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[Ephemera] Table of Dominical Letters; Memorial Notes for Deceased nuns
In French, manuscript on paper
Northern France (Marquette-lez-Lille?), 1495 or as late as 1528

8 folios on paper, unidentified watermark (f. 8) acephalous quadruped with a tail, modern pencil foliation at the top recto corner 1-8, possibly missing one folio (collation $i^6 +2$ [quire of 6 followed by two detached singletons, ff. 7-8, original structure uncertain, but perhaps missing a leaf after 1), four scribes, the first (ff. 1-7) writing in a confident cursive Gothic script (Gothica cursiva libraria) in black and red ink, with the red ink reserved for rubrics and "golden numbers," the second scribe writes a single paragraph on f. 7r in a smaller, spiky cursive gothic script in black ink, the third scribe writes a single paragraph on ff. 7r-v in a hasty cursive gothic script in brown ink, the fourth scribe writes a single paragraph on f. 8 in a small, neat cursive gothic script, ff. 7 and 8 are detached, soiling on the margins of the paper, significant wear and folding on the outer margins throughout, wormholes on ff. 7-8. Blue paper binding with escutcheon pasted onto the middle, paper pastedowns. Dimensions 200 x 140 mm.

Ephemera from the Middle Ages are not common, and ephemera from Cistercian nuns must be very rare indeed. This small booklet, consisting of only eight folios wrapped in a paper cover, survives from the Cistercian nuns of Marquette in northern France. Bearing no evidence that it was ever part of a larger volume, the booklet preserves a practical table recording the date of Easter that the nuns would have consulted frequently. Notes on deceased members of the community are recorded in blank space following this text, including an intriguing reference that seems to record the return of a mortuary roll to the abbey. Few manuscripts from this important noble abbey survive.

PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript was produced in 1495 according to the preface on f. 1v in northern France, likely at the Cistercian Abbey of Notre-Dame de repos de Marquette, where it was in the early sixteenth century (see below). There is, however, a discrepancy in the years specified in the prologue (1495-1756), and the actual years in the calendrical table, 1529-1756. This is difficult to explain. It is possible that a leaf with the years 1495-1528 is now missing, although physical evidence does not support this (see collation above). Perhaps the scribe simply omitted these years in error. Alternatively, this could be a copy of an earlier table made in 1528-9, omitting the superfluous years.
2. From at least 1533 to 1539, according to two notes on f. 7, the manuscript belonged to the Cistercian nuns of the Abbaye du Repos de Notre-Dame de Marquette. Located in Marquette-lez-Lille, just outside of Lille in the diocese of Tournai, the abbey was founded by Jeanne of Constantinople, countess of Flanders and of Hainaut (1200-1244) in 1226 and transferred to Marquette in 1236. The abbey prospered but suffered from Protestant depredations in the second half of the sixteenth century, resulting in destruction of some of their books (Bondéelle-Souchier, 1994). The nuns were expelled in 1792, and the abbey was finally destroyed by a fire in 1793 (Cottineau, 1939, vol. 2, col. 1769; Gubellini, 2006). Few medieval manuscripts from Marquette appear to have

survived apart from their Cartulary (Paris, BnF, MS lat 10967; ed. Vanhaeck, 1937-1940); two Breviaries, Brussels, BR, MS 2028 and Cambrai, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 99 (Online Resources); and the splendid three-volume Marquette Bible, Los Angeles, Getty Museum, MS Ludwig I.8, made in Lille c. 1270, and given to the abbey in the 1400s by Philip, Duke of Burgundy (1396-1467) (Online Resources; another Bible, now surviving mostly as dispersed fragments, including Getty Museum, MS Ludwig I.9 and Brussels, BR, MS II.2523, may also have belonged to Marquette; Bondéelle-Souchier, 1994).

3. Pasted on the outer front cover of the binding are a shelfmark written in ink on a small paper square, "6861," perhaps 18th century, and a title in ink written on paper in the shape of a shield: "Table contenant la lettre Dominicale, les jours de Septuagesime, Pasques et Pentecôte pour les années 1529-1756." The range of dates shows that a folio containing the data for 1495-1529 had been lost by the time this was added.
4. Shelfmark 548 B.VIII on a pasted stamp on the inner front cover, perhaps nineteenth century.

TEXT

ff. 1-7, [Preface], *Declaracion de la grande table cy apres escrip̄te durant ii. c. et lxii ans. . .*, incipit, "En ceste grande table cy apres escrip̄te chascune ligne. . .; [f. 1v], *Sensuint la dicte grande table pour ii. c. et lxii ans*; [f. 2], *Lan de grace, Nombre dor, Lettres dominicales, Septuagesime, Pasques, Pentecouste [sic]*, incipit, "M.d.xxix x c xxiiii Janua xxviii mars xvi maii; . . . [f. 6v] . . . M d cc lxi xix gf xi febr xiiii aprilis ii junii"; [f. 6v, further instructions], incipit, "Par le moyty de ceste grande table si dessus escrip̄te on pourra asses . . . lomenge de Dieu de la glorieuse vierge Madre et de fonte la court de paradis. Deo gratias";

Table of years, golden numbers, dominical letters, and dates of Septuagesima (the ninth Sunday before Easter), Easter, and Pentecost, with instructions for use. The table includes the years 1529-1756 (227 years), but the preface states that the table accounts for 262 years and was composed in the year 1495, thus covering the years 1495-1756, and the years 1495-1528 are missing (see Provenance above).

