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**Obit Book of the Parish Church of Saint-Martin and Saint-Magne in Nangis  
In Latin and French, manuscript on parchment  
[France, Nangis (Seine-et-Marne), c. 1285-90 to the 16<sup>th</sup> century]**

*37 folios, including 2 preliminaries + 2 paper leaves loosely inserted at end, complete, mostly in quires of 8 (collation i<sup>r</sup>, ii<sup>s</sup>, iii<sup>s</sup>, iv<sup>s</sup>, v<sup>s</sup>, vi<sup>r</sup><sup>(4-1)</sup> [last folio cancelled] + [II] loose ff. copied on paper), ruled in plummet for 24 lines, written space 150 x 118 mm., written originally in a Gothic hand in red and light brown ink (some later entries in darker black ink) with sparse entries for each day of the year 7 lines apart, mostly with the date in Roman numerals, and occasionally for major liturgical feasts and for a small selection of anniversaries of major benefactors (the earliest date being 1289, 2 January), the "KL" symbols for each month in large red letters, the spaces between each daily entry subsequently filled with very numerous anniversaries of donors to the church with names and benefactions of land and kind in a wide variety of hands, late thirteenth to early sixteenth-century, some entries crossed out, additions at each end, many signs of use, inserted paper leaves lightly wormed, generally sound. CONTEMPORARY BINDING of beveled wooden boards sewn on 3 thongs pegged into tunnel grooves, covered with tawed leather, marks from a clasp once on edge of upper cover and a pin once in centre of lower cover, binding stained, battered, and scored with circular cuts but unsophisticated and intact; some wormholes in last parchment folio and in loose paper bifolium. Dimensions: 200 x 150 mm.*

Intact and in its original binding, this is a previously unknown and unrecorded book of obits and anniversaries for the small parish of Nangis, located south-east of Paris, interesting for the precious historical record it offers of local social and economic circumstances over three centuries, as well as the insight it provides into the relationship of the Church to lay society and into the phenomenon of necrology-obituaries in the development of liturgical commemoration. Relatively few such manuscripts survive in private hands, and even fewer have been systematically studied.

**PROVENANCE**

1. From the small parish church of St.-Martin, Nangis, in the diocese of Sens, about 40 minutes south-east of Paris (parish church, dedicated to Saint Martin, diocese of Sens, doyenné de Montereau; the patron Saint Martin is quoted twice in the

calendar, f. 22: "Translatio sancti Martini" [4 July]; f. 33: "Idus Martini epicopi et confessoris festum duplex" [11 November]). The thirteenth-century church is adjacent to the Chateau of Nangis, occupied in the late Middle Ages by the family of Bouchard-Montmorency (see Bray [1959], pp. 58-60; see also T. Lhuillier, *L'ancien château de Nangis...*, Paris, 1893). The sparse liturgical entries include the feasts of the relics of Sens Cathedral (7 January, f. 3v), St. Lupus of Sens (1 September, f. 27v; *Act. SS*, Sept. I, 255-264), and the translation of the relics of St. Savinien, first bishop of Sens (25 August; f. 26v; *Vies des saints et des bienheureux*, "Saint Savinien et Potencien, eveques de Sens, vol. 12, pp. 805-823; saints Savinien and Potencien are penned in again on f. 31v). The fifteenth-century list of lands on the page after December begins "Hec sunt terre ecclesie de Nang[iaco]"; the seventeenth-century heading on f. 3 describes it, incorrectly, as "Marthologe de la cure de Nangis"; and there are titles of various dates on the upper cover, all specifying Nangis by name ("Cartulaire de la cure de Nangis"; "Martyrologe de Nangis"; "Terres de Nangis"). It probably remained in the possession of the church until the French Revolution. Judging by the script of the whole of the calendar, but also with reference to the main and earliest rubrics and obit entries, it seems quite likely that the main section of this obit book was started in the last quarter of the thirteenth century, some time around 1285-1290, the earliest date recorded being 1289 (f. 3) but the rubric on f. 21v refers to Bouchard de Montmorency, probably Bouchard I whom we know died in 1284 (Bouchard de Montmorency is the only lay benefactor whose entry is in red). The same hand also penned in an entry on f. 3v for a donation made in the year 1301 by a certain "Emelina." The obit book was from then on filled according to the anniversaries and donations made by fellow parishioners.

2. Dr. Andre Rooryck, MS 30.

## TEXT

ff. 1-2v, Various prayers to be recited: "Nous ferons priere a Jesu Crist pour la pais que Nostre Sire la nous vuelle [...] envoyer du ciel" [...] Nous ferons priere pour tous marchans et marchandes de [...] merchandise que ce soit en terre ou en mer que nostre sire leur [...] faire et mener ceulx merchandise et sy lealment que le puissant acquerir etc. [...] Nous ferons priere pour ceulx qui font le pain benoit [...] Nous ferons priere pour les amez de nos peres et de nos meres, de nos seures et de nos freres [...] et pour tous les benefacteurs et pour toutes les ames qui atendent la mercy de Nostre Sire dont les corps reposent en l'esglise de ceans et en tous autres cemetieres...";

ff. 3-36, Roman Calendar with dominical letters and days of the month recording main feasts and local saints to be honored, with obits mentioning names of deceased benefactors

and their donation in kind, in land or in currency; added in the upper margin: "Marthologe [sic] de la cure de Nangis";

ff. 3-6v, Kalendas Januarius: rubric, *KL januarius habet dies .xxxii. luna .xxx. circumcisio domini festum duplex*; incipit obit, "Obiit domina Agnes domina de Nang[iaco] pro quam habemus duas partes terre de Charmei..." [...] "Anno domini m<sup>o</sup> cc<sup>o</sup> lxxx ix<sup>o</sup> [1289 ?] obiit Andreas de la Chaise et Ysabellis eius uxor qui legavunt per anniversario suo unum arpentum terre situs iuxta cheminum de la Chaise..." (f. 3); rubric, *.viii. KL conversio sancti Pauli festum duplex. Anno domini m<sup>o</sup> ccc<sup>o</sup> xx<sup>o</sup> v<sup>o</sup> [1325] obiit Johannis Allemanni de Closello armiger (f. