

**Antiphonal (Sanctoral and Common of Saints)
In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment with musical notation
Spain (Fregenal de la Sierra), 1546 (dated)**

148 folios on parchment (somewhat stiff and crackly, yellowed hair side, very white flesh side, with occasional offcuts, for example f. 94), original foliation in red roman numerals top outer corner recto, lacking five leaves, ff. 1, 6, 8, 35, 148 (collation i⁸ [-1, 6, and 8, ff. 1, 6, 8, with loss of text] ii-iv⁸ v⁸ [-3, f. 35, with loss of text] vi-xvi⁸ xvii⁶⁺¹ [structure uncertain, text is complete] xviii⁸ xix⁸ [-5, f. 148] xx²), horizontal catchwords, ruled very faintly in lead(?), (justification 380-375 x 245-243 mm.), written in a rounded formal Gothic bookhand with eight lines of text and eight five-line red staves, music in square notation, red rubrics, large (equivalent to 1-line of text and a musical staff) strapwork initials (cadels) in black ink, some with small letters inscribed on banderoles ('IHS', 'A', 'AV', 'P'), alternately red and blue initials, occasionally with decorative void spaces within the initials, three large parted red and blue penwork initials in the Spanish vermiculated style, ff. 1, 83, 129, infilled with black on square grounds of black and red, some damage to about twenty leaves, many of which have been repaired, including f. 88, bottom margin repaired with a strip from another Choir book, f. 111, lower outer corner repaired with corner from another manuscript, text on ff. 113v, 120, 125v-126, 136v-137 seriously abraded, bottom corner f. 125 missing, including some loss of text (partially repaired by sewing and a strip of parchment from another Choir Book), f. 126 top and bottom outer corners damaged with slight loss of text at top, f. 129, strip from another Choir Book used as a repair in lower margin, lower margins ff. 144-145 damaged (no loss of text), ff. 46 and 65, outer margin slit, lower edges have been nibbled/gnawed, occasional stains, lower outer corners soiled through use, cockling, but text and music are remain easily legible and undamaged on most pages. Bound in very heavy wooden boards covered with dark brown leather, front and back covers with metal fittings of elaborate pierced brass centerpiece and two lower corner pieces and rough flat metal edge and corner piece along the upper edge and corner, upper board with strap, lower board with metal catch, spine with five raised bands, spine fragile with leather missing at the bottom, cracking along the joints, front and back pastedowns are covered with an impressive collage of modern manuscripts (eighteenth century?) in Spanish, a sheet of ruled paper used for practicing calligraphy, and a fragment of a printed book about the life of Don Juan Augustin Borrego (1690-1751), also in Spanish. Dimensions 590 x 340 mm.

This large and imposing Choir Book is a rich source for the liturgy in Extremadura in Southern Spain just before the liturgical changes mandated by the Council of Trent in 1564. It is signed and dated by its scribe, Benedictus Arias, who very likely can be identified as the humanist, biblical scholar, and linguist, Benedito Arias Montano, renowned for his work on the *Biblia regia*, a Polyglot Bible printed by Plantin in 1572. When this manuscript was copied in his hometown of Fregenal, he was only nineteen years old, and still a student, with his illustrious career yet to come.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in 1546 in Fregenal, today Fregenal de la Sierra, a town in the province of Badajoz, Extremadura, in the south of Spain, as recorded in the colophon on f. 151v:
"Peractus est liber iste a me Benedicto Arias presbitero frexnensi xv die mensis januarii:
anno domini M.D.xl.vi. Est exactum expensis parrochialis ecclesie sancte Catherine
prefati oppidi frexnensis pacensis dicoesis ad laudem et gloriam omnipotentis dei

necnon ad honorem beate virgins matris eius marie et beate Catherine dei sponse. Laus Deo" (This book was completed by me, Benedict Arias, a priest of Fregenal, on the fifteenth day of January 1546. And it was paid for by the parish church of St. Catherine of the aforesaid town of Fregenal in the diocese of Peace [i.e. Badajoz] for the praise and glory of God and also for the honor of the blessed virgin Mary his mother and of blessed Catherine the bride of God. Praise be to God).

Our scribe, Benedictus Arias, can almost certainly be identified as Benedito Arias Montano (1527-1598), the renowned Hebraist, biblical scholar, and humanist, who was born in Fregenal, today Fregenal de la Sierra, a town in the province of Badajoz, Extremadura, in the very far south of Spain. González Carrajal mentioned the colophon in 1932, when the manuscript was still in the parish church of St. Catherine's in Fregenal (1932, p.5). More recently, Martínez Ripoll (1998, p. 42) has concluded that the identification of the writer of the colophon with Benedito Arias Montano seems quite likely, suggesting he could have been ordained as a priest at nineteen (and entered holy orders at an even younger age to receive an ecclesiastical prebend, which was not uncommon at that time).

Benito Arias Montano (1527-1598) was born in Fregenal de la Sierra, into a family from the lower nobility. His father was a secretary of the Holy Office of the Inquisition. He was sent to Seville to study when he was fourteen; at 19 he enrolled at the arts course in Seville, and in 1550, at the University of Alcalá de Henares, where he pursued biblical studies and Hebrew. In 1560, at the age of thirty-three, he was professed in the Order of Santiago. His career was an illustrious one. He was King Phillip II's chaplain and librarian of the royal library at El Escorial, and author of numerous works in both Spanish and Latin; he is best known for his work on the Polyglot Bible known as the *Biblia regia*, printed in Antwerp by Christopher Plantin in 1572.

