

‘St Omer’ or ‘Rede’ Psalter

2° f°: KL Martius habet
te sancto suo (fol. 8)

Parchment (HSOS). Fols: iii + 132 (numbered 1-131, but an unnumbered leaf after fol. 16) + i (numbered fol. 132). Overall: 235mm x 173mm; writing area: 154mm x 110+mm. In long lines, 22 lines to the page. Rare signs of four prick-holes in bottom margin, in line with vertical bounding lines and marking the extra tramlines added in that margin; bounded and ruled in black ink with the middle line of the text block usually extending to edges of the folio. Written in gothic textura semiquadrata (early portions in *precissa*). Punctuation by point and *punctus elevatus*. This manuscript is discussed in detail by Rowena E. Archer, ‘Piety, Chivalry and Family: the Cartulary and Psalter of Sir Edmund Rede of Boarstall (d. 1489)’ in Peter Coss and Christopher Tyerman ed., *Soldiers, Nobles and Gentlemen: essays in honour of Maurice Keen* (Woodbridge, 2009), 126-49.

CONTENTS

1. Fols 1-6^v: A calendar in black and red.

Includes ‘*Erkenbodis episcopi*’ (12 April), in black; ‘*festiuitas sancti audomari*’ (8 June), in red; ‘*Bertini abbatis*’ (5 September) in red; ‘*Inuentio sancti audomari episcopi*’ (21 October), in black; Becket expunged, as are all references to the pope, but also (as noted by Archer, 140) in a moment of over-zealousness, at 4 July the name of the apostle Thomas.

2. Fols 7-119^v: ‘*Beatus uir qui non abiit in consilio impiorum et in uia peccatorum -- laudate eum in cymbalis iubilationis omnis spiritus laudet dominum*’.

The Psalter.

3. Fols 119^v-131: ‘*psalmus dauid* Confitebor tibi domine quoniam iratus es michi conuersus est furor tuus --- Lumen ad reuelationem gentium et gloriam plebis tue israel’.

The twelve canticles, ‘*Benedicite*’ preceding ‘*Benedictus*’ (fols 127^v-28) and with the Athanasian creed preceding ‘*Magnificat*’ and ‘*Nunc dimittis*’ at the end (fols 130^v-31). There are only two written lines on fol. 131, and the verso is blank.

COLLATION 1⁶ 2-11¹² 12⁶. No catchwords or signatures.

TEXTUAL PRESENTATION AND DECORATION Headings in red. At the opening of each psalm, a two-line *champe* (a large three-line example at Ps. 119, the head of the Gradual Psalms, fol. 105) in gold leaf on blue and violet, some with animal shapes (lion or eagle) or geometric swirls in white inside the letter, with an extended bar border of the same. At the versals, alternate one-line lombards, blue with red flourishing and gold leaf with blue flourishing. At the opening of the Psalter and of the Nocturns, six- and seven-line historiated *champs* with a *demivinet* (eight-line with a *vinet* at the incipit), a bar in gold leaf, blue, and violet, typically with additional ‘secular’ figures or *babwynes* on the bottom horizontal bar and/or in lower margins. Line fillers relatively plain, in red, blue, and gold leaf. In the calendar, *champs* with extended bar borders.

The historiated initials, images on a gold leaf ground, include:

Fol. 7 (Ps. 1): above, David harping with a psaltery-player; below, beheading Goliath

Fol. 22^v (Ps. 26): God anointing David king

Fol. 33^v (Ps. 38): king David, gesturing at his face to indicate his 'custodia lingue', being instructed by God

Fol. 44 (Ps. 52): Christ, with upraised finger, instructing the 'insipiens', who is carrying a stone and a cudgel

Fol. 54^v (Ps. 68): above, God holding the world, with king David praying out of the waters that 'intraerunt ad animam meam', with in bottom margin drollery of a lancer spearing a bare-bottomed man through the anus.

