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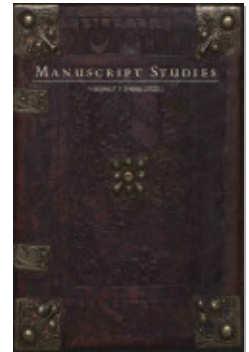
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The Charterhouse Antiphonal Fragment

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DACT, Digital Analysis of Chant Transmission

A FRAGMENT OF THE SOLE extant English Carthusian antiphonal, and the third extant historiated English antiphonal, has recently been identified (fig. 1). Ghent, University Library, MS BHSL. HS.3020 comprises a collection of parchment leaves that includes a bifolium from an early Tudor Carthusian manuscript, probably made for the London Charterhouse.¹ The fragment's later history and the circumstances of its arrival in Ghent remain unknown. The present note describes the leaves and analyzes the chant to identify the Carthusian use. Positioning the bifolium among existing English antiphonals underscores the rarity of such a find. Finally, the art of this fragment is undeniably English and, specifically,

Special thanks to Godfried Croenen, project leader at Medieval Manuscripts in Flemish Collections, who posted images of the Charterhouse Antiphonal Fragment on Twitter, where they were first identified, and for providing study images to assist our further research into them during the pandemic. @MMFCbe <https://twitter.com/MMFCbe/status/1387030496220229635?s=20> (27 April 2021). This research was partly funded by the British Academy.

1 Currently catalogued as “Antiphonarium [fragm.],” <https://lib.ugent.be/catalog/rug01:000993354> (accessed 21 May 2021), and as “Unidentified manuscripts on parchment. 8 folders. —s. XII–XVI,” in Albert Derolez, Hendrik Defoort, and Frank Vanlangenhove, eds., *Medieval Manuscripts: Ghent University Library* (Ghent: Snoek, 2017), 280.



FIGURE 1. Ghent University Library, BHSL.HS.3020. Image reproduced with CC-BY-SA license, with thanks to Ghent University Library.

metropolitan. Its art situates the fragment within a specific production network, revealing the likelihood that the antiphonal was made in the city for the London Charterhouse between about 1490 and 1520, for which reason it can be known as the Charterhouse Antiphonal Fragment.

Description

The bifolium was likely the outer part of a quinion beginning its volume (though conceivably there could have been a calendar or other prefatory material) and shows both ruling and pricking. The chants of folio 1r, for the first Sunday in Advent, would have begun the church year, and were marked by a major illuminated border in the original volume. This full bar border and historiated initial are discussed in detail in another section. Each leaf contains a single column of chant and rubrics, with room for thirteen staves of music. The chant texts are copied in textualis, in black with red spacers. The music is in a narrow square notation on a four-line staff, with the f-clef having pronounced descenders on either side. The frequent use of b-flat clef betrays the antiphoner's English origins.² Majuscles can be decorated with parallel strokes and dots, and are touched with yellow. *Litterae notabiliores* remain unusually plain for an English music manuscript, and occur in two ranks, as lombards in blue flourished with red, or in black with some light internal decoration. Rubrication highlights responsory and versicle abbreviations, and other liturgical designations, as well as line enders and spacers. Folio 10v ends with a catchword inside a banner containing both the catchword (*Super*) and rubricated versicle abbreviation. For ease of use, the

2 Examples of the b-clef or b-flat clef can be found in English and Welsh sources from the twelfth century onward (e.g., the St. Alban's Troper, London, British Library, Royal MS 2 B IV, twelfth century; the Wilton Processional, thirteenth century, as known from leaves sold widely by Otto Ege; Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 135, a fourteenth-century missal from Canterbury or Salisbury), and are even mentioned in passing in Thomas Morley's *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* as late as 1597, but are rarely seen on the continent. Cf. also David Hiley, *Western Plainchant: A Handbook* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 425 no. 10; and Allison Altstatt, "Re-Membering the Wilton Processional," *Notes* 72 (2016): 690–732.

