## MOINES ET MONIALES DANS L'ORDRE DES CHARTREUX :

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## The Music Manuscripts of the Nuns of Mont-Sainte-Marie de Gosnay

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Mont-Sainte-Marie de Gosnay is unique in that many of their music manuscripts have been preserved, in contrast to almost none from the other charterhouses for nuns. Among these manuscripts five Antiphonaries from the charterhouse have been preserved. One of these is in the Grey collection of the National Library in Cape Town. There are also in existence four small manuscripts from Mont-Sainte-Marie containing the rite of the consecration of virgins. These nine manuscripts are of particular interest, since they show that at Mont-Saint-Marie only the chants of Lauds and Vespers, but not of Matins, were sung, and that during the rite of the consecration of the virgins, not only the insignia specified in the Roman Pontifical, the veil, the ring and the crown, were conferred, but also a maniple, a stole and a silver or gold cross.

The signature of a nun on the first page of MS Cape Town Grey 3c23, made it possible to determine the provenance of the manuscript as the Charterhouse of Mont-Sainte-Marie de Gosnay. It also made it possible to locate two similar manuscripts in France and two in what is now Montenegro. All these manuscripts are Antiphonaries for Lauds, the Daily Hours and Vespers which had been given to nuns at the Charterhouse of Mont-Sainte-Marie when they took their vows. They are the only extant Carthusian Antiphonaries in manuscript for Lauds and Vespers. All are dated around 1540.

MSG 3c23 is part of the Grey Collection of the National Library in Cape Town. The Grey Collection is a collection of manuscripts and printed books donated in 1861 to what is now the National Library by Sir George Grey (1812 – 1898), who was governor of the Cape Colony from 1854 to 1861. Grey bought the manuscript from Henry Bohn in England in 1858. On the front flyleaf of the manuscript is

the bookplate of Edward Vernon Utterson, a literary antiquary, whose library was sold at Sotheby's in 1852.

The name "Soeur Marie Utens" is written on fol. 1r in a later script than the rest of the manuscript. The date 1538 appears on fol. 126v at the end of the Temporal and before the Dedication of the church in the hand of the original scribe. The date is consistent with the script and the notation as well as the illuminations and border decorations. The provenance of the manuscript is nowhere mentioned.

It is a volume of 179 vellum folios, ruled in feint brown ink. The measurements are  $213 \times 146 \times 47$  mm. It is notated.

It was possible to establish the history of Sister Marie Utens because of the existence of MS Sélignac 45, formerly in the Chartreuse of Sélignac, near Simandre, France. Since the Chartreuse of Sélignac no longer exists, the manuscript is now in the library of the Grande Chartreuse. A portion of this manuscript, entitled *Le Mont-Sainte-Marie, moniales de Gosnay*, written by Abbé Ingold, towards the end of the nineteenth century, recounts the history of the Utens family. The manuscript also contains a necrology of the Charterhouse, by P. Bastin. Sister Marie Utens was born, probably in Béthune, in 1599. Since she was fifteen, she wanted to enter Mont-Sainte-Marie, and she took her vows at sixteen, when MSG 3c23 was probably given to her. Her two sisters, Augustine and Constance, joined her at the Charterhouse some years later. Marie died on 25 January, 1643. Augustine and Constance died in 1682. The father of the three nuns, Jaspard Utens, was a son of one of the first families of Louvain, but left that city for Béthune in 1570. He married Elizabeth Macron of Béthune. In 1636 he added a codicil to his will in which he left '60 florins to my three daughters who are Carthusian nuns in Gosnay, for a Responsory and other necessities'.<sup>1</sup> This 'Responsory' could not be traced, but it probably contained Responsories for Matins to supplement the Antiphonary belonging to Marie.

