

Ritual with prayers and blessings (Carthusian Use); brief selection from Carthusian Statutes (in French); JOHANNES RODE, *De proprietate monachorum*  
In Latin and French, decorated manuscript on paper with musical notation  
Eastern France (Bourg-en-Bresse, Ain, Chartreuse de Montmerle), dated 1515

119 folios on paper, watermark: a branch of grapes (unidentified), modern foliation in pencil, 1-118 (including 1 bis), original part complete, lacking three leaves in the added part at the end of the manuscript (collation i<sup>14</sup> ii-ix<sup>12</sup> x<sup>12</sup> [-7, -8, -9, lacking three leaves after f. 115, with loss of text]), vertical catchwords, alphanumerical signatures, ruled in brown ink (justification 110 x 74 mm.), written in brown ink in gothic cursive bookhand (*bâtarde*) on 18 long lines, music on ff. 111-115v is written in square notation on four-line staves in brown ink, four staves per page, rastrum 18 mm., rubrics in red, capitals touched in yellow, 1- to 2-line initials in red ink (a few larger initials in the litanies), some decorated with penwork in red or brown ink, ink corrosion on ff. 111-115v, the lower outer corner of ff. 98-102 lacking, some water stains and worm holes, in overall good condition. EARLY BINDING, sixteenth-century blind-tooled brown calf over wooden boards, tooled with three frames formed with the repetition of small stamps: (from the outer to inner frame) *Agnus Dei*, rose and fleur-de-lys, the spine is lacking the leather, exposing three thongs on which the quires were sewn, brass clasp and catches intact, pastedowns are recycled manuscript leaves on paper from fifteenth-century legal documents in Latin, leather on the covers very worn, otherwise in good condition. Dimensions 142 x 107 mm.

This volume sheds light on the daily life of Carthusian monks (and nuns) in the early sixteenth century at one of its important Charterhouses. Dated colophons identify the scribe and tell us when and under what circumstances this manuscript was made. The selections of the statutes in French are expressly addressed to nuns, and the liturgy, recorded with masculine forms, often includes feminine alternatives indicated throughout above the lines of text.

## PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript includes several colophons, one of which on f. 12 records that it was completed on January 5, 1515, and that it was made at the request of Jean Chiurelli, the prior of the Montmerle Charterhouse (transcribed below); translated, it reads, "Written in the year of the Lord 1515 on the fifth of January in the charterhouse of Montmerle of the Carthusian order at the request of our venerable father, prior John Chiurelli of the same house to which he belongs. If it is found in any other house of the order, it shall be let it be restored to the same and to the aforesaid house of Montmerle, Le petit andrieu." At the end the scribe gives his name, *Le petit Andrieu*, that is, Andrieu Le Petit, followed by his signature: the initials "ap" with penwork ornament. The date and place of copy are also given on ff. 8 (1515), 61 (January 2, 1515) and 93v (1515).

The charterhouse Notre-Dame de Montmerle du Val-Saint-Etienne (*Domus Sanctae Marie Montismerulae*) was initially founded as a Benedictine priory in 1070 by Hugh d'Asnières des Bois and became a dependency of the Abbey of Joug-Dieu. In 1210, it became a Carthusian community and detached itself from Joug-Dieu. Montmerle was the richest

charterhouse in Bresse. Its numerous benefactors included the lords of Bâgé and of Coligny, as well as the bishop of Mâcon. In 1280, by the concession of Amadeus V, Count of Savoy, and his wife, Sibylle de Bâgé, the charterhouse became a powerful seigneurie with its own justice system. The Montmerle Charterhouse was dissolved during the French Revolution in 1792, and the monastery buildings are today in ruins.

## 2. Private European Collection.

### TEXT

f. 1, [Added in a contemporary hand on a blank leaf], List of virtues for a monk and a list of the seven cardinal sins; [f. 1v, ruled, otherwise blank];

ff. 1bis-8, [Passion of Christ according from the Gospel of John, ending in a colophon], ... *Scriptum in monte merula per me F.A.P.R. 1515* [followed by the scribe's signature];

ff. 8v-12, [Five short prayers for the dying], *Item dic pro agonizante*, incipit, "Kyrie eleison ... Valete bene vivere et bene mori ... Vt salvemur cum eo quam est benedictus in secula seculorum," *Anno domini millesimo v<sup>c</sup> quintodecimo quinta Januarii scriptum in domo montismerule ordinis cartusienensis ad instantiam venerabilis patris prioris Johannis Chiurelli eiusdem domus cui pertinet. Si in aliqua domo ordinis reperiretur restituatur eidem et domui predictae montismerule. Le petit andrieu*; [ff. 12v-13v, ruled, otherwise blank];

ff. 14-28, [Ritual for visiting the sick, last sacraments administered to the dying, ritual for the burial, in Latin and French], *Quedam exhortationes visitandi infirmum. Corpus domini sibi ministrandi. Et inungendi ac sepeliendi ...*; [f. 15v], *Sequitur modum inungendi infirmum secundum ritum de ordinem cartusiensium ...*;

ff. 28-29, Ritual for visitation of monks, nuns, and lay brothers;

ff. 29-33, Litanies (including St. Bruno, the founder of the order and the patron saint of Carthusians), followed by prayers;

ff. 33-61, [Ritual for the funeral, concluding], ..., *Laus deo 1515. 2 januarii. Iste libellus est domus montismerule ordinis cartusienensis*; [f. 61v, ruled, otherwise blank];