responsories were at some point enumerated in the margin.³ Folio 1v ends midway through the fifth responsory of Advent I; folio 10r picks up midway through the Magnificat antiphon of the fourth Sunday of Advent, continuing with responsories for Matins (again numbered in the margins), ending with the seventh responsory and the catchword for its verse. Successive leaves would continue with the remaining weeks of Advent before progressing through the rest of the liturgical year and then the music for saints' days.⁴

Chant Contents and Liturgical Provenance

Inspection of the fragment's liturgical content proves its Carthusian origins, and marks it as the only known English Carthusian antiphonal extant.⁵ The texts of its chants, their ordering, and the fragment's rubrics all have analogues in Carthusian sources. Moreover, the chant melodies frequently match note-for-note with Carthusian concordances, attesting to remarkable consistency in the melodic tradition not often seen in medieval chant sources.

The fragment's chant texts signal its Carthusian origin. By way of example, the first chant given in full is the Magnificat antiphon for the first Sunday of Advent, whose text reads *Ecce nomen domini venit de longinquo ardens furor eius et gravis ad portandum*. An antiphon with these opening words was in quite standard use in many regions and orders as the Magnificat antiphon for this day.⁶ But most of these apparent concordances use a slightly different text: *Ecce nomen domini venit de longinquo et claritas ejus replet orbem terrarum*. This more standard text is—like many chant texts—a pastiche of biblical references, stitching together a verse from Isaiah (30:27) with one from Luke (2:9) and another from Wisdom (1:7). The Carthusian order, however, adapted

3 A different marginal hand has also singled out the responsory *Ecce virgo concipiet* with a clover-like sigil, the numeral I, and the words *A p(rima?)m d. d(omi)n(ic)a.(?)*

4 For an introduction to antiphonals, see Andrew Hughes, *Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982), 161–233.

5 See note 12 below.

6 Of the ninety sources for this feast currently on the Cantus Index, fully eighty-six use *Ecce nomen domini* as their Magnificat antiphon. <http://cantusindex.org/table?feast=01011000&l%5B%5D=386> (accessed 6 July 2021).

many chants to bring them closer to their biblical wording.⁷ Thus the Luke and Wisdom references were peeled away, and the resulting chant is taken entirely from Isaiah 30:27. It is this characteristically Carthusian “biblicized” chant that appears on the fragment.⁸

The structure of the liturgy shown in the fragment’s text is also characteristically Carthusian. Elsewhere, it was usual to begin Advent with the responsory *Aspiciens a longe*; the fragment, however, opens with *Aspicebam in visu*, which was more typically the second responsory of Advent.⁹ Carthusians, however, placed it first. The typically Carthusian ordering of chant is present throughout the fragment.¹⁰ The rubrics likewise betray their Carthusian use: the first, rather lengthy, rubric describes Advent Sunday as that proximal to the feast of St. Andrew; the next outlines the private commemorations for various saints and the dates on which they are to be

7 On this topic, see Katarina Ster, “Resacralization of the Sacred: Carthusian Liturgical Plainchant and (Re)biblicization of Its Texts,” *Musicological Annual* 5 (2014): 157–80. The principles by which Carthusians reformed their responsories are laid out in Hansjakob Becker, *Die Responsorien des Karthäuserbreviers: Untersuchungen zu Urform und Herkunft des Antiphonars der Karthäuse* (Munich: Max Hueber Verlag, 1971).

8 This chant, and others used at Vespers and Lauds, may be compared with those in the fully digitized (fourteenth century, Parisian) Carthusian diurnal, South Bend, Indiana, University of Notre Dame, Rare Books and Special Collections, MS lat. b.4, available here: https://rarebooks.library.nd.edu/digital/bookreader/CodLat_b04/#page/273/mode/1up (accessed 6 July 2021). Notes and neume groupings are identical.

9 Again, the Cantus Index can prove the rarity of this habit; although *Aspicebam* (given the ID 006128) is a widespread responsory with 142 concordances in the Cantus Index, most sources (98) give it as the *second* responsory of first Advent, with the other concordances being repetitions of the same later in the first week of Advent (41 instances) and two giving the responsory at Vespers in addition to Matins. The only source in the Index to give *Aspicebam* as the opening responsory of Matins on the first Sunday of Matins in the Index is Grenoble, Bibliothèque Municipale, MS 867, which is, again, Carthusian.

