

**Obituary of the Cluniac Priory of Mouthier-Haute-Pierre
In French and Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment
Eastern France, Franche-Comté (Mouthier-Haute-Pierre), c. 1400 (additions until 1688)**

iii (paper) + 63 + ii (paper) folios on parchment, early modern foliation in brown ink in the upper right corner of the leaves, 4-11, 16-55, 58-72 (made before the loss of leaves; with errors), modern foliation in pencil in the lower right corner, 1-63, lacking nine leaves, otherwise complete (collation difficult due to tight binding), no catchwords or signatures, ruled in brown ink (justification 216 x 134 mm.), written in brown ink in Gothic bookhand (textualis) in a single column on 25 lines, entries written in several different cursive hands in the 15th-17th centuries, rubrics in red, capitals touched in yellow, large calligraphic initials in brown ink and yellow wash for each day in the calendar (K, I or N for Kalendas, Idus and Nonas), 2-line initials alternating in red with blue penwork flourishes and in blue with red penwork flourishes (ff. 1-8v), large blue KL initials with red penwork in the calendar for each month, stains and signs of frequent use, margins of ff. 15-16v, 18 smudged, some medieval repairs, but in overall very good condition. Half-bound in the eighteenth century in brown calf, spine with six raised bands, gold-tooled with pomegranates, stars, foliage and fillets, title in gilt "Necrolge (sic) / de / Moutier / Haute / Pierre", covers with red decorated paper over pasteboards, gray silk placemaker, edges painted red, slight wear on covers and spine, leaves cropped close to marginal inscriptions on some pages, but in overall good condition. Dimensions 302 x 214 mm.

The rediscovery of an important and visually striking manuscript, the Obituary of the Cluniac Priory of Mouthier-Haute-Pierre. Its detailed obits provide a wealth of information spanning five centuries concerning the priors and monks, as well as local families who acted as benefactors. Especially interesting are the descriptions of works of art, ornaments, vestments, books, and building work gifted by these individuals. Obituaries are a type of manuscript seldom found on the market (only four sales are recorded in the Schoenberg Database in the last forty years).

PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript was made around 1400 at the Cluniac Priory of Mouthier-Haute-Pierre (Alta Petra), in the Doubs, Franche-Comté, based on the styles of the script and decoration. Moreover, the inscription on f. 61 concerning the anniversary masses paid annually by Hugues de Moustier (c. 1382-1460; the monks call him Hugues "niblet," son of Gerard de Mostier), in the original script of the manuscript, suggests that the obituary was made during his lifetime, and probably before 1402, because it does not mention the donation Hugues made to the priory in that year, described in the original act of 1402 that is kept at the Bibliothèque National de France (Département des Manuscrits, Titres originaux, Moustier; cf. Moustier, 1883 [unpaginated]).

Obits of important priors and benefactors between 1268 and 1400 were added in the obituary in the seventeenth century (especially on ff. 14v-19v, 56v); this indicates that there was an earlier obituary from which the information was copied. Dated obits continued to be recorded in the book until 1688.

2. M. de Ranquet, Clermont-Ferrand, France.
3. The manuscript belonged in the twentieth century to the notary Paul Alamartine from Le Mayet-de-Montagne in the Allier. The three letters kept with the volume concern an exchange between Alamartine and Victor Berger, a bookseller in Beaune, in 1956.
4. France, Private Collection.

TEXT

[Note: this description uses the modern foliation found in the bottom corner of the leaves.]

ff. 1-8v, incipit, “//et iam non videbitis me et iterum modicum ...”;

Brief Gospel readings and devotions to the Virgin or saints for the liturgical year, beginning and ending imperfectly (lacking three leaves in the beginning and one leaf at the end of text). It seems likely that these were read in chapter house before the obits were read. Organized by rubrics according to feasts of the Temporal and Sanctoral, including feasts for saints Philip and James, John the Baptist, Peter and Paul, Mary Magdalene, James, Stephen, Bartholomew, Matthew, Michael, Denis, Simon and Jude, Andrew, Thomas, and Berthold (very rare; perhaps the thirteenth-century preacher, St. Bertold of Regensburg, or St. Berthold (+ 1197), abbot of two monasteries in Engelberg Switzerland, or St. Berthold V duke of Zähringen who built the Cathedral of Fribourg).

ff. 9-60, Calendar with obits inscribed on relevant days throughout the year, with dated entries spanning 1268-1688, copied from c. 1400 into the seventeenth century; the word “Obierunt” (in plural) heads each date; the calendar begins imperfectly (lacking three leaves) and lacks two leaves between ff. 48 and 49; concludes with the rubric, *Explicit kalendarium*;

The amount of text varies. A few pages are blank apart from the decorated initials (ff. 11, 12v, 20v, 21v, 22, 22v, 24, 26-27, 29, 30v-31, 32- 32v, 33v, 35v, 36v-37, 38v-39v, 40v, 42v-43v, 45, 46, 47v, 49, 51, 53, 54, 55v, 60), but many of the entries are detailed, including descriptions of donations, such as the obit of prior Geoffroy du Vernois (1381-1410), who had a bell tower constructed, and gave the priory a clock, paintings, stained glass windows, chalices, ornaments and vestments (f. 28v).