f. 62-65, [Ritual for the excommunication and for the revocation of the excommunication, reintegrating the apostates, ending with the colophon], ... *Laus deo ap* [signature of Andrieu Le Petit];

ff. 65v-74v, Ritual for the reception of novices, followed by several rites of benediction;

ff. 75-79, *Dominica in ramis palmarum exhortatio contra proprietarios*, ...;

ff. 79v-82, [Rites of excommunication in French], *S'ensuit la sentence d'escommuniement en francoys que se baillie da dymanche de Rampaulx ou chapitre contre tous religieux rendus convers* ...;

ff. 82-87v, [Statutes of the Carthusian Order in French for houses of nuns] *In domo monialium. Sensuit la sentence . . . , Et primierement sensuyent les status translates en francoys*, incipit, "Aussy a vous suers on vous doit exposez les status et lyre en francoys et langaige que vous puissés entendre . . .";

ff. 87v-88v, [Rite of the absolution, ending with the colophon], . . . *Domus Montimerule pertinet liber iste. A. P.*;

ff. 89-93v, [Blessings, ending with the colophon], *Ad benedicendum panem . . . , . . . Venerabili in Christo patri domino Johanni Chiurelli priori montimerule pertinet liber iste. 1515. ap.*;

ff. 94-110v, [Contemporary addition; treatise on the attributes of monks], *Incipit tractaculus de proprietariis monachis*, incipit, "Monachus dicitur persona obedientiam, paupertatem, et castitatem professam, . . .";

This is almost certainly Johannes Rode, *De proprietate monachorum*; short passage of this text printed in Becker, 1986 from a manuscript in Brussels. Johannes Rode (d. 1439) was Abbot of the Carthusian monastery of St. Matthias in Trier, known for his programs of reform. The treatise also circulated with the more descriptive title, *Tractatus de religiosis proprietariis ex decretali domini Innocenti papae* (Treatise on the properties of Religious (i.e. monks) from the decretals of Pope Innocent); other manuscripts include: *Catalogue général*, v. 2, p. 814, (Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale MS 1983); Köln, Stadts Archiv, MS W 140; MS Bos. o.14 described in Klein-Ilbeck and Ott, 2009; and Paris, Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, MSS 1418 and 1436 (Kohler, 1893, pp. 25 and 40).

ff. 111-115v, Contemporary addition, hymns with musical notation, beginning with Credo; [the acidity of the ink has corroded the paper in this section];

ff. 116-118v, [Contemporary addition, in French, beginning imperfectly with the last three lines of an unidentified text on the prophecy of Esdras, followed by forms of absolution], incipit, "///. . . , Cy finex la prenostication revelée au bon saint prophet besdras pour scavoir . . .";

The Ritual is a liturgical book that contains all the services for the rituals, sacraments, and blessings which are not contained in the Missal, Pontifical or Ceremonial of Bishops.

Our manuscript provides invaluable, previously unknown information on the history of this Carthusian monastery, including the name of the prior in 1515, Jean Chiurelli. There is only one short modern monograph dedicated to the history of the Montmerle Charterhouse (Genton and Rude, 1999; Nyd, 1849, very briefly discusses its history through the thirteenth century, and mentions only three fifteenth-century sources, the last from 1435). The selections from the statutes translated into French in our manuscript are addressed to nuns. The Chartreuse de Poiteins, founded in 1230, is the only abbey for Carthusian nuns in Ain; further research is required to establish the relationship of these two foundations and their place in the history. In many passages, the prayers are copied with masculine forms, with the feminine alternative added above the line in red.

The Carthusians lead a solitary, contemplative life in community, being one of the most austere religious orders with perpetual closure, almost absolute silence, frequent fasting, and complete

abstinence of meat. Their sober liturgy reflected the austere way of life. Bruno of Cologne and his companions founded the order in 1084 in their search for God in solitude in the Chartreuse Mountains. Initially they followed the Rule of St. Benedict, and for Mass they followed the use of Grenoble, as Bruno had been led to the Chartreuse by St. Hugh, Bishop of Grenoble. In order to achieve greater solitude, modifications were introduced into the monastic routine, prayers, and the Mass and Office. In 1127, Guido, the fifth Prior of the Chartreuse, wrote the "Consuetudines," the Customs. In 1259 the rule, known as the *Statuta Antiqua*, was promulgated, fixing the liturgical texts and rites; a third edition, the *Statuta Nova*, appeared in 1368. The Carthusian Statutes were updated again 1509 (*Tertia compilatio*), and in 1510, Johannes Amorbach printed an edition that included all the statutes to date (Hogg, 1989).

## LITERATURE

Becker, Petrus. "'De proprietate monachorum.' Ein Text des Abtes Johannes Rode von St. Matthias," in *Corona Amicorum. Alois Thomas zur Vollendung des 90. Lebensjahres von Kollegen, Freunden und Schülern dargeboten*, Trier (1986), pp. 25-34.

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#### ONLINE RESOURCES

Chartreuse de Montmerle

[https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chartreuse\\_de\\_Montmerle](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chartreuse_de_Montmerle)

Jean-Baptiste Lebigue, "Initiation aux manuscrits liturgiques"

<https://cel.archives-ouvertes.fr/cel-00194063/document>

*Statuta ordinis cartusiensis*, ed. Gregor Reisch, Basel, Johann Amerbach, Johann Froben and Johann Petri, 1510 (VD 16, G-4071)

<http://dl.ub.uni-freiburg.de/diglit/statuta1510/0001>

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