10 There is no complete Carthusian antiphonal currently indexed on Cantus, but several have been digitized, including two now in Grenoble, Bibliothèque municipale, MSS 418 (Grande Chartreuse?, fourteenth century) and 19 (ca. 1400) available at <https://pagella.bm-grenoble.fr/BMG.html?id=Bmg-0002091> and <https://pagella.bm-grenoble.fr/BMG.html?id=Bmg-0002177>, respectively. A list of chants by incipit, taken from antiphonals from Gosnay and Champmol, may be found in F.C. Steyn, “Three Unknown Carthusian Liturgical Manuscripts with Music of the 14th to 16th Centuries in the Grey Collection, South African Library, Cape Town,” 2 vols. (PhD diss., University of South Africa, 1994), 2:29–184.

done; and the third, on folio 10r, describes the practices to be followed on fasting Saturdays.¹¹ All three of these instructions were necessary to the particular needs of the Carthusian use, and not of other monastic orders. One may thus be confident that the fragment was originally made for use in a Carthusian house.¹²

Extant English Antiphonals

In theory, every church in late medieval England was furnished with at least one antiphonal, and therefore thousands, perhaps tens of thousands, of antiphonals must once have existed.¹³ Only a fraction of these remain extant, and most of these as binding fragments. While eleven complete or near-complete English antiphonals (of all liturgical uses) remain from the late Middle Ages, over seventy-five can be identified in use as binding material, and more certainly remain yet unidentified.¹⁴ As N. R. Ker pointed out,

11 The wording of the third of these is particularly close to the *Consuetudines* of the order: “Iste antiphona precedentur super psalmos Benedictus et Magnificat cessant qua die laudes principie incipiunt Sabbato ieiuniorum temporalium vi missam cum quinque lectionibus excepta epistola et ix in ecclesia psalmos.” C f. *Consuetudines D. Guigonis* III.2: “In Sabbato jejuniorum temporalium sextam et missam cum quinque, excepta epistola, lectionibus, et deinde nonam continuatim in ecclesia cantamus” (PL 103: 641–42). (Guigo’s Chapter II.1 describes the practice concerning commemorations outlined in the second rubric.) Such detailed rubrics are uncommon in antiphonals.

12 Steyn listed sixty-four known Carthusian antiphonals in 1992. The Medieval Music Online database (<http://musmed.eu/order/590>, accessed 6 July 2021) adds another nineteen antiphoners and diurnals to the list, and the diurnal at Notre Dame brings the total to eighty-four—none of them from England.

13 Owain Edwards, “How Many Sarum Antiphonals Were There in England and Wales in the Middle of the Sixteenth Century?” *Revue Bénédictine* 99 (1989): 155–80 at 176–80.

14 Including Irish and Welsh sources, Hughes counted “about twenty British antiphonals complete enough for accurate observation,” but he does not list shelfmarks, and we are unable to match that number unless also including the noted sarum breviaries he discusses (*Medieval Manuscripts for Mass and Office*, 242). Unlike the counts made by Salisbury, Edwards, and possibly Hughes, our count does not include breviaries, which may include the same musical material as antiphonals (Michael Cheung Salisbury, “Stability and Variation in the Office Chants of the Sarum Sanctorale,” *Plainsong and Medieval Music* 27 [2018]: 1–26, Edwards,

“antiphonals are the books most commonly met with in which the leaves are big enough to be used singly as wrappers,” and therefore their preservation is unique among England’s medieval liturgical manuscripts.¹⁵ Documents bound with antiphonals date from the sixteenth into the seventeenth century, long after the music’s liturgical utility was past and their very retention theoretically banned.¹⁶ Such an extended period of use suggests that antiphonals were not understood simply as handy binding material when they happened to be available, but that they were valued for this utility, and even stored for the purpose in the face of putative bans.