In MSG 3c23, the first page of the feast of St Mary Magdalene is particularly lavishly decorated. The illuminated letter "M" shows a royal figure, a Carthusian monk kneeling at his feet. An illumination in the first letter of an office is usually reserved for the saint whose office it is. After a careful analysis it emerged, however, that this was Saint Louis (Louis IX of France, 1214 - 1270). He wears a white robe, probably representing a cassock, the red dalmatic of the deacon and a mantle with fleur-de-lis and a collar of ermine, closed in front like an old-fashioned chasuble. He wears the chain of the Order of St Michael, created by King Louis XI in 1469, and has a coronet on his blonde hair. He carries a sceptre in his left hand, and in his right the instruments of the passion. One can distinguish the three nails, behind which one might suppose the crown of thorns would be: these are the traditional attributes of St Louis.<sup>2</sup>

St Louis was the patron of the scribe and miniaturist, Dom Loys de Villebecq, vicar of Mont-Sainte-Marie, Ms AGC C II 817 but not in MSG 3c23. A comparison of the script of the two manuscripts shows that Brother Loys was also the scribe of MSG 3c23. St Mary Magdalene was the patron of Dame Magdelaine Bornicourt, who was apparently the first owner of MSG 3c23. She is the only nun with the name of Magdalene who entered the cloister in the 16<sup>th</sup> century before 1538. It seems plausible that the Antiphonary was written for her. Dame Magdelaine appears in the accounts of Mont-Sainte-Marie of 1544 (p. 377): "Dame Magdelaine Bornicourt... 12 Livres per year." Dom Loys chose the office of St Mary Magdalene to present himself at the feet of his patron.<sup>3</sup> According to MS Sélignac 39 (dated between 1361 and 1411), a Calendar of Mont-Sainte-Marie the feast of St Louis was celebrated there with twelve lessons.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Un Chartreux (Dom B. Gaillard) Soeur Marie Utens, moniale de la Chartreuse de Gosnay et l'antiphonaire de Gosnay, MS Cape Town Grey 3c23, typescript, 1994, pp. 1 and 2; L. le Vasseur, Ephemerides ordinis Cartusiensis, vol. 1, Montreuil: Notre Dame des Prés, 1890, pp. 119-120. Gaillard quotes Abbot Ingold, Le Mont-Sainte-Marie, moniales de Gosnay, MS Sélignac 45, pp. 341-344, and P. Bastin, La Chartreuse du Mont-Sainte-Marie de Gosnay, Necrology, MS Sélignac 45, p.35. <sup>2</sup> Un Chartreux, Soeur Marie Utens, pp. 17 and 18; P.C. Cahier, Caractéristiques des Saints dans l'art populaire, vol. 2. Paris: Poussielque, 1867, pp. 638, 836.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Un Chartreux, Soeur Marie Utens, p.18.

#### MS AGC C II 817

MS CII 817 of the Grande Chartreuse is, like MSG 3c23, fully notated. On the flyleaf at the end of the manuscript is written in the same Gothic hand as the rest of the manuscript: "The book belongs to sister Anne de Monchy, nun of the cloister of St Mary at Gosnay, written by Brother Loys de Villebecq, humble vicar of the monastery above, 1537" (my translation).

On the binding of MS C II 817 one can find in letters of gold "Dame Chaterine (sic) (F)asse Religieuse aux Dames de Gosnay 1600". In MS Sélignac 45 the name of Sister Catherine Fasse appears in the list of nuns of the Charterhouse of Monte-Sainte-Marie, and in the minutes of the General Chapter of 1634 one finds "Obiit Soror Catherine Fasser (or perhaps "Falson") moniales domus Gosnay". The date 1600 could have been the date when she took her vows.

Two of the miniatures in the two manuscripts show a marked similarity. The illumination on fol. 87r (Vigil of Easter) of MS C II 817 is identical to that on fol. 85v in MSG 3c23. The "A" of "*Alleluia*" shows Christ with a hat and a spade, appearing in the garden before St Mary Magdalene, who is carrying a jar of perfume. The same illumination also appears in MS Pleterje 4, fol.85r, but there Christ does not wear a hat.