Fol. 68 (Ps. 80): king David rejoicing with musical instruments (horn, harp, and psaltery), playing bells with mallets

Fol. 80 (Ps. 97): three monks singing the 'canticum nouum' from a choir book on a lectern

Fol. 93 (Ps. 109): the Trinity speaking, the first two persons seated beneath a descending dove

Alison Stones, *A Survey of Manuscripts Illuminated in France. Gothic Manuscripts 1260-1320*, 2 parts in 4 vols (London, 2013-14), i/2:210-11 discusses the illumination in detail; she proposes that it 'is a hitherto unrecorded instance of collaboration between the Saint-Omer artist and the Douai painter', taking the first to be responsible for *Beatus* initial at fol. 8 (drawing a parallel with Paris: Bibliothèque d' Arsenal, MS 3516) and the latter, to whom she also attributes Brussels: Bibliothèque Royale, MS 9391 and Valenciennes: Bibliothèque municipale, MS 838, for all other interventions. She speculates that her Douai painter may have taken over after the death of the Saint-Omer artist. She places the work to 'c. 1275-1285', taking 1290 as the *terminus post quem non* since an obit to Eleanor, queen of England, who died in that year, is added (see PROVENANCE). She reproduces as fol. 7 and details of 54^v and 93 as i/1: plates 392-394. See also AT no. 702 (70) and plate xl (fol. 7); Scott, 1:76 n23 (referring to 1:55) apparently considers our manuscript of English manufacture and describes its iconographic programme as of an old style.

BINDING Brown leather over millboards, s. xvi, gold stamped: in an inner rectangle corner-pieces and an armorial centrepiece, providing the arms of John Whitgift as archbishop of Canterbury, 1583-1604, using his Stamp 3 as defined by the British Armorial Binding database [last accessed 15th December 2015]. Sewn on five thongs. In the act of re-binding for Whitgift, the folios were cut down, with some loss of illumination at the top of fol. 7; the fore-edges of the leaves were also gilded. Those fore-edges have painted onto them 'MS F 12'. Pastedowns modern paper, a ChCh bookplate on the front pastedown. At the front, two modern paper flyleaves and one modern vellum one; at the rear, one modern paper flyleaf (132). On the medieval binding this replaced, see PROVENANCE; from that earlier period, still *in situ* are all the remains of small tabs at the edge of fol. 33 and 93, suggestive that of the devotional use of the volume.

PROVENANCE An early learned attempt to reconstruct this manuscript's early history is provided by a letter, kept with the manuscript, dated 15th August 1902, and from the musicologist and scholar of liturgy H(enry) M(arriott) Bannister (1854-1919). He proposes a St Bertin origin and states 'I believe it to be older than is stated in Dr Kitchin's catalogue [saec. xiv. vel xv.]. The terminus a quo, as evidenced by the Kalendar, is AD. 1255 (canonization of St. Clara), and the absence of St. Louis the King (canonized in 1297) ... usually suggests the 13th century. And this is borne out by the added obit of our Queen Eleanor (†1290); as she was buried at Westminster and had no special French connexion, I think that the ms. must have got to London before the beginning of the 14th century.' These perspicacious comments can be augmented and revised. The calendar certainly points toward production for use in St Omer or its neighbourhood, through the inclusion of saints related to the abbey found at Sithiu (present St Omer) by Omer (d. 667)

himself and whose first abbot, Bertin (d. 698) gave it the name by which is known, and with Erkembode (d. 742) a later abbot.

The date of the manuscript's arrival in England cannot be stated with as much certainty as Bannister attempted. Alison Stones suggests (i/2:210) that the obit for Eleanor, wife of Edward I (27 November) is contemporaneous with the text and may have been added in France, since she was Countess of Ponthieu. While this should be rejected – the wording, 'Obitus Elianore consortae Edward regis Anglⁱ', emphasises her English connexions and appears to be by an English hand (?s. xiv^m) – the evidence cannot confirm an early move across the Channel. More revealing of its early use are the two additions to the calendar, both relating to Saint Dominic (noted by Archer, 139); Stones points out that the date of the second feast (5 August) suggests a French origin as, in England, the feast fell on 4 August.