Given their unique utility as wrappers, it is surprising how few illuminated antiphonals remain from medieval England. One might expect that illuminated antiphonals would have attracted special attention from binders as providing visually attractive covers. Either the binders did not care for illumination, or there were few illuminated antiphonals to choose from. For the most part, antiphonals had to be hand-copied, throughout the pre-Reformation period.¹⁷ Fewer than a dozen known English examples show

“How Many Sarum Antiphonals Were There,” 174). We are also taking catalogue identifications as accurate, and have been unable to assess each of these manuscripts ourselves. The eleven complete or near-complete English antiphonals are: Arundel Castle, Duke of Norfolk’s Library, Antiphonal; Cambridge, University Library, Add. MS 2602, Mm. ii. 9; London, British Library, Lansdowne MSS 461 and 463; London, Lambeth Palace Library MS 7; Nottingham, University Library, MS 250; Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 948; Ranworth, St. Helen’s Church, Antiphonal; Westminster, Abbey Library MS 43; Worcester, Cathedral Library, MS F. 160. Too long to list here, this exploratory fragment census is based on listings in N. R. Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969–2002), and the online catalogues of the British Library, Bodleian Library, National Archives, and the Digital Scriptorium. Such a remarkable dataset deserves further examination.

15 Ker, *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, 2:313.

16 See, for example, the mid-sixteenth-century account book Kew, The National Archives, WARD 11/17/5, covered with an antiphonal leaf, now TNA E163/22/1/23, or Norwich ANW/1/31, 1664.

17 Birkman’s single editions from 1519 and 1520 offer exceptions that prove the rule: printing antiphonals was not a financially viable proposition. ESTC S107864, *Antiphonale ad usu[m] ecclesie Sa[rum]. politissimis imaginibus decoratum* ([London or Paris]: Birkman, 1519), and ESTC S120713, *Antipho[n]arij ad usu[m] Sa[rum]. volum[n]e secu[n]du[m]: vulgo pars estualis nu[n]cupata* ([London or Paris]: Birkman, 1520).

any evidence at all of illumination. One whole and two fragmentary examples show simple *champ* initials, gold initials on parted rose and blue grounds, figured in white, and sometimes bearing simple sprays of vine-work.¹⁸ While they do require gold leaf, *champs* are very routine initials, and are generally not employed as first-rank decoration, so these three examples may demonstrate cost-cutting even among patrons wealthy enough to purchase illumination. Five examples, three whole and two fragmentary, illustrate much more complex decorative schemes, with fully illuminated programs of foliate initials and bar borders, though without figural art.¹⁹ Of course, all of the fragmentary cases, and even some of the whole examples, may once have included more highly graded material, but we can only assess what remains to us today.²⁰

Scholars agree that only two complete English antiphonals remain that show full illumination programs including historiated initials: the Wollaton Antiphonal and the Ranworth Antiphoner.²¹ The Wollaton Antiphonal was commissioned by Sir Thomas Chaworth of Wiverton, Nottinghamshire, probably around 1430. In 1460 the volume was purchased from Chaworth's executors for ten marks for use in St. Leonard's Church, Wollaton.²² Lavishly

18 Lambeth 7 (whole); London, British Library, Harley MS 6157 (binding fragment); Worcester, Worcester Cathedral, Add. MS 68/8 (binding fragment).

19 WAM 43 (whole) does include heraldry, but apparently no historiation, strictly speaking; Lansdowne 461 (whole); Lansdowne 463 (whole); Edinburgh, University Library, MS 211, fragment XII (binding fragments); and Kew, National Archives, E163/22/1/7 (binding fragment).

20 For example, Lansdowne 461 lacks both its beginning and ending material. The art that remains closely resembles that of an enormous missal, Dallas, Southern Methodist University, Bridwell Library, MS Prothro B-212. Prothro B-212 is also incomplete, but still features a few historiations, suggesting the possibility that Lansdowne may have once as well.