The two Antiphonaries are from the same period: 1537 and 1538.

#### MS Caen, Mus. des Beaux-arts, coll. Mancel 242

The third almost identical manuscript is MS Caen, Mus. des Beaux-arts, coll. Mancel 242, which has on the last page the inscription:

"This book is for the use of Dame Jacqueline de Mons, nun of the church and monastery of the Carthusian order and sacristan of this church. (The manuscript) was written by Brother Jehan de Marissal, a Carthusian monk of the convent of Montreuil in the year 1549."

The scribe was therefore not the same as for the other two manuscripts. The ductus of Dom Jehan Marissal's handwriting has a pronounced slant to the left and a very distinctive "s" although he apparently tried to adapt to the earlier manuscripts. Dom Jean Marissal had the reputation of being an excellent scribe. "Dom Jean Marissal, as appears from his competency and the excellence of his miniatures is a master of his art. He transcribed numerous manuscripts, and was considered one of the most celebrated miniaturists of the time."<sup>4</sup>

Dame Jacqueline de Mons was the sacristan of Mont-Sainte-Marie de Gosnay when the Antiphonary destined to be used by her was copied. Some years later, in 1560, at the death of Sister Marguerite de Licques, she succeeded her in the office of cellarer. Sister Jacqueline died while holding that office in 1568 or 1569, as is testified to by the Charta of the General Chapter.<sup>5</sup>

Although similar in appearance and content to the other two manuscripts, the Caen manuscript differs from them not only in regard to the script, but also in other respects. It has three full-page illustrations which the others do not have. The only historiated miniature in the manuscript does not seem to have

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Un Chartreux (Dom B. Gaillard), Antiphonaire de Dame Jacqueline de Mons, typescript, 1995, 2; Abb Lefebvre, La Chartreuse de Notre-Dame des Près, à Neuville sous Montreuil, Montreuil, Notre-Dame des Près, 1881, pp. 83, 124, 125,126, 396 and 445.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Un Chartreux (Dom B. Gaillard), Antiphonaire de Dame Jacqueline de Mons, typescript, 1995, p.2.

been painted by the miniaturist who decorated the other two manuscripts, although an attempt was made to adapt to the same style.

On the whole, MS Caen seems to have been more carefully written than the other manuscripts. Although there are mistakes that have been corrected, they are fewer than in the other manuscripts. It is clear that the Caen manuscript was not copied from the others, nor from the same exemplar.

#### Chartreuse de Pleterje, MS 4

MS Pleterje 4 is almost identical to the other Antiphonaries. Like MS Caen, the scribe was Dom Jehan Marissal, but MS Pleterje 4 precedes MS Caen by three years.

On the last page of the manuscript is the inscription:

"This book is the property of sister Franchoise de la Haye, nun of the Carthusian order in the house of St Mary at Gosnay at Bethune written by Brother Jehan Marissal in the year of grace 1546". This is followed by an inscription in a much less neat and later hand: "This book belongs to a Carthusian lady of Gosnay at Bethune".

Dame Françoise de la Haye entered Mont-Sainte-Marie towards 1531. She appears in 1544 in a list of nuns, in the Register of Revenues of the house.<sup>6</sup> She was the daughter of the "noble Jehan de la Haye, exuier", who promised to pay for his daughter an annual sum of forty livres. In addition to the Antiphonary which Dom Jean Marissal copied for her in 1546, he also wrote for her in 1558 a manual for the Consecration of the Virgin. Sister Françoise died on 21 October 1571 after a long illness.<sup>7</sup>

The general style of the illuminations indicate the same artist as in MSG 3c23 and MS AGC CII 817. The miniaturist was possibly Dom Loys de Villebecq, the scribe and possible miniaturist of MSG 3c23 and MS AGC CII 817.

#### **MS Pleterje 2**

MS Pleterje 2 is again almost identical to the other manuscripts. This is another manuscript written by Jehan Marissal, dated 1548.

#### The colophon on the last page reads:

"The present book is for the use of sister Marie de la Fosse, professed nun of Mont St Marie at Gosnay of the Carthusian Order. Written by brother Jehan Marissal, who is a Carthusian monk, professed of the convent of Montreuil. At the instance, entreaty and request of lady Anne Camp, mistress of the same sister Marie. In the year of grace fifteenhundred and fortyeight. 1548."

On the flyleaf of the manuscript one finds written in very large letters in a late Gothic hand "To Dame Marie le Vasseur".

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> MS Sèlignac 45, Les Archives du Mont Sainte Marie de Gosnay, p.377.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Le Vasseur, *Ephemeride*, vol. 4, p.22.

According to MS Sélignac 45 the death of Marie le Vasseur was announced by the General Chapter in 1624, with the addition "after 67 years of exemplary life in the order", which places her entry into the order in 1557. Sister Marie de la Fosse entered the Charterhouse as a nun in 1547 and her death was announced by the General Chapter in 1610 under the shortened form "Maria Fosse".<sup>8</sup>

Sister Marie de la Fosse also figures on a list of amounts paid to the Charterhouse in MS Sélignac 45: "20 livres by her father Jehan de la Fosse, attorney at court at Arras". She was therefore the daughter of a wealthy lawyer.<sup>9</sup>

There are no illuminations in this manuscript.

These five manuscripts contain no chants for Matins at all. They do, however, contain most of the Antiphons and Responsories for Lauds, the Daily Hours and Vespers. Chants for the Daily Hours, although given in incipit, are mostly not notated. They are the only extant Carthusian chant books for Lauds and Vespers I could find.

The reason for the existence of these books is probably that at Mont-Sainte-Marie only Lauds, the Daily Hours and Vespers were sung. It is therefore understandable that the nuns of this charterhouse would have separate books for these offices. No manuscripts originating from Mont-Sainte-Marie containing Matins could be found, although quite a number of other manuscripts from this Charterhouse have been preserved. During the years 1530 to 1550 there were seven Charterhouses for nuns. There are no extant Antiphonaries for Lauds and Vespers for any of the other six Charterhouses for nuns.

In an ordinance "for the direction of nuns" dated 19 May 1677 Dom le Masson (Prior of the Grande Chartreuse, 1675- 1703) formally allowed all nuns to recite the chants for Matins, except on solemn feasts such as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, Corpus Christi, Assumption, St Bruno and All Saints. Lauds and Vespers had to be sung on all occasions. The vicar of a Charterhouse for nuns could, however, permit them to sing Matins at his discretion, provided that this would not tire them unduly.<sup>10</sup> Dom le Masson would have been aware of the practice at Gosnay to sing only the chants for Lauds and Vespers, since he was visitator for the Province of Picardy.<sup>11</sup>

All the manuscripts are notated in the square notation which was common at the time.

The most important feature of the music in the Gosnay manuscripts is the inclusion of two Antiphons, in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> modes, for the Liturgy of St Genevieve. The Antiphons could not be found in any of the 28 Carthusian Antiphonaries in manuscript of the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries, studied, nor in the printed *Antiphonarium Diurnum* of 1898, except for manuscripts of Gosnay. There are 67 known extant Carthusian Antiphonaries in manuscript, from the twelfth to the seventeenth centuries. According to Dom Gabriel van Dijck, of the Grande Chartreuse, who has had insight into even more Antiphonaries, the office of St Genevieve is not present in any other Antiphonary.<sup>12</sup>

