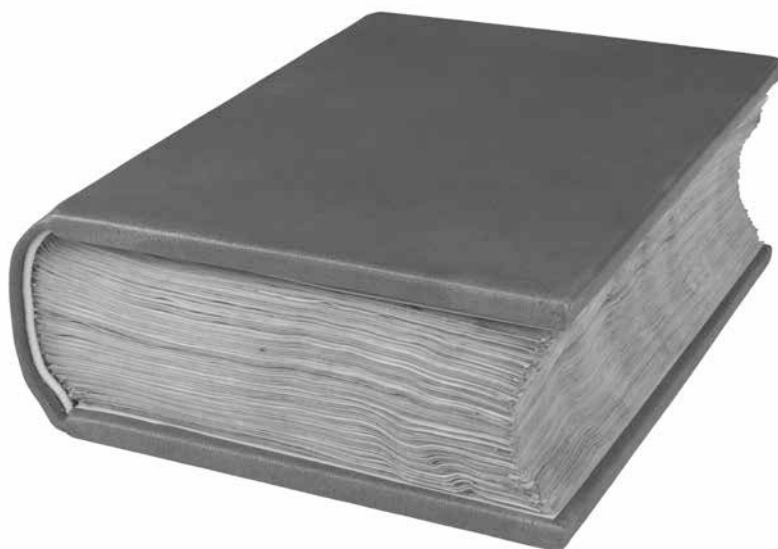


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*The Codex Sancti Paschalis and the
'Fossanova' Manuscripts of the Phillipps
Collection*

THE CODEX SANCTI PASCHALIS (CSP) is a rare treasure of Franciscan history, belonging to the Order of Friars Minor of the Province of the Holy Spirit (Australia and New Zealand), and on deposit at the State Library of Victoria. The manuscript is a missal, containing the text of the mass as to be recited by the priest and used in a Franciscan community.¹ It is one of a small number of identifiably Franciscan thirteenth-century liturgical books to survive to the present day, and is thus of great interest to scholars of liturgical history and of art history. It is also the earliest Western Christian liturgical manuscript in Australia. As with so many items in the vast collection acquired by Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792–1872) and dispersed after his death, little is known for certain about its provenance and early history. This brief study serves to clarify a confused claim that has crept into descriptions of the manuscript, namely that prior to being acquired by Phillipps, it belonged both to the Cistercian abbey of Fossanova, south of Rome, and before that, to the ancient Benedictine abbey of Nonantola, in the province of Modena.



The *Codex Sancti Paschalis* in its new binding.

Reproduced courtesy of the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor, St Paschal Library, Box Hill, Victoria

Unravelling its history illustrates the broader problem of identifying the provenance of manuscripts acquired by one of the greatest private collectors of all time.

While the original community that used the CSP may never be identified, scholars are agreed that it is of Umbrian provenance, and that it was very likely decorated by Perugian miniaturists with a professional connection to the Order of Friars Minor in that town. The missal, composed of 395 folios, contains 37 decorated initials (including one historiated initial of Christ in Majesty, f. 7^r) and a crucifixion miniature of exceptional quality (f. 182^r). Stylistic analysis has connected this decoration to the ateliers and influence of the Maestro di Deruta-Salerno (active ca. 1270–80) and Venturella di Pietro (active early 1300s). Together with the liturgical feasts included in the missal's calendar, this evidence suggests the missal was probably produced in the 1290s.² Both stylistic and liturgical evidence must be used cautiously in matters of dating, due to the many other factors that affected the production of liturgical manuscripts: the impact of local liturgical identity, the scarcity of liturgical exempla, and the particular constraints placed on the Friars Minor (the impact of the vow of poverty on book production). Whether or not the CSP was in constant use during its first three hundred years is not definitively known; it seems likely that it fell into disuse at some point (or was improperly cared for wherever it was stored), as the water-damaged condition of some of its folios (particularly in the first and last quires) indicates time spent in a damp environment without a cover. Given the many glosses in later hands that appear in the CSP, it seems likely that the missal was in daily use for at least some of these early centuries. Further analysis of these glosses is required to investigate the impact of the Tridentine reforms on the use (or disuse) of the CSP.

Provenance

The earliest known reference to the CSP is a brief description in the printed catalogue of the library of Sir Thomas Phillipps. It is listed as 12289 (no. 30), part of a collection of 56 codices (originally 55 codices, but the final item divided into two) under the heading 'Payne & Foss. 1848, Ex. Abb. S. Stephani, de Nova Fossa'.³

12289 (30) Missale fratrum minorum secundum do[mino]. Thick fol[io] v[ellum].
s. xiv (folia 396).

In a xerox copy of the original *Catalogus* of the Phillipps collection, extensively annotated by A.N.L. Munby and held in the Cambridge University Library manuscripts room, a note confirms that this missal is now 'In St Paschal's College, Box Hill, Victoria.'

The great Franciscan scholar, A. G. Little (1863–1945) mentioned the Phillipps 12289 manuscript (the Codex Sancti Paschalis) only in passing, in a detailed study of Phillipps 12290, a manuscript he had purchased from the Phillipps collection at Sotheby's 6–9 June 1910. Both 12289 and 12290 were part of a group of Franciscan manuscripts listed among the codices acquired for Phillipps by the booksellers Payne and Foss, who believed the group came from the Cistercian abbey of St Stefano, Fossanova. Phillipps



Two folios from the *Codex Sancti Paschalis*: the Christ in Majesty initial, f. 7r, and the Crucifixion miniature, f. 182r. Reproduced courtesy of the Franciscan Order of Friars Minor, St Paschal Library, Box Hill, Victoria

12290 is a north Italian manuscript from around 1300 containing the two *Rules* of Francis (1209/10–1221 and 1223) with associated commentaries, an important Latin version of the *Fioretti di San Francesco* (an account of the Life of Francis with a strongly Spiritual Franciscan flavour, after 1337), chapters from the *Speculum Perfectionis* (1318) and various other writings, including works by Peter Auriol, Bonaventure, the Five Masters and Peter John Olivi. The manuscript carries a note affirming that it was written on the order of Fr Laurent de Rieti, Minister of the Province of St Anthony (i.e. of Venice).⁴ A. G. Little donated this manuscript to the Bodleian Library, Oxford, in 1940 where it now has the shelfmark Lat. th. d. 23.⁵

Little is noted by Munby as having frequented the Phillipps collection at Cheltenham prior to 1914.⁶ Munby observed that Phillipps 12290 was part of a small group of Franciscan manuscripts within a larger group that came from the abbey of Fossanova. It was reported in the Phillipps catalogue that Payne and Foss sold this Fossanova group to Phillipps in 1848. The Franciscan 'Fossanova' manuscripts were:

- i. Ph 12887, a breviary (sold in 1903, location unknown).
- ii. Ph 12888, a breviary from Siena (now in Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, McClean 60).⁷
- iii. Ph 12289, a missal from Perugia (CSP, now in Melbourne, SLV).⁸
- iv. Ph 12290, miscellanea from Venice (*Rules* of Francis, *I Fioretti* and other works, now in Oxford, Bodleian Library, Lat. th. d. 23).⁹

v.Ph 12299, a missal (Use of Rome, location unknown)

vi.Ph 12302, *I Fioretti, Leg. De S. Clara* from Fabriano ('olim pauperarum (!) sorarum (!) de Fabriano', now in Manchester, Rylands Library, Ital. 51).¹⁰

Whether all of the manuscripts listed in this part of the *Catalogus* actually came to Payne and Foss via the abbey of St Stefano, Fossanova, is uncertain. St Stefano was originally a Cistercian abbey, built in the late twelfth century and famous for being the place where Thomas Aquinas died in 1274, en route from Naples to the Council of Lyons. The abbey was secularised by Napoleon in 1810, but in 1821 returned to Church control, being taken over by the Carthusians of Trisulti and then transferred to the Franciscans (Friars Minor Conventual) only in 1936 – long after Franciscan manuscripts were included in the 'Fossanova' collection, sold to Phillipps in 1848.¹¹

That some of the manuscripts listed in the Phillipps catalogue as coming from Fossanova actually came from the ancient Benedictine abbey of Nonantola (near Modena), after being taken to the Cistercian Bibliotheca Sessoriana of the church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme (Rome), was established by the Giuseppe Gallotti in his detailed study of the ancient library catalogues of Nonantola (from 1166, 131, 1464 and 1464–90). The first five of the 'Fossanova' manuscripts that date from the eighth century and are written in the Lombard script, may well have come from Nonantola, as did a twelfth-century Nonantola manuscript (of the sermons of St Maximus) that passed into the collection of Major J. R. Abbey, and described by J. J. G. Alexander and A. C. de la Mare.¹² In a complementary study, published in the same year, the abbé José Ruyschaert furthered scholarly knowledge of the locations of these manuscripts. He observed that a number of them surfaced in the collection of the bookdealer Gianbattista Petrucci between 1798 and 1813, and that they had been acquired by Payne and Foss for Thomas Phillipps.¹³ Ruyschaert, however, never mentioned the shelfmarks of the Franciscan manuscripts listed among those of Fossanova as being part of the Nonantola collection.

In volume 4 of his Phillipps studies, Munby caused confusion by stating at one point (correctly) that some of the 'Fossanova' collection had originally come from Nonantola, but then asserting (on the authority of a communication from Ruyschaert) that the entire collection came from Nonantola.¹⁴ This second claim was repeated by Margaret Manion, following the authority of Christopher De Hamel, in her study of CSP.¹⁵ Yet scrutiny of Ruyschaert's original investigation implies that Munby's earlier assertion was more accurate, and that the 'Fossanova' manuscripts came from many different locations. The Italian bookdealer, Petrucci seems to have included Nonantola manuscripts in the collection he listed as coming from Fossanova, before it was sold by Payne and Foss to Phillipps.

The small group of Franciscan manuscripts in Phillipps' collection came from a variety of locations, not all of which can be identified. They are listed here with (in italics) the annotations made by Munby in the xerox copy of the Phillipps *Catalogus* held in Cambridge University Library. References are f[olio], v[ellum] and S[otheby's auction catalogues] and lot number.

- i. 12287** (28) Breviarium fratrum minorum secundum consuetudinem romanae curiae f. v.. xiv half bound spotted sides = *S[otheby's]* 1899, 252 *Not sold S[otheby's]* 1903, 184 and *S[otheby's]* 1908, 125.
- ii. 12288** (29) ditto fol. v. Xiv 1377 *S[otheby's]* 1896, 139 *Fitzwilliam McLean* 60
- iii. 12289** (30) Missale fratrum minorum secundum do. Thick fol. v. s. xiv (folia 396) *St Paschal's College Box Hill, Victoria*.
- iv. 12290** (31) Regula B. Francisci et fratrum minorum ... Testamentum B Francisci f. v. s. xiv first Page illum [*S[otheby's]* 1899, 589. *Not sold S[otheby's]* 1910, 345 £20.10 *A G Little Bodl lat. th. d. 23*.
- v. 12302** (45) Li Fioritti del S. Francescho, Legenda de S. Chiara f. v. s. xiv Olim sororum pauperum de Fabriano ; scriptura cursiva *S[otheby's]* 1911, 412 £16.00 *Q[uarich]. Rylands Ital. 51*.
- vii. 12299** Missale secundum consuetudinem Romanum *S[otheby's]* 30 Nov 1976 lot 885 *T J Symonds* £3600.

While there is no evidence the CSP came to Payne and Foss via Nonantola, it did not necessarily come from Fossanova either. They were added to other 'Fossanova' manuscripts before the collection was bought by Phillipps from Payne and Foss. Munby's annotations to the xerox of the Phillipps catalogue in Cambridge University Library indicate, for instance, that Ph 12288 came from the Franciscans in Siena (as Little suggested) and that Ph 12302 came from the Poor Clares at Fabriano (in the Marche region). These manuscripts were all grouped together under the name 'Fossanova' by the Roman bookseller Gianbattista Petrucci, who gathered them from many sources and sold them to Payne and Foss, Phillipps's agents. While some of Phillipps's Italian manuscripts did come from Nonantola, it seems unlikely that the CSP was one of them, as has been claimed.¹⁶ It is more probable that it came from a Franciscan house and was grouped with others from Fossanova and elsewhere by Petrucci for the sake of convenience.