If, then, its earliest use is connected with friars in France, it seems it was in England by the early fourteenth century and, certainly, by the fifteenth century, it was in non-religious English ownership. There is a set of additions to the calendar in secretary, all associated with Sir Edmund Rede the younger of Boarstall, Bucks. (1413-89). These extend chronologically from the death of his father, also Edmund, in 1430 (8 October) to a note of his being knighted in 1465 (the foot of the page for May). Included, under 21 November, is a notice of Rede's marriage to Agnes, daughter of Sir John Cottesmore of Baldwin Brightwell, Oxon. (1435); Cottesmore was lord chief justice, his death noted under 30 August (1439). For further biographical particulars on Rede, see *The Boarstall Cartulary*, ed. H. E. Salter, OHS 88 (1930), ix-x; Josiah C. Wedgwood and Anne D. Holt, *History of Parliament: Biographies of Members of the Commons House 1439-1509* (London, 1936), 711-12, and White Kennett, *Parochial Antiquities Attempted in the History of Ambrosden . . .*, rev. edn, 2 vols (Oxford, 1818), 2:313-407 passim (with material tracing the lordship of Boarstall from Rede to 1634 at 407).

Rede's will, printed Salter, 286-95, provides an extremely extensive account of his library, at least two dozen books receiving mention. This MS was probably among the books Rede left his grandson and heir William, which include 'duo psalteria mea cum duobus clapsis de argento et deauratum pounced cum capitibus unicornuum' (Archer (140) is surely wrong in identifying this medium quarto volume with the 'psalterium valde minimum' mentioned). Salter notes that this was the device of the Jameses, Rede's mother Christine's family (cf. her obit, 28 March 1435, in the calendar); this evidence of its binding prior to the late sixteenth century may help us surmise the ownership in the generations immediately before it reached Edmund Rede's hands.

Among surviving Rede books, in addition to the Boarstall Cartulary (in private hands), are BL, MSS Cotton Nero C.iii (Nicholas Upton) and Harley 3490 (an outsized *Confessio amantis*), both mentioned in the will. See A. I. Doyle, 'English Books In and Out of Court from Edward III to Henry VII', Scattergood-Sherborne, 163-81 at 175-76; Kate Harris in Jeremy Griffiths and Derek Pearsall ed., *Book Production and Publishing in Britain 1375-1475* (Cambridge, 1989), 168, and Derek Pearsall, 'The Rede (Boarstall) Gower: British Library, MS Harley 3490', Griffiths FS, 87-99.

Our knowledge of the subsequent history of the book is incomplete. There is a signature 'Jesus Ben' Brasgerdle' (fol. 131^v, s. xv/xvi), presumably an owner after the volume left the Rede family. By the end of the sixteenth century, as shown by the presence of the arms on the binding, this manuscript was in the collection of John Whitgift, archbishop of Canterbury. The shelfmark at the fore-edge, however, is not (Prof. James Carley tells us) in a style used in his library, and it also does not come from ChCh, where the seventeenth-century collection did not run to a set of 'F' manuscripts. So, this shelf-mark is evidence for intermediate ownership between the archbishop and its present location.

It is unclear precisely when this manuscript arrived at ChCh: it does not contain a note of donation nor is it recorded in the Donors' Register (MS LR 1). The earliest internal evidence for ChCh's ownership of the volume is the New Library shelfmark 'E.12', written by Edward Smallwell at the front pastedown and the foot of fol. 1. Another book once belonging to Archbishop Whitgift, a printed Book of Common Prayer (London: Christopher Barker, [1583?]) with his annotations, came to ChCh and is held as MS 336; it was part of the bequest of another archbishop of Canterbury, William Wake. This Psalter, however, is not listed in Wake's schedule (MS 352/8), and, indeed, its presence in the New Library catalogue – which excludes the Wake collection (see Appendix IV) – demonstrates that it must have arrived by a different route. In fact, the 1676 catalogue has an entry for 'Psalmi etiam latine 4^o' and, of the manuscripts now *in situ*, this is the only possible match (Appendix I, [23]). Given the Donors' Register is fairly full for the Restoration period, as it is for the 1610s, and considering the other evidence we have, the most plausible period for our manuscript's arrival would be the second quarter or the very middle of the seventeenth century. Perhaps its exit from the institutional library which had a shelfmark added to the fore-edge was related to the upheavals caused by the Interregnum and it came to this redoubt of royalism for safe-keeping.

Version date: 15th December 2015