21 Nottingham, University Library, MS 250, and Ranworth Antiphoner. The Wollaton is partly digitized at <http://turningthepages.nottingham.ac.uk/>.

22 On the Wollaton Antiphonal, see Alixe Bovey, "The Wollaton Antiphonal: Kinship and Commemoration," in *The Wollaton Medieval Manuscripts: Texts, Owners and Readers*, ed. Ralph Hanna and Thorlac Turville-Petre (York: York Medieval Press, 2010), 30–40; Ralph Hanna and Thorlac Turville-Petre, "The Catalogue," in *The Wollaton Medieval Manuscripts: Texts, Owners and Readers*, ed. Ralph Hanna and Thorlac Turville-Petre (York: York Medieval Press, 2010), 105–8; and Kathleen L. Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts, 1390–1490*, 2 vols. (New York: Harvey Miller, 1996), 2:204–6.

illuminated, the volume bears twenty-three historiated initials, together with a dozen full bar borders, more than a dozen partial bar borders, and a wide range of ink decoration.²³ The iconography featured in the miniatures remains relatively standard, with a few idiosyncracies.²⁴ The miniature and border artists can be identified working on other volumes owned by Chaworth, and it seems that they must have been based somewhere in the area.²⁵

Though the original patron of the Ranworth Antiphoner is unknown, its calendar shows that it was made for use in Norwich diocese. Made in the 1480s, it seems to have been in St. Helen's Church, Ranworth, by the early sixteenth century.²⁶ The volume features nineteen historiated initials, and many full and partial bar borders. Like the Wollaton, the Ranworth Antiphoner also shows a range of ink decoration. Just as the Wollaton's artists are known to have worked on other East Anglian volumes, so too the artists of the Ranworth worked on other volumes with Norwich-area provenance, and likely worked in that city.²⁷ Like the Wollaton, the Ranworth's iconography is generally standard overall; however, unusual details appear in about half the miniatures, according to Kathleen L. Scott.²⁸

London Art and the Charterhouse Antiphonal Fragment

Both historiated English antiphonals and four of the rest of the illuminated antiphonals show origins in the provinces, and this rate of survival reminds us of the dense landscape of churches in late medieval cities, and even across the countryside in rural villages.²⁹ By no means did London have a monopoly on parish churches, or on fine liturgical manuscripts. Yet,

23 Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, 2:204–6.

24 Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, 2: 205.

25 Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, 2:205.

26 Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, 2:325–6.

27 Research on this artistic style is forthcoming.

28 Scott, *Later Gothic Manuscripts*, 2:325.

29 Ranworth Antiphoner (Norwich diocese); Wollaton Antiphonal (East); Lansdowne 461 (Norwich diocese); Lansdowne 463 (Norwich diocese); E163/22/1/7 (Norwich diocese); Worcester Additional 68/8 (Worcester).

given the provincial origin of both other historiated volumes, it is fortunate that the Charterhouse Antiphonal Fragment offers a glimpse of what metropolitan historiated antiphonals looked like, even if it does so in a fragmentary form.

There is little question that the Charterhouse Antiphonal was made in London. The border art characterizes a style, perhaps employed by one artist and perhaps by more than one, decorating a group of metropolitan volumes, liturgical and legal, made circa 1490–1525. While the leaves and aroids are typical of fifteenth-century English border style, late in the century these motifs grow soft and very large, and tend to deform in order to fit a box shape surrounding the text. Scott notes that this particular style employs patterns creating uniform motifs across volumes.³⁰ The use of these patterns allows us to identify the Charterhouse Antiphonal with this group of manuscripts. We can see the same acanthus and aroid patterns used in both lower corners of the Charterhouse Antiphonal Fragment in a collection of parliamentary statutes (London, British Library, Hargrave MS 274, folio 50r, for example).³¹ A very similar pattern can be found in another statute collection made for Henry VII.³² The style also appears in liturgical volumes, including a ritual, and perhaps even the Benefactor's Book of the Abbey of St. Albans, as late as 1520.³³

If the art is characteristic of a London style, the miniature can only be explained by the Carthusian destination of the volume. Elsewhere in Advent, the Wollaton and Ranworth antiphonals feature moments from the Nativity

30 Kathleen L. Scott, *Dated and Datable English Manuscript Borders* (London: British Library Press, 2002), 110.

31 Digitized samples from this manuscript can be found at <https://www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.aspx?MSID=18470&CollID=17&NStart=274>.