The feast of St Genevieve is not mandatory in the Carthusian order. It is not mentioned in Carthusian Calendars, not even in the Calendars of Gosnay (MSS Sélignac 38 and 57).<sup>13</sup> Her presence in the Antiphonaries written for the Charterhouses of Gosnay might have been due to unrest and disease in the region at the time and was certainly the result of a special dispensation for Gosnay. Dom le Masson in his ordinance of 1677 forbade prayers and devotions which were not prescribed by the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> MS Sélignac 45, Dom A. Devaux, communication, 20 January 2000.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Dom Gabriel van Dijck, communication, 25 January 2001.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Dom Gabriel van Dijck, communication, 19 April 2002; Georgius Schwengel, *Propago Ordinis Cartusiensis, Aparatus ad t.11*, Analecta Cartusiana 90/2, 1981, p. 240.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Dom Gabriel van Dijck, communication, 25 January 2001.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Dom B. Gaillard, communication, 23 July 1994, Dom Gabriel van Dijck, communication, 25 January 2001, MSS Sélignac 38 and 57.

Statutes, but specified that in cases of public emergency a text specified by the vicar of the nuns could be used.

In MSG 3c23 the liturgy in honour of St Genevieve appears on fol. 171v - 172r and in MS AGC in exactly the same place, on fol. 171v and 172 r, in both manuscripts between the Gloria Patri in 8 tones and a liturgy for Presentation, near the end of the manuscripts. In MS Pleterje 4 it appears at the end of the manuscript on fol. 180r and 180v. In MS Pleterje 2 and MS Caen it appears between Sabbato Sancto and Vigilia Sancti Pasche on fol. 78v - 79r and 69r and 69v respectively. It would therefore seem that the liturgy of St Genevieve, while initially added at the end of the earlier manuscripts was incorporated into the contents of the two later ones. The liturgy consists of two Antiphons, each followed by one versicle. They are followed by a prayer.

Two other manuscripts from Gosnay containing the Antiphons and prayer for St Genevieve were found. The one is Pleterje 5, a very small volume of 9 by 13,5 cm., and 87 folios. The small size excludes the possibility that it would have been used in the choir. The Carthusian statutes forbid that a book should be held in the hand in the stalls except by the weekly priest and the precentor during the parts where they sing alone.

A colophon on fol. 87v reads that the volume was copied by Dom Jean Marissal, a monk of the Charterhouse of Notre-Dame des Prés near Montreuil-sur-Mer in 1547 to be used by Sister Marie de la Fosse, who was also the owner of MS Pleterje 2, again at the request of sister Anne de Camp, the mistress of the novices.

The manuscript contains an assortment of chants for various feast days including on fol. 86v the Antiphon "Sponsa Dei Genovefa".

The other manuscript is MS Pleterje 1, a complete Antiphonary. It has no colophon and is not dated. The provenance is possibly Val-saint-Esprit. It contains both the Antiphons and the prayer for St Genevieve towards the end of the manuscript.

The Sequence "*Virgo templum trinitatis*" is a particularly conspicuous component of MS 3c23. It does not appear in the other Gosnay manuscripts (or in any other Carthusian manuscript). The Sequence, the text of which deals with the Seven Joys of Mary, follows the liturgy for St Genevieve in the manuscript, and appears before the Antiphon and Oration for Presentation near the end of the manuscript. The Carthusian liturgy does not include Sequences. Sequences occur quite often in the manuscripts of Carthusian Graduals, however, where the manuscripts still contain their first and last pages. These pages are the refuge of liturgical and non-liturgical pieces, foreign to the original content of the manuscript. The presence of the Sequence in MSG 3c23 could mean that it was sung in the Charterhouse during a local paraliturgical ceremony.

The manuscripts from Mont-Sainte-Marie containing the rite for the consecration of virgins are:

Valenciennes, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 140. The manuscript is not notated, but provides all the texts for the chants sung during the ritual. According to a colophon it had belonged to Sister Antoinette de Pronville, who lived in 1544. (This is probably the same person as Sister Catherine de Pronville, who, according to MS Sélignac 45, died in 1578).

