and twenty-one lines per page in a slightly irregular Gothic hand, black and red ink, plummet ruling, distributed in one or two columns. All recovered leaves written by the same hand in two types of writing. Modern pencil foliation and other notes on the *recto* and *verso* of some leaves.

Decoration: historiated, inhabited and uninhabited initials on a background of burnish gold leaf, in blue, red, orange, black, white, brown, beige, green colours, some of them with extensions in shape of humans, birds, and dragons often biting into the body of the letter.

Versal initials in burnished gold and blue with flourish penwork extensions in red and blue. Penwork line-fillers with non-figurative, linear, and floral elements, and dragons, monsters, human-headed monsters, birds, fish, bulls, dogs, lions and humans in full shape or only their head in blue, red, and gold, often with a red blob or ball in their mouth.

Contents: Psalter - Canticles - Creeds - Litany - Collects - Hours of the Virgin - Office for the Dead.

Provenance: Broken and widely dispersed in the 1960s, with leaves in the collection of Carl Richartz, Amsterdam by 1966.

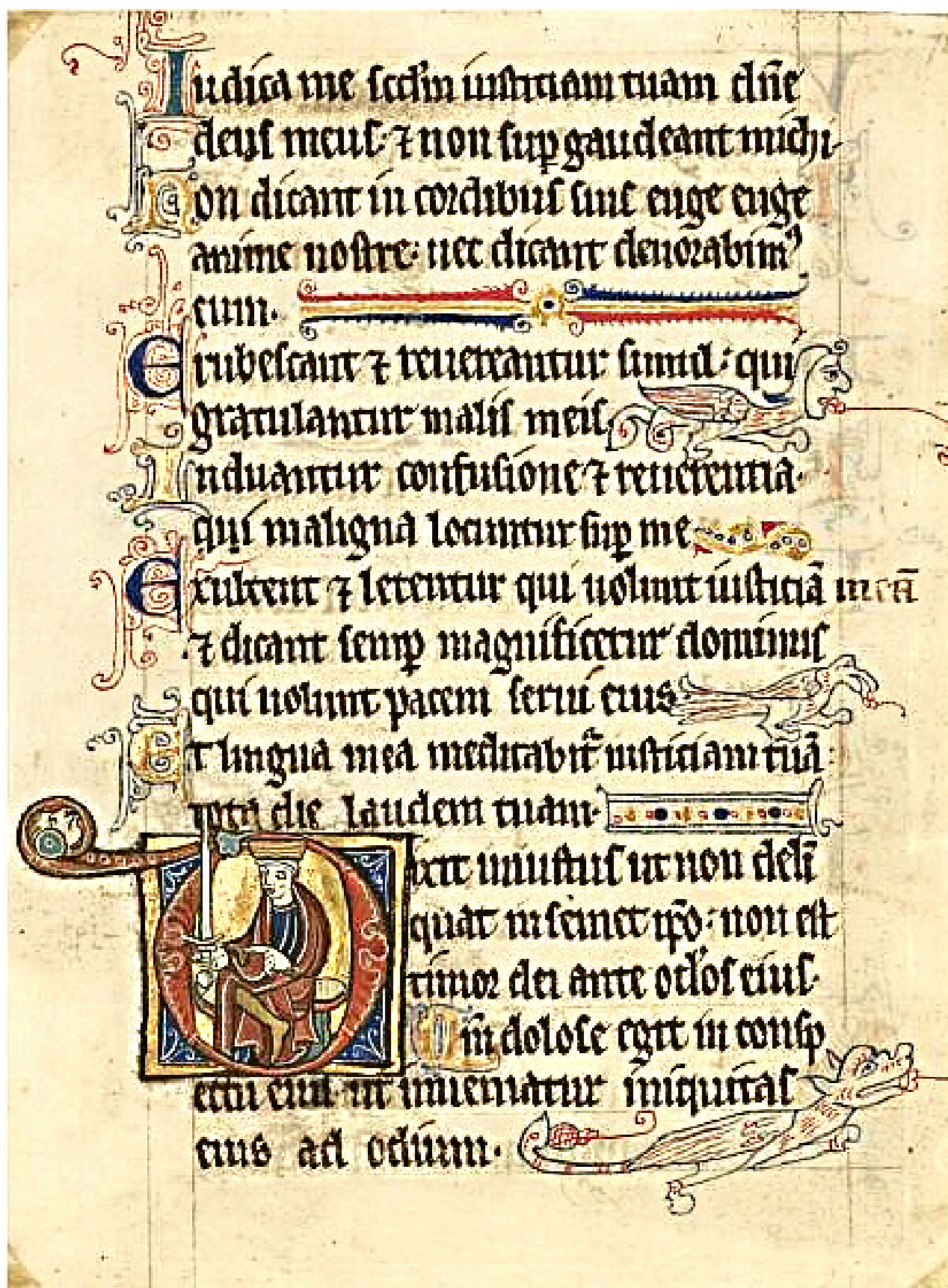


Fig. 1. *Recto* of a leaf with Psalm 34:24-28 and Psalm 35:2-3 with the characteristic initial, versal initials, non-figurative line-fillers and line-fillers in the shape of a human-headed monster, a bird, and a dragon. Modern pencil foliation at the top right corner (78).

A part of this dispersal was undertaken by Folio Fine Art, with leaves initially appearing there in their cat. 43 in February 1967, and the leaf foliated '202' inscription on its reverse recording their stock number 'MS 2617', and a price: '£10.10.'" in the Roger Martin Collection of Western Manuscripts auctioned at Bloomsbury, on 6 July 2021. Alan Thomas and Maggs also sold leaves in the 1960s, see P. Kidd, *The McCarthy Collection*, II, 2019, no. 20, and the list of known leaves in Sotheby's, 7 July 2015, lot 13.

