Special Collections Resources for Manuscript and Printed Book Used in Liturgical Contexts during the Middle Ages

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Useful Guides
Special Collections: http://libguides.ucc.ie/specialcollections
Medieval Studies: http://libguides.ucc.ie/medievalstudies

Liturgical books
“Liturgical” manuscript or printed book were intended for use in church and divine worship. Liturgical books were for the celebration of either Mass or the Divine Office.

- Mass = consecration and distribution of the Eucharistic bread and wine to commemorate Christ’s Crucifixion and the redemption of humankind; celebrated in churches and monasteries on a daily basis

- Divine Office = Daily round of services offered to God; services consisted of a combination of psalms, prayers, readings, singing, etc.; in monasteries, a total of eight services is offered across the days at set Hours
The missal became the most important service book for the celebration of mass. It was introduced in the Carolingian period (c. 9th century). By the 13th century it had supplanted the older Sacramentary, prompted by the development of saying private masses and low masses.

The missal contains the full range of scriptural readings, prayers and chants for mass, together with ceremonial directions. Often only the opening words of readings, etc. will be given, the full text would be known by heart or available in other service books such as:

- **Sacramentary**: prayers said by the priest during mass
- **Gradual**: principal choir book
- **Evangelary or Evangelistary**: Gospel readings arranged according to the liturgical year with the full reading (*pericope*) for each feast; sometimes also called Gospel lectionary or Pericope Book
- **Epistolar**: Epistle readings (generally NT, but also OT) arranged according to liturgical year
- **Lectionary**: passages of scripture (Epistles and Gospels) read out as lessons during mass; sometimes also called *comes* (companion)

The breviary is the principal book for the performance of the Divine Office

**Etymology:** From the Latin "brevis" = short, concise

**Hours of prayer** observed by the monks:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matins = ca. 2am</th>
<th>Sext = “Sixth hour of the day”, noon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lauds = follows straight after Matins</td>
<td>None = “Ninth hour of the day”, ca. 3pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime = first hour of the day, ca. 6am</td>
<td>Vespers = onset of evening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terce = “third hour of the day”, ca. 9am</td>
<td>Compline = close of day, before retiring</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The breviary is divided into two main sections: the **temporale** and **sanctorale**

**Temporale** (also known as “Proper of time”, *Proprium de tempore*) = material for celebrating services organised around the commemoration and celebration of principal events in Christ’s life:

- Starting with Advent Sunday (four weeks before Christmas)
- Christmas Day (major feast)
- Feast of the Circumcision (1 January)
- Epiphany (6 January)
- Presentation of Christ in the Temple (also known as Purification of the Virgin Mary or Candlemas) (2 February)
- Lent
- Palm Sunday (Christ’s entry into Jerusalem)
- Holy Week and Easter Sunday (climax of the Christian year)
- Ascension (40 days after Resurrection)
- Pentecost
- Advent
Sanctorale (also known as “Proper of Saints”, Proprium de sanctorum) = material (prayers, music, texts) for the celebration of Saints throughout the year; usually includes feasts of all major saints.

The Sanctorale was normally supplemented by the Commune Sanctorum (“Common of Saints”) to celebrate feast days of saints who have no liturgical texts written for them specifically; arranges into different subsections for the rank of the Saint (apostle, martyr, confessor, virgin).

The breviary usually contains:
- Full complement of texts, both said and sung, for all hours
- Texts include psalms, antiphons, lessons, prayers, etc.
- Can contain written music (“noted breviary”)
- Calendar: very important for establishing feast days; they usually use the Roman system (three fixed points in a month, i.e. kalends, nones, ides)

Books Used in Liturgical and Private Devotional Contexts

Psalter
The Psalter is primarily a book of Psalms. In the non-monastic Roman liturgy of the Middle Ages, all 150 Psalms were recited each week (mainly at matins and vespers), divided up into cycles.

The Psalter was the principal book for private devotions before the emergence of the Books of Hours in the 13th century.

If Psalters were designed to be used in the performance of the Divine Office, they contained other relevant texts, such as the Hours of the Virgin. Other possible additions could include:
- Calendars
- Canticles (= hymns, excluding the Psalms)
- Creeds (=statement of belief)
- Litany of the Saints (= series of invocations for deliverance and intercession addressed to the Holy Trinity, the Virgin, angels, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins)
- Prayers

Book of Hours (also called a primer or horae)
- Central text: Little Office of the Blessed Virgin (or Hours of the Virgin), a shorter, simpler version of the Divine Office performed at the eight canonical hours
- Text of the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin known from the 10th century
- Originally only read by ecclesiastics
- Enters popular use by the end of the 12th century, often attached to the Psalter
- Gradually, a variety of other elements were added to the Little Office: a liturgical calendar, a Litany of the Saints, Suffrages (intercessory prayers presented to a hierarchy of Saints), the Office of the Dead, other Offices, Penitential Psalms, Gradual Psalms and prayers. The presence of these elements can help to date the Book of Hours.
The Book of Hours takes its more or less standard form in the 13th century, and remains in use until the 16th century, also as a printed book.

- Books of Hours express the layperson’s desire to imitate the prayers of monastic life.
- Nearly always illuminated, according to the patron’s budget (sometimes even portraying the patron).
- Medieval best-sellers, made to suit all tastes and pockets (esp. popular in France, Flanders, but also for the English market).

A typical Book of Hours would have:

1. A calendar recording the fixed feasts of the liturgical year and anniversaries of important saints; often ornamented with miniatures portraying the signs of the zodiac and the occupations of the months (invaluable information about everyday life).

2. A sequence of extracts from the Four Gospels, with the four evangelists often depicted with their symbols: John (“In the beginning was the word”), followed by Luke (story of Incarnation of Christ, starting with the Annunciation), Matthew (continuation of Christmas story), and Mark (Christ appearing to the disciples after Resurrection).

3. The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary, often illustrated by eight scenes showing the Virgin in her role as mother of Christ according to the eight canonical hours:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matins</th>
<th>= the Annunciation</th>
<th>Sext</th>
<th>= the Magi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lauds</td>
<td>= the Visitation</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>= the Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime</td>
<td>= the Nativity</td>
<td>Vespers</td>
<td>= the Flight into Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terce</td>
<td>= the Shepherds</td>
<td>Compline</td>
<td>= Coronation of the Virgin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, especially in England, scenes from Christ’s Passion and Resurrection were often preferred to the scenes of Christ’s birth and childhood.

4. A variety of subsidiary material such as the Office of the Dead, Hours of the Cross, Hours of the Holy Spirit, “Fifteen O’s” (devotion to the Passion attributed to St Bridget of Sweden, d. 1372), the seven Penitential Psalms with a litany of the saints, prayers, etc.

Prayer Book

- Collections of prayers for private devotional use appeared at least as early as the 8th century in the Insular world, and shortly after in the Carolingian Empire.
- Prayers were collated according to central devotional themes.
- Often accompanied by passages from the Gospels and the Psalms.
- Popularity grew in the later Middle Ages, esp. with aristocratic patrons for whom fine illuminations would be included.
  - Supplements the Psalter and Book of Hours for private devotional use.