32 TNA E164/11, fol. 41r.

33 Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Laud Misc. 267 (ritual), and London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero D VII (Benefactor's Book), fols. 43v, 44v, 47v, 81r, and 154r. The style decorates the entry for Abbot Ramrynge, who ordered this batch of entries to be written and decorated at some point after he became abbot in 1492 and before he died in 1520. Digitized samples of Laud Misc. 267 can be found at <https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/objects/da0f955d-b50b-41c8-b8b4-e6066faa232e/>, and Cotton MS Nero D VII is digitized in full at https://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Nero_D_VII&index=30. More research on this style is forthcoming.

story, and the complete Charterhouse Antiphonal may have once as well.³⁴ Notably, neither of the other historiated antiphonals begins the Temporale with a truly historiated initial at all, and the Wollaton opens with the family arms.³⁵ In the fragment, the historiation shows a half-length Christ displaying his hand- and side-wounds within a cloud floating above a green landscape.³⁶ Highlighting the Wounds presses the eschatology of Incarnation to its final conclusion, and may gesture toward the Carthusian order no less than Chaworth's arms indicated his family. This Christological iconography also seems to reference the opening antiphon, and such a choice reflects the same Carthusian sensibilities that revised the chant to more closely quote scripture. Such an iconographic decision would also be entirely in keeping with Carthusian devotion to the Man of Sorrows, and suggests that the iconography of this antiphonal was carefully considered.³⁷

While known for their ascetic, pious lifestyle, Julian Luxford has shown that the English Carthusians' books featured typical amounts of illumination.³⁸ Most historiated volumes seem to have been gifts, and "the commission of illustrated, as opposed to simply decorated, manuscripts by Carthusians from outside the order seems to have been rare."³⁹ Luxford also offered examples of Carthusians decorating their own volumes; however, the style and technique of this art generally does not match that of commercial manuscript illumination of the era.⁴⁰ Thus, the illuminated border and historiated initial on this antiphonal would have fit in among the rest of the Charterhouse's liturgical manuscripts, especially if it was a gift donated to the order.

34 The Wollaton's first miniature in the Temporale is the Nativity (fol. 34), and Ranworth chooses the Adoration of the Shepherds (fol. 22).

35 Nottingham 250, fol. 1r.

36 Unfortunately, the rubbing obscuring the entire cover prevents us from assessing much more detail in either the border or the miniature, including making more assessments of palette, shading, and hatching.

37 Julian M. Luxford, "Precept and Practice: The Decoration of English Carthusian Books," in *Studies in Carthusian Monasticism in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Julian M. Luxford (Turnhout: Brepols, 2009), 225–67, at 245–46.

38 Luxford, "Precept and Practice," 227, 229.

39 In fact, the English Carthusians may not have commissioned many of their own manuscripts at all; Luxford, "Precept and Practice," 235–36.

40 Luxford, "Precept and Practice," 237–53.

Much research remains to be done in the field of English liturgical manuscripts in general, and we struggle even to accurately count remaining antiphonals. Therefore, the Charterhouse Antiphonal's importance far outweighs its fragmentary state. We are familiar with the artists and patrons of the Wollaton Antiphonal, and the artists and an early site of the Ranworth Antiphoner. With only a bifolium extant, we recognize the artists and audience of the Charterhouse Antiphonal as well. The leaves offer us a glimpse into the liturgical life at the London Charterhouse at an especially poignant moment of its history, a generation or less before the Reformation. As the joyful season of Advent began, with these leaves, the silent monks sang in contemplation of Christ in majesty, triumphant over his wounds. The singers could not know that martyrdom awaited some of them, too. The fragmentary Charterhouse Antiphonal preserves only their solemn joy.