MS Bibliothèque Nationale, Latin 1437 is not dated, but also belonged to "Sister Antoinette de Pronville, nun of Gosnay", according to the colophon at the end. The manuscript is notated.

MS Bibliothèque Nationale, Latin 1438 is also not dated, but according to the colophon had belonged to Sister Jeanne Capette, who died in 1525. After her death it was given to Sister Lambarde du Bois, nun of Gosnay, who died in 1583. It is notated.

MS Douai 569, which is notated, was written, according to the colophon, in the same script as the rest of the manuscript, "pour dame franchoise de la haye". The handwriting is not gothic, like the others, but bâtarde. Sister Franchoise de la Haye had also had in her possession the Antiphonary, now MS Pleterie 4.

They are all very small books, the longest having 53 pages.

There is also a manual containing the rite copied for a nun from Gosnay in the 17th century, a Charleville manuscript, which I have not seen. Two other manuscripts, Ms Darmstadt 710, provenance Cologne, and MS Brussels Bibl. Royale 8245, provenance Korsendonck, both large manuscripts containing *miscellanea*, contain the rite of the consecration of the virgins as practised at Bruges which indicate that the rite was the same as that of Gosnay.

In an exhaustive discussion Dom Augustin Devaux asks the question whether the Carthusian nuns kept in their earlier monastic life the consecration rite with the particularities which characterises it today. He points out that there is no doubt about the consecration of the virgins itself. That was the rule. The essential part of the rite evolved in accordance with the Roman Pontifical.<sup>14</sup>

He found that before 1689 the three special insignia, the maniple, the stole and the cross, were not conferred in any of the three charterhouses for nuns of the Alpine region: Prémol, Salettes and Mélan, because there was no record of it. Considering whether abuses of the time might have caused the manuscripts of the three houses to disappear, he admits that this was possible for Prémol and Salettes, both of which suffered much during the religious wars, but pointed out that Mélan never suffered a cataclysm capable of destroying its library. He also said that it was unthinkable that these three large feminine communities would allow this very important tradition to disappear.<sup>15</sup>

Towards 1650, therefore, two "traditions" for the consecration of the virgins had coexisted for more than two centuries among the Carthusian nuns: during the course of the ceremony as practised at Mont-Sainte-Marie and Sainte-Anne de Bruges, the bishop handed over to each nun, as one entity, three insignia, a maniple, a stole and a silver or gold cross, in addition to the insignia conferred according to the Ordo of the Roman Pontifical: the veil, the ring and the crown; in all the other nunneries, only the insignia as according to the Roman Pontifical were conferred. The origin of the usage of the two houses is not very clear, and does not date from the origins of the order. The first written evidence of its existence appeared in the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century for the two houses mentioned, and perhaps reached back to the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Since 1688 or 1689, due to the efforts of Dom le Masson, the whole order followed the form practised at Mont-Sainte-Marie and Sainte-Anne. Today, apart from the three insignia of the Roman Pontifical, only the stole is conferred in the Carthusian order.16

Dom Bernard Gaillard, vicar of the charterhouse for nuns of Nonenque, compiled a list of sixteen known extant music books from Mont-Sainte- Marie, including those discussed. These include Graduals, some small books with the night offices and others with miscellanea. There are also two others, consisting only of a few pages each, which belonged to visitators of Gosnay, priors of Valenciennes.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> A. Devaux, Études et Documents pour l'Histoire des Chartreux. Salzburg Institut für Anglistik und Amerikansitik, 2003, p. 28. <sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup> RituelCartusien de Consécratiion des Vierges. St Pierre de Chartreuse, Grande Chartreuse, 1986, p. 9; Devaux, Études et Documents pour l'Histoire des Chartreux, p. 32; B. Gaillard, Rituel de Dom le Masson, Typescript, 2003, p.8; Dom Bernard Gaillard, communication, 15 May 2004.

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