When Thomas Phillipps died in 1910, his enormous collection of over 60,000 manuscripts was sold in portions over many years. W. H. Robinson Ltd had acted for the State Library of Victoria in negotiating the purchase of the Phillipps manuscripts from a sale at Sotheby's in 1946.¹⁷ In 1949, Robinson's purchased what remained of the Phillipps library, the rest having been dispersed around the world. A representative of the firm wrote to the Chief Librarian of the State Library of Victoria, C. A. McCallum, and proposed a scheme of mutual benefit – the loan of group lots of ten or twelve manuscripts, to be exhibited in the Library, which would hopefully inspire 'some wealthy Australian to make a gift to [the] library'.¹⁸ So it happened that on 28 February 1949 the first such consignment arrived at the State Library in Melbourne, and it was reported in the *Argus* that a 'beautiful' Franciscan missal (the CSP) was amongst the collection.¹⁹

Scholars are in the fortunate position of having a detailed record of the CSP's purchase by the Order of Friars Minor from one who was intimately involved in this process – Fr Celsus Kelly OFM. His article in the *Provincial Chronicle of the Holy Ghost Province of Australia and New Zealand* describes in depth the arrival of the missal in this country, negotiations about its sale, and its eventual purchase by the Order. He related that the CSP 'caused considerable interest, not to say excitement in the various

Melbourne Communities'.²⁰ One of the many friars to visit the exhibition specifically to view the CSP was Fr Vincent Long OFM, the Guardian of St Paschal's College, Box Hill. Kelly, presumably obtaining his information from Fr Long himself, records some of the Guardian's thoughts:

What a wonderful thing it would be if it found its way home again to the Friars – at St Paschal's College! What an inspiration it would be to our present students and the students for generations to come. But there is only one chance in a million of that happening.²¹

This 'one chance in a million' came to fruition. The State Library of Victoria was also keen to purchase the CSP for its collection, and had even begun raising funds for this purpose.²² One of the Library Trustees directing this matter was Fr W. P. Hackett SJ, who was also the director of the Central Catholic Library, another group desirous of purchasing the CSP. Fr Hackett's difficult position, representing conflicting groups, led to his withdrawal from the negotiations.²³ With the Central Catholic Library out of the running, the Franciscans (as another viable Catholic group) had the opportunity to channel the funding from Catholic Melburnians previously promised to the CCL. With the support of Fr Hackett, Kelly approached and secured the financial support of a private donor.²⁴ This individual provided £550, and wished to remain anonymous in the public record. The State Library was still keen to purchase the missal, however, and further negotiations ensued before the Library agreed to allow the Franciscans to buy the manuscript.²⁵ There were three conditions:

- 1) that the Missal should remain in Australia [later changed to Victoria by the Trustees];
- 2) that in the event of the library at Box Hill being dispersed the Public Library should have the first option of acquiring the Missal; and
- 3) that it should be available to the Public Library for exhibition purposes.²⁶

On Tuesday 12 July 1949, the CSP arrived at St Paschal's Friary in Box Hill, eventually having been bought by the Order of Friars Minor for £507/15/5.²⁷ The missal remained in St Paschal Library for nearly 50 years, amongst the friars who continue to treasure it as a living part of their spiritual and cultural heritage. In 1990, it was placed on permanent loan to the State Library of Victoria for reasons of conservation. In 2007–08, the CSP was repaired and rebound by conservators at the Library in preparation for its inclusion in the exhibition *The Medieval Imagination: Medieval and Renaissance Illuminated Manuscripts from Cambridge, Australia and New Zealand* (March–November 2008, State Library of Victoria).²⁸ In November 2009, it was returned to St Paschal's Friary for an exhibition and international conference celebrating the 800th anniversary of the founding of the Order of Friars Minor.²⁹ Still belonging to the Franciscan friars (ofm) in Australia, and secure in its beautiful new binding of scarlet alum-tawed goatskin, the Codex Sancti Paschalis is ready for the next chapter of its long life.