ff. 60v-63v, [Obits of benefactors in French and Latin written c. 1400, other obits and inscriptions added later in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries], incipit, “Li hers de Monfacon et de Mont Beliar pour chanter trois messes la semaine. Cesta savoir le dimainche, le mardi et sambadi en la chapelle dou saint esperiz doivent dix livres estevenants chascun ans et perpetuelement”; “Item pour ung anniversaire en ladicte chappelle pour monsieur Estienne conte de Mont Beliar landemain de la tout saint .xxx. sol estevenants tout sus les tailles dou chastel vief Vuillafen ”; ... [followed by inscriptions concerning other funerary masses, transcriptions of charters related to the priory of Mouthier-Haute-Pierre, including one concerning the prior Geoffroy du Vernois; and other inscriptions and additions, including one on f. 62v, written in the sixteenth century, describing local burial customs]; incipit, “Les habitans de Moustier, avant que mettre en terre les corps mortz, les viennent presenter ceans.

Alors les religieux vont en corps avec la croix jusques a la rüe chantant "Libera me"; ... , [f. 62v], ... , "Obierunt patres, matres, fratres, sorores, parentes, benefactores, requietores, amici nostri congregacionis monachi et alii familiares nostri"; [ff. 62v-63v, additions et pen trials].

Obituary of Mouthier-Haute-Pierre, studied in detail by Audéric Moustier in 1883 (see Bibliography; a transcript of this article is kept with the manuscript), who listed numerous priors with their dates and donations drawn from the entries in this manuscript. The Priory of Mouthier-Haute-Pierre in the archdiocese of Besançon may have been founded as early as 618 by St. Eustache, abbot of Luxeuil Abbey, and at least by the ninth century, when it figures, in 870, in an act concerning the division of the lands of Lothaire (Moustier 1883, (no page numbers)). It was attached to Cluny in 1094. The earliest known priors were Ponce (1109), Lambert (1139), Richard de Fertans (1269), Milon (1304-c. 1312), and Etienne de Fertans (1313-c. 1338) (Moustier, 1883 [unpaginated]). The priory was rebuilt in the thirteenth century, and a church dedicated to St. Lawrence was built c. 1300 and 1338.

Our manuscript describes important donations made to the priory by the local lords of Montbéliard, Montfaucon, Thoraise, and Vuillafans, including Hugues de Moustier, who donated a vineyard to the priory in 1431, to augment the income of the chapel dedicated to St. Anthony, founded in the priory church by his ancestors. The priory was rebuilt again in the sixteenth century by its most illustrious prior, Antoine Perrenot, cardinal of Granvelle (prior 1542-1586; Online resources). The seventeenth-century history of the priory can be studied from the twenty-two detailed account books recorded during the priorate of Philippe Emmanuel de Montfort in 1641-1657, allowing one to analyze the priory's revenues from wine, rents, tax on crops, wool and lamb meat (Chaneaux, 1977, pp. 1081). Inventories made in 1542, 1631, 1632 and 1711 reveal a rich establishment, as Marie-Louise Chaneaux has shown; she traced the names of 57 priors and 94 monks (Chaneaux, 1977, pp. 1082-1083). The monks left the priory during the Revolution, and the library of around 500 volumes was confiscated and dispersed in 1790; the monastic buildings were sold to two habitants of Mouthier in 1791 (Chaneaux, 1977, pp. 1081-1082). A twelfth-century Gospel Book made for use at the priory survives in Besançon, BM, MS 63 (Online resources).

An obituary is a book that records the obits and anniversary masses celebrated in a given monastic house. The word *obituarium* was not used in the Middle Ages, and this type of book was often simply called *liber* (book) (Lemaître, 1975, p. 1024). In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the terms *necrologium* (as on the eighteenth-century spine of our volume) or *obituarium* were used interchangeably, although there is a difference between the two. In theory, a necrology recorded all the deceased members of the community, whereas an obituary contained only the deceased members of the community (or lay benefactors) who had founded and paid for an office to be celebrated in their memory for a certain number of years (Lemaître, 1975, p. 1024). In practice, there was often no clear line between the two. Each morning the names of those to be remembered on that day in the obituary (or necrology) were read in the chapter house at Prime (or Terce), preceded by readings from the martyrology and the rule.

Our manuscript has been known to scholarship since at least 1709, when Dom Albert Chassignet referred to it in his *Histoire du Prioré de Mouthier*, a work that is now difficult to find, but which was cited by Muller in his 1939 history of the priory (Muller, 1939). Chassignet noted, for instance, the obit of the fifteenth-century prior Jean Burdet de Châtillon Bombarde on f. 23,

which gives details of the numerous books and ornaments that he gave to the priory, including two large incunabula and a large missal (cf. Muller, 1939, p. 96).

Obituaries provide information about medieval people and families that would otherwise be unknown to us. They can be a particularly valuable source for the history of the institutions they were made for, including their monastic libraries and churches, because the inscriptions of obits, as in our manuscript, are often very detailed, describing the precious objects, books, constructions, religious foundations, lands, and funds gifted by the monks and benefactors. They also support research in medieval monasticism in general because they reveal rare personal and sociological information that is not available elsewhere. This is a propitious occasion to acquire this type of a manuscript, as obituaries are especially rare on the market; the Schoenberg Database records only four sales in the last forty years.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Antoine Perrenot de Granvelle (Wikipedia)

https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antoine_Perrenot_de_Granvelle

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