As Sotheby's referred to Esther Rosenbaum as one of the previous owners of some leaves from this manuscript, the name was taken over by other sellers in the description of some sister leaves, but in a wrong form, as Astor Rosenbaum.

Since the name Rosenbaum rings familiar for the people interested in this manuscript, it seems appropriate to refer to it from now on as the *Rosenbaum Psalter-Hours*.

The Methodology applied to the reconstruction

Step 1: During the *recensio*, the following document types were collected, as illustrated with examples on the next pages: (1) digital fragments of a leaf (portraying mainly initials and line-fillers), (2) *recto* or *verso* of a leaf (in a relatively great proportion of the available material), (3) complete leaves *recto/verso*, and (4) a *bifolium*.

Web-based search engines made my work easier than expected with type 1 documents. As for type 2 documents, the digital objects mostly preserved traces of the writing on the other side of the leaves, especially initials at the beginning of the units, and also versal initials.



Fig. 2. Digital fragment (type 1) of a recto leaf from the Rosenbaum Psalter with historiated initial “S” and details of Psalm 127:6 and Psalm 128:1-3.

Fig. 3. Recto leaf (type 2) with most of the upper half missing, with historiated initial “I” and details of Psalm 118:90-96.



The latter were extremely useful in reconstructing the content of the verso leaf, thus making it possible to create type 5 of the documents, the reconstruction of the content of the verso leaves, not yet found.

Step 2: *eliminatio* has not yet been necessary with this manuscript, as the fragments are so distinctive that one can immediately decide even in case of low quality images whether he or she has already seen them or not, without spending time to deciphering the writing – thanks to the characteristic initials and line-fillers.