2. Numerous Spanish saints are mentioned in the Sanctoral (see Text, below); and there are marginal notes in Spanish (e.g. f. 31v, "Juan Bautista"; f. 74, "Todos los Santos"). The front and back pastedowns are covered with sheets from manuscripts (eighteenth century?) and printed material, all in Spanish.
3. Still in Fregenal at the church of St. Catherine in 1832, when T. González Carrajal stated that our manuscript's colophon had been copied for him by his friend Don Augustin Pereira, vicar of Encinasola; González Carrajal knew of the colophon because of an earlier description of it by José Fernando Becerra in 1782 (see González Carrajal, 1832, p. 5 and note 2 and p. 132).
4. Sold by Golden Oldie Antiques (North Carolina and other locations) from a large estate in Connecticut; with a typed description from a Litchfield, Connecticut antiques dealer, presumably from the inventory of the estate.

TEXT

f. 2, [f. 1, now lacking; text begins imperfectly with the concluding two lines of text and music from the previous page], incipit, "//sancto. Sicut erat in principio ... in secula seculorum, Amen";

ff. 2-83, *Incipit officium sanctorale iuxta morem alme pacensis ecclesie. In natali sancti stephani protbomartyris ad missam officium, ...;*

Sanctoral with Stephen, John the Evangelist (f. 6, missing, now beginning f. 7), f. 9v, Conversion of Paul, f. 14v, Agatha, f. 16v, Chair of St. Peter, f. 21, Annunciation, 24v, Philip and James, f. 30, John the Baptist, f. 37, Peter and Paul, f. 39, Paul, f. 40v, Visitation, f. 43v, Mary Magdalene; f. 46, James; f. 48, Anne; f. 52, Transfiguration, f. 54v, Lawrence, with Vigil, f. 59, Assumption, f. 61v, Nativity of Mary, f. 68v, Dedication of Michael Archangel, f. 72v, All Saints, with Vigil, f. 77v, St. Martin, f. 79, Andrew, with Vigil.

In addition to these major feasts, with text and music recorded in full, liturgical rubrics throughout list in detail the saints whose feasts are to be found in the Common of Saints, often with references to the folio number in roman numerals added in a very tiny script between the lines. Among the saints mentioned in this way are: Translation of St. James, Julian and Basillissa, Hilarius, bishop, Marius, Martha, Audifax and Abachum, Vincent, Ildephonsus, archbishop of Toledo, f. 12, Polycarp, Valerius, bishop of Saragossa; f. 16v, Scholastica, Julia; f. 18v, Martha, Thomas Aquinas, Leander of Seville, Florentina, Joseph; f. 24v, Engratia (sister of Fructus), Isidore, Victor, Hermengild, Turibus de Liebana; f. 29rv, Ivo, Bernardinus, Anthony, OFM; f. 43v, Marina; f. 51, Martha; f. 52, Dominic; f. 58v, Clare; f. 98v, Faustus Januarius and Martialis, martyrs (Cordoba); f. 71v, Francis, Attilanus, bishop of Zamora, Gerald, Nunilo and Alodia, virgin martyrs (Huesca); f. 79, Aemilianus (or St. Millan), Eugenius of Toledo, Facundus and Primitivus; f. 83, Eulaia, Lazarus, Translation of Isidore.

ff. 83-129, [Common of Saints], *Incipit commune sanctorum secundum morem pacensem, ...;*

ff. 129-149v, *De primo tono in festis solemnibus, ...;*

Settings for the Kyrie, Gloria (f. 137v), Sanctus (f. 143), Agnus dei (f. 146v).

ff. 149v-151v, *In festis solemnibus beatissime uirginis marie genetricis, incipit, "Kyrie virginitatis amator inclyte pater et creator marie eleyson Kyrie...";* f. 150, *In festis solemnibus beate marie uirginis, incipit, "Gloria in excelsis deo ..., Amen";*

f. 151v, [Scribal colophon], incipit, "Peractus est liber iste a me Benedicto Arias presbitero frexnensi xv die mensis januarii: anno domini M.D.xl.vi. Est exactum expensis parrochialis ecclesie sancte Catherine prefati oppidi frexnensis pacensis dicoesis ad laudem et gloriam omnipotentis dei necnon ad honorem beate uirginis matris eius marie et beate Catherine dei sponse. Laus Deo."

ff. 152-153v, *De apostolis com., incipit "Vos qui secuti estis me ...; Modulatio nova, incipit, Patrem// <bottom corner damaged>> //tem factorem ...Et vitam venturi seculi, Amen."*

Music manuscripts for use by the choir form a distinctive category of medieval liturgical books. Most were copied in a very large format that enabled a whole group of singers to share one manuscript. Their large size and the complicated format of text and musical notation meant that they were very expensive to print, and Choir Books continued to be copied by hand into the

eighteenth century. Antiphonals (also called Antiphonaries or Antiphoners) include the sung portions of the Divine Office, prayers said throughout the day and night by the secular clergy and members of religious orders. Many Choir Books now survive only as single leaves; studying the text and music preserved in a large codex such as this one allows students and scholars to arrive at a completely different understanding of the evidence.

The Council of Trent (1545-1563) ushered in many changes to the Catholic Church, not least to the liturgy. (The likely scribe of our manuscript, Benedito Aria Montano, attended the council and was involved in implementing its reforms). The impact of the liturgical reforms on Spain, beginning almost immediately after the conclusion of the council in 1564, were particularly marked, and generally led to the replacement of local liturgical rites with the reformed Roman rite. Our manuscript is therefore an important document, preserving the liturgy in the diocese of Badajoz on the cusp of these major changes. The detailed Sanctoral is of special interest.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

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<https://dbe.rah.es/biografias/7898/benito-arias-montano>

[Oxford Bibliographies, "Benito Arias Montano"](#)

<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195399301/obo-9780195399301-0459.xml>

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