Easter is the single most important date on the Christian calendar, but its date changes every year. Finding the date of Easter on any given year requires the knowledge of when there will be a full moon after the Spring equinox on March 21, known as the Paschal full moon. The date of Easter, then, falls on the Sunday following the Paschal full moon. The dates of other notable feasts are calculated relative to Easter. Thus, the date of Easter serves as an anchor point for the other moveable feasts on the calendar.

The introduction to the table of dates gives instructions on how to read and use the data therein. Outside of the table proper, at the left margin, one will find the "An de Grace", i.e. the year *anno domini*. In the first column next to the year, one can find the "Golden Number" that aids in finding the date for all of the new moons any given year. In the second column are listed the dominical letters. The letters range from A to G and indicate when Sundays will fall during the year. During leap years, "annee de bissexté," there will be two dominical letters, one pertaining to the calendar prior to 29 February and another for afterwards. The third column

lists the days when Septuagesima falls. The fourth column gives the date of Easter, and the fifth, the dates of Pentecost.

Following the table, another set of instructions inform readers how to find the dates of other moveable feasts on the Christian calendar. The Sunday following Septuagesima is Sexagesima and the next Sunday is Quinquagesima. The following Wednesday is Ash Wednesday "le jour des cendres." The following Sunday is Palm Sunday "le jour des vraudons," the first Sunday of Lent, i.e. Quadragesima. Next, there are five Sundays between the celebration of Easter and the Minor Rogations. The Thursday after the Rogations is the Feast of the Ascension "le jour l'ascension nostre seigneur." The Sunday after Pentecost is the Feast of the Trinity "le jour de la trinite," and the following Thursday is the Feast of the Corpus Christi "la feste du sainte sacrement," which completes the calendar of moveable feasts.

f. 7, incipit, "Memoire que le xvii jour du mois de febvrier an quize cens et xxxiii nous fut presente par Frere Jehan Moder(?)... par sa benigne grace de leur pardon leur face Amen"; Memorial for deceased nuns, dated February 17, 1533, recording the arrival of a Cluniac "convert and professed" (*convert et proffes*), i.e. a lay brother, to the "Monastere Nostre Dame du Repos de Marquettes" with the roll ("le grand roliau") recording the names of deceased members of the community: Dame Anthonette Maret; Dame Marie Argi//; Dame Peronne Marquande; Dame Jossine de Langle; Dame Peronne de Langlee, prieuse; Dam[e?] Pierre Dormoy, confesseur; Dame Anne Dadiselle; Dame Katherine Cleremes; and Seur Jossine de le Tour.

f. 7, incipit, "Le xxvi jour du moys doctober mil cinque et xxxix fut presente le Per dessusdict en leglise de Reims... trespasces depuis la xxxiii."; Another memorial for deceased nuns, dated October 26, 1539, recording the visit from a priest of the Church of Reims (perhaps the same Jehan Moder mentioned above ("dessusdict")).

f. 7v, [Four lines of notes], incipit, "Par Jan des lande Religieux laiez de labbaye sanct Ioinct de marne et Poitou. donna abbatissa | m h | j z | h l"

The texts recording the names of deceased nuns appear to record the return of a mortuary roll to the monastery where it originated. From the eighth century onward, we have evidence of *breviatores* travelling along local and sometimes international routes to visit other monasteries with these rolls (called "le grand roliau" in our manuscript), where monks and nuns would record a *titulus* to honor and pray for an important bishop, abbot, prioress, or group of deceased named at the top of the roll (for an example of a fifteenth century mortuary roll composed for abbots, monks, and others from Jumièges, see Delisle, 1866, no. LXXXIV). The text in our manuscript record appears to record the date when a mortuary roll and its *breviator* returned to the Abbaye du Repos. The names listed in the texts are probably the nuns for whom the roll was composed.

f. 8, incipit, "Si la visitation nostre dame eschiet au dimenche y sera entierement celebre e au samedi qui sera la vigile on ieusuera? par tout lordre aussi tous les aultres iours ... celle du dimenche sera chantee le premier iour vacant"; [f. 8v, blank].

Instructions for prayers for when the Feast of the Visitation of the Virgin Mary falls on a Sunday. The Feast of the Visitation of Mary to Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-56) entered the Roman Calendar in 1389 at the behest of Pope Urban VI. The Feast was celebrated on 2 July, today it is celebrated on 31 May. Bernard of Clairvaux, one of the leading spiritual figures of the early Cistercian movement, made Marian devotion the center of his exegesis in his sermons on the Song of Songs. The Virgin Mary became a central figure in Cistercian spirituality and Mary was officially named matron of the Cistercian Order in 1281. (Burton and Kerr, 2011, p. 127)

It is remarkable that this small, portable manuscript, its eight folios preserved only in a later paper cover, has survived for centuries. In format and in content, this meets the definition of ephemera. The calendar table, which must have been consulted often by the nuns when this was copied, concludes with 1756, after which the text was obsolete. The added notes, recording the names of deceased nuns and possibly the return of the abbey's mortuary roll, document events that would otherwise have disappeared without a trace.

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<http://initiale.irht.cnrs.fr/codex/9376>

Los Angeles, Getty Museum, MS Ludwig I 8 ("Marquette Bible")

<https://www.getty.edu/art/collection/object/103RTH>

"Marquette," Cistopedia (including extensive bibliography)

<https://www.cistopedia.org/index.php?id=12943>

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