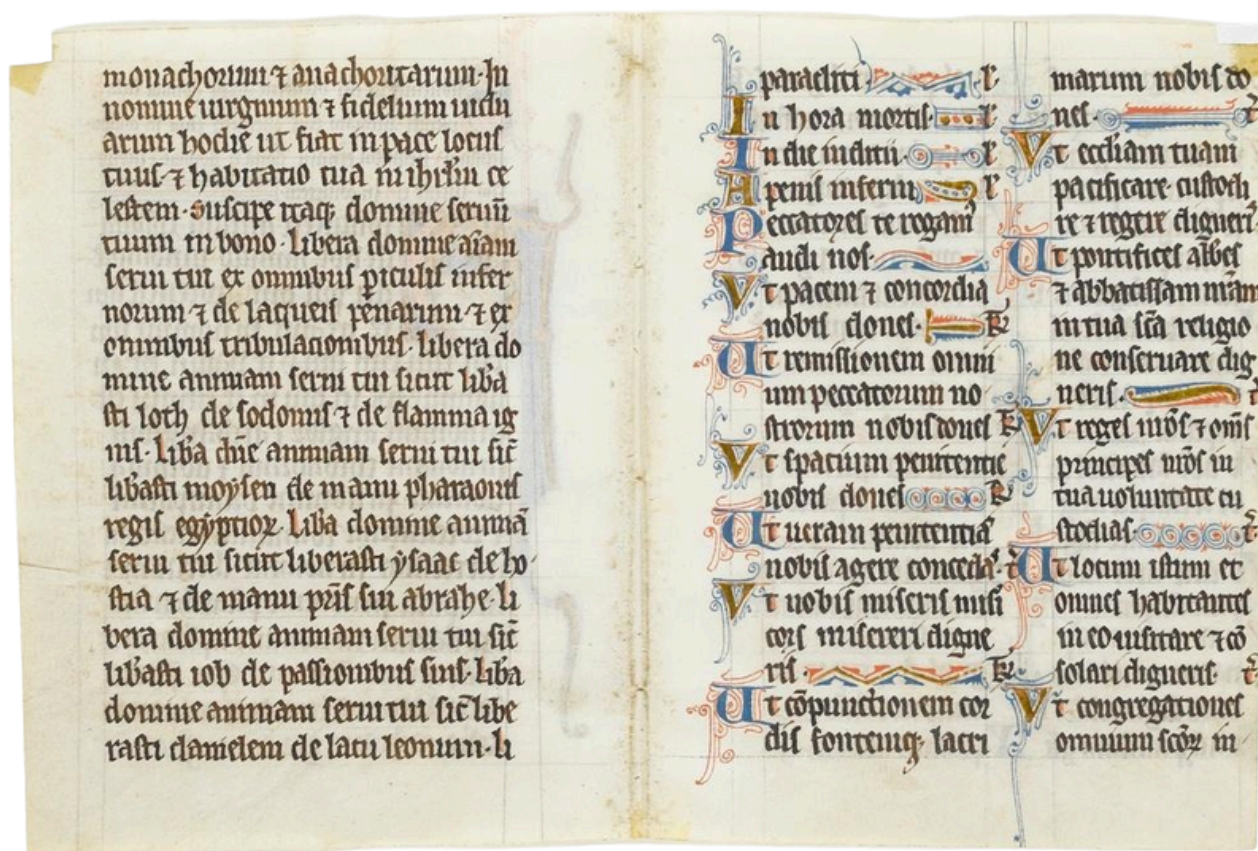


Fig. 4. One side of a *bifolium* (type 4) with part of the Office for the Dead (on the left, verso), and part of the Litany (on the right, recto). Text distributed into one and two columns.

C 1976/2593, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Graphische Sammlung.

Collecting duplicates of the same physical object has been intentional so far, to have different digital versions in different qualities.

To the best of my knowledge, there is no description found yet with the details of the manuscript in its state before its dismembering, so there is no guideline for us to reassemble the fragments of this specific manuscript. Thus, there are still uncertainties in steps 3 and 4. During step 3, *examinatio*, however, we might group the pages of the codex under digital reconstruction into the following categories:

- (1) recovered and obtained material (leaves that we know about and we possess them);
- (2) recovered but not obtained material (leaves the description of which we know from catalogues or other accounts, and perhaps having some thoughts where to locate them in the parent book even before focusing on *restitutio*);
- (3) reconstructed material, and
- (4) missing material (leaves we might expect at specific locations but have no information about them, or leaves we might not know about).

These are the categories which constitute the basis of step 4, *restitutio*.

Contents (as per the digital material retrieved so far and according to Peter Kidd's summary [2]):

Psalter: imperfect. Psalms without hymns or antiphons.

[2] Peter Kidd, *Medieval Manuscripts Provenance. Notes and Observations*. A Lavishly Illuminated 13th-Century Psalter-Hours Made for a Nun [II]. 13/06/2015, <https://mssprovenance.blogspot.com/2015/06/a-lavishly-illuminated-13th-century.html>.

Canticles: imperfect. Confitebor tibi – Ego dixi – Exsultavit cor meum – Cantemus Domino – Domine audiui.

Creeds: Athanasian Creed.

Litany: imperfect, with a partial list of saints.

Collects: Omnipotens sempiterne Deus – Deus cui omne cor – Omnipotens mitissime Deus – Deus regnorum omnium – Omnipotens sempiterne Deus – Deus qui iustificas impium – Familiam huius sacri coenobii – Exaudi Domine preces nostras – Presta quaesumus omnipotens Deus.

Hours of the Virgin: imperfect. Matins (Quem terra pontus – Psalm 8 – Psalm 23 – Lectio Prima – Lectio Secunda) – Lauds (Psalm 92 – Psalm 148 – Prayers following the Benedictus and the antiphon O admirabile) – Terce or Sext (Psalm 123 – Psalm 124 – Psalm 125 – Prayers) – Vespers (Psalm 109 – Psalm 112 – Psalm 121 – Psalm 126 – Psalm 147) – Compline (incl. Nunc dimittis).

Office for the Dead: imperfect. Prayers to be said over the newly dead – First nocturne(?) (Psalm 145 and prayers) – Second nocturne (Psalm 22 preceded by various prayers – Psalm 26 – Lectio quarta).

Hypotheses [3]

In case of a wealthy commissioner, luxurious Psalters of this era often contain a prefatory cycle with whole-page miniatures depicting scenes of stories from the Old Testament and the life of Jesus [4]. Similar single miniatures or blocks of miniatures might be expected at the major divisions of the book and at the distinguished psalms as well.

[3] As not all the leaves of the parent manuscript are available yet, the here presented ways of thinking might change their turn in case of obtaining more material in the future.

[4] Kristine E. Haney, *The Winchester Psalter: an Iconographic Study*. Leicester University Press: Leicester, 1986, pp. 47–69, Kathleen M. Openshaw, *Weapons in the Daily Battle. Images of the Conquest of Evil in the Early Medieval Psalter*. «The Art Bulletin», 75/1 (1993) p. 21.

However, as for now they are totally absent (hence they belong to our category of missing documents). Colleagues at Christie's, having a leaf with Psalm 12 at their disposal, with a modern pencil foliation placing it at folio 54, confirm its existence as "the eleven preceding psalms would have required no more than about twenty leaves: this suggests that in addition to a calendar, there may also have been a significant series of prefatory miniatures" [5]. The leaf containing Psalms 2 and 3 (Fig. 9 b), foliation at the top right corner (as number 47), further supports this theory.

Although no miniatures have yet been found from the Rosenbaum Psalter, it bears other traces about its structure. The visually distinguished incipit of Psalm 26 (Fig. 5), the similar visual emphasis at Psalm 52, and the absence of such a practice at the incipit of Psalm 51 refer to an eight-fold Psalter division [6].

With the Rosenbaum Psalter, specific difficulties arise regarding the origin of the manuscript. So far there is no trace of the Prefatory miniature cycle, the Calendar, and the Litany is imperfect. Though the list of the female saints in the latter might be more or less complete, it shows well why any hypotheses will remain inconclusive without the Calendar, as the listed names refer to England, North-East France and Flanders as well as a place of origin.

[5] Christie's, Live Auction 7590 Valuable Manuscripts and Printed Books, Lot 8, Three historiated initials on two leaves from a Psalter-Hours, in Latin, illuminated manuscript on vellum. 04/06/2008, https://www.christies.com/zh/lot/lot-5080702?lid=1&sc_lang=en.

[6] Chanoine V. Leroquais, *Les psautiers manuscrits latins des bibliothèques publiques de France*. Tome 1. Macon: Protat frères, 1940, p. xc; P. Kidd 2019 p. 108.



Fig. 5. *Recto* of a leaf with Psalms 37:19-22 and 38:2 and historiated initial (damaged), incipit in capitals. The visual distinction of the incipit of Psalm 38 might refer to a psalter with eight-fold division.

The more conventional, non-figurative line-fillers and penwork initials again do not help us in locating the manuscript, as they were commonly used in similar shapes and colour palette in the above-mentioned regions. The Hours of the Virgin, on the other hand, might show characteristics of the use of Sarum (Fig. 6).

Peter Kidd notes [7] that the prayer *Familiam huius sacri coenobii* in the Collects was rare in Psalters and Book of Hours, yet it does not restrict the candidates for the region of origin [8].



Recovered materials as per document types

- obtained digital fragments (further on df): 66
- total in leaves (as per *restitutio*): 36 leaves, out of which
- type 1 documents: 1 df
- type 2 documents: 29 dfs
- type 3 documents : 21 dfs
- type 4 documents : 2 dfs

[7] Peter Kidd, Medieval Manuscripts Provenance.

Notes and Observations. *A Lavishly Illuminated 13th-Century Psalter-Hours Made for a Nun* [III]. 20/01/2016, <https://mssprovenance.blogspot.com/2016/01/a-lavishly-illuminated-13th-century.html>.

[8] See e.g. the results of the search of this prayer at the Usuarium database (usuarium.elte.hu).

As for the owner of the codex, previous studies suggested that it was a woman, a nun, perhaps from a wealthy family and this theory seems to be firmly based in the details of both the text (Fig. 7) and the line-fillers (Fig. 8) where one finds dragons with a nun-like face.

As for its decoration, a not yet mentioned but close parallel may be found in the collection of the Trinity College in Cambridge. The East Anglian Psalter B.11.27 was made at around 1300 [10], that is, slightly later than our Psalter, but shows the same types of monster line-fillers in penwork together with similar non-figural line-fillers, almost identical versal initials, and the same type of uninhabited initials as the one at the beginning of Psalm 2 in our codex (Fig. 9 a and b). The human-headed dragon holds a reddish blob or ball in its mouth, just like the grotesque line-fillers which made the Rosenbaum Psalter so widely admired even in its dismembered state.

List of museums possessing a leaf or leaves from the manuscript

- Cleveland Museum of Art, Jeanne Blackburn collection
- Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Graphische Sammlung
- National Museum of Western Art, Naito Collection, Tokyo
- Trinity College Dublin

[10] See the description at the website of the Trinity College Cambridge, The James Catalogue of Western Manuscripts, with bibliography and the digitised version of the codex: <https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/Manuscript/B.11.27>.

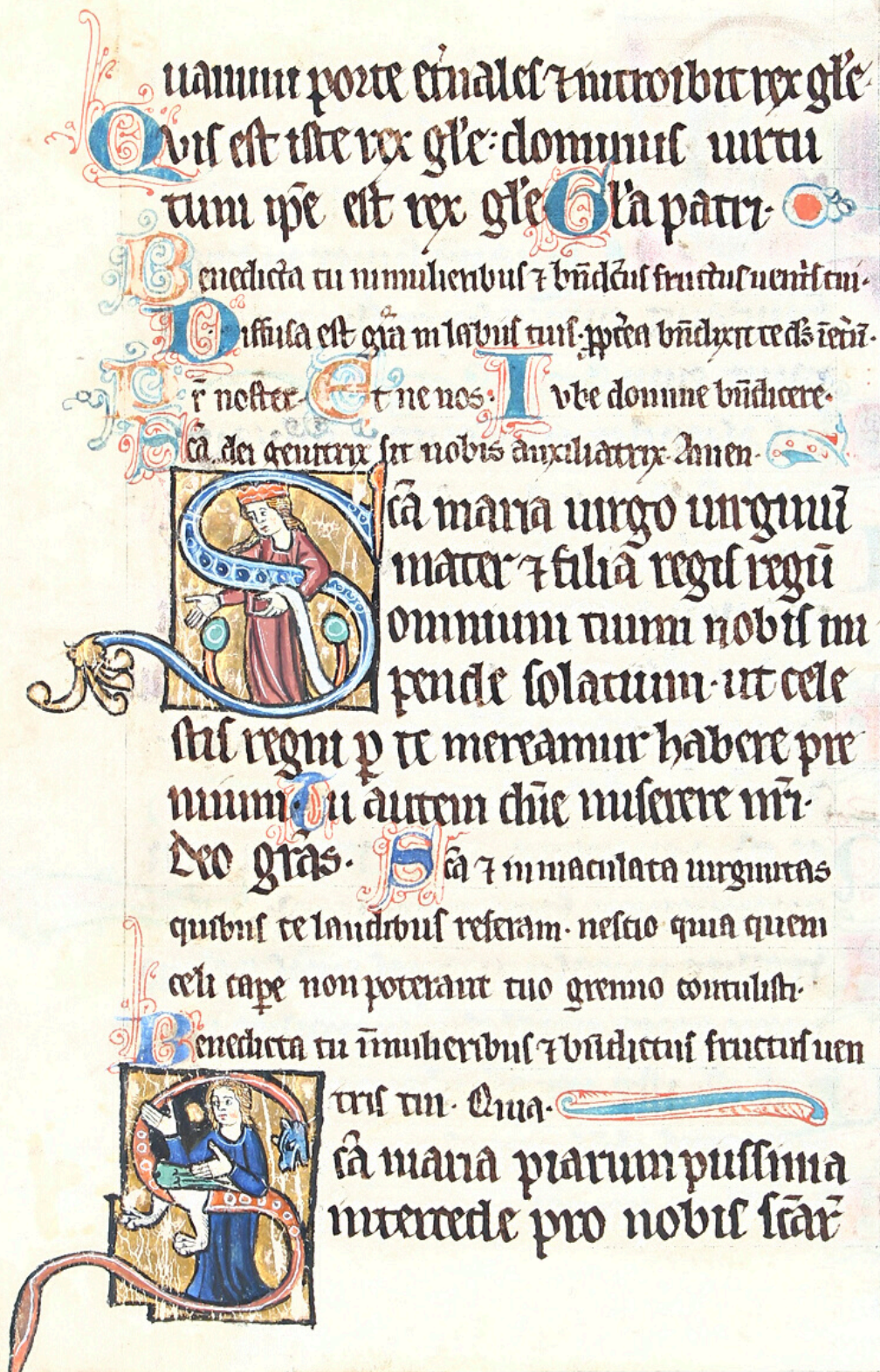


Fig. 6. Verso of a leaf with a detail of the Hours of the Virgin. Two types of writing, same hand, multiple flourish penwork initials per line. The content of this leaf reflects the use of Sarum.



Fig. 7. (a) Detail of Litany with “abbatissam n(ost)ram” (above, C 1976/2593, Staatsgalerie Stuttgart, Graphische Sammlung) and (b) detail of Collects with “familiam tuam abbatissimam n(ost)ram” (below). Based on this one might suppose that the owner was a woman.



Fig. 8. Dragon-shaped line fillers with the face of a nun. (a) Detail of Canticles (left), (b) detail of Psalm 77 (right, photo by Peter Kidd).

The annotated edition of the Rosenbaum Psalter-Hours will be released in 2023 by this same publisher. Those who would like to start browsing through the digitally (partially) reassembled manuscript can follow this link:

<https://www.receptioacademic.press/rosenbaumpsalter>

DOI: 10.55456/rosenbaumpsalter

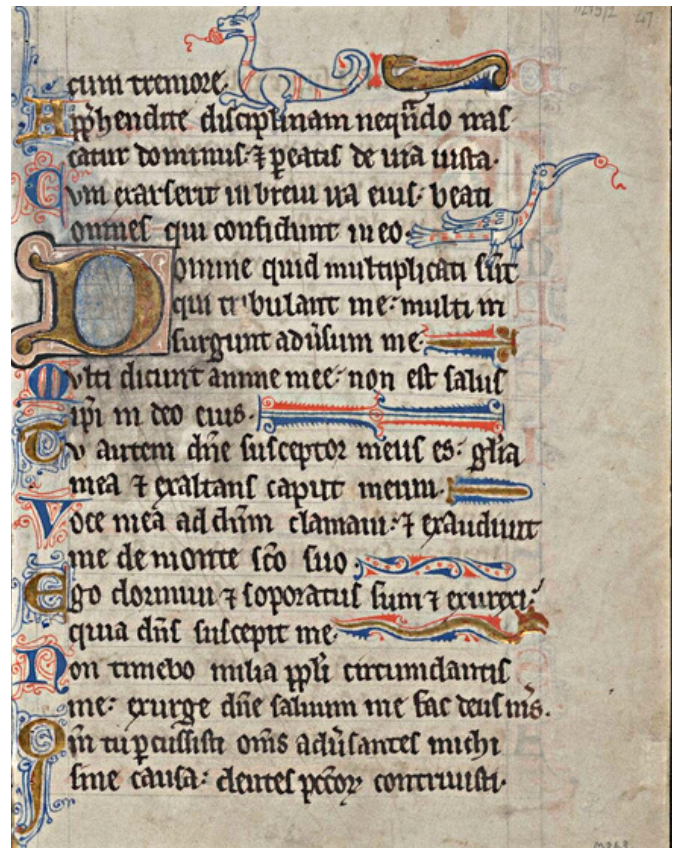
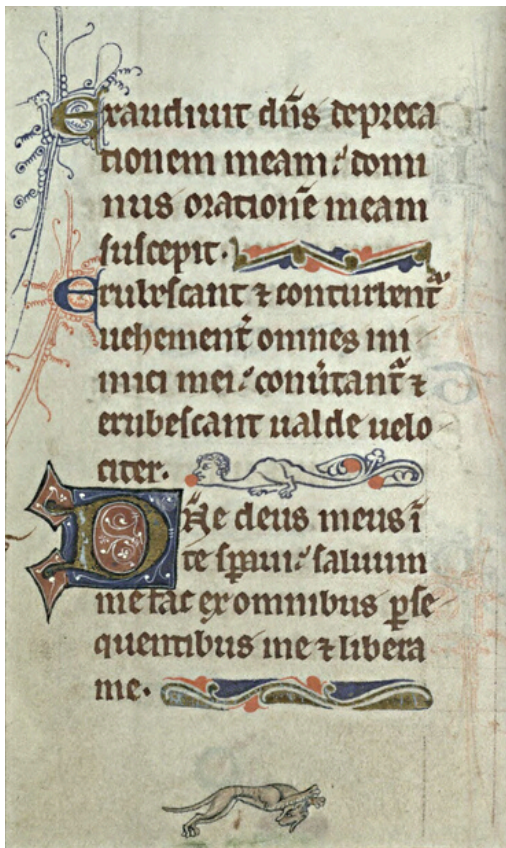


Fig. 9. (a) Psalm 6:10–11 and Psalm 7:2 in Psalter B.11.27 f.7v, Trinity College, Cambridge (left), and (b) Psalm 2:11–13 and 3:1–8 on the *recto* of a leaf from the Rosenbaum Psalter, Trinity College Dublin (right) with modern pencil foliation “47” at the top right corner.

Sources of Images

Fig. 1: <https://www.invaluable.com/auction-lot/f-a-seated-king-with-sword-large-historiated-init-19-c-lj1c2m8imi#>

Fig. 2: https://api.piasa.fr/cache/original/uploads/feuille-d-un-psautier-sur-v-lin-orn-de-troisiniti_586421_5b7c26578f305.jpg

Fig. 3: <https://www.swaen.com/uploads/37771.jpg>

Fig. 4: [https://swbexpo.bsz-bw.de/image/sgs?](https://swbexpo.bsz-bw.de/image/sgs?id=03D1BC4C96764C8E86C4E263A780BCF7&img=2&width=1000&mode=w)

[id=03D1BC4C96764C8E86C4E263A780BCF7&img=2&width=1000&mode=w](https://swbexpo.bsz-bw.de/image/sgs?id=03D1BC4C96764C8E86C4E263A780BCF7&img=2&width=1000&mode=w)

Fig. 5: <https://www.swaen.com/listing/illuminated-leaf-from-a-liturgical-psalter/26691>

Fig. 6: <https://www.reiss-sohn.de/en/lots/9454-A198-65/>

Fig. 7: (a) [https://swbexpo.bsz-bw.de/image/sgs?](https://swbexpo.bsz-bw.de/image/sgs?id=03D1BC4C96764C8E86C4E263A780BCF7&img=2&width=1000&mode=w)

[id=03D1BC4C96764C8E86C4E263A780BCF7&img=2&width=1000&mode=w](https://swbexpo.bsz-bw.de/image/sgs?id=03D1BC4C96764C8E86C4E263A780BCF7&img=2&width=1000&mode=w) and (b) <https://3.bp.blogspot.com/-cKbKhOVJCHQ/VpoxooqhSwI/AAAAAAAEjSo/Pig6XiitnMA/s1600/Zeleisi1.jpg>

Fig. 8: (a) <https://www.loeb-larocque.com/eshop/anonyme-illuminated-leaf-from-a-liturgical-psalter>

and (b) <https://mssprovenance.blogspot.com/2015/03/a-lavishly-illuminated-13th-century.html>

Fig. 9: (a) [https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/Manuscript/B.11.27/UV#?](https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/Manuscript/B.11.27/UV#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=28&r=0&xywh=-852%2C0%2C2874%2C1713)

[c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=28&r=0&xywh=-852%2C0%2C2874%2C1713](https://mss-cat.trin.cam.ac.uk/Manuscript/B.11.27/UV#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=28&r=0&xywh=-852%2C0%2C2874%2C1713) and (b) <https://pbs.twimg.com/media/FYgnWRKWAAAMWSP.jpg>

(All links consulted on 08/08/2022.)

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 v3 et equitibus eius in mare et reduxit super
 eos dominus aquas maris.
Illi autem israel ambulauerunt per siccum
 in medio eius.
 Domine audiui auditionem
 tuam et timui.
 Domine opus tuum: in me-
 dio annorum iustificata illud.
In medio annorum notum facies: cum iratus
 fueris misericordie recordaberis.
 Deus ab austro ueniet: et sanctus de monte pharaon
 erit celos gloria eius: et laudis eius plena terra.
 Splendor eius ut lux erit: cornua iuuantibus
 eius.
 Vbi abscondita est fortitudo eius: ante
 faciem eius ibit mors.
 Egrediatur diabolus ante pedes eius:
 stetit et mensus est terram.
 Asperxit et dissoluit gentes: et contriti sunt
 montes seculi.

Fig. 10. The Rosenbaum Psalter-Hours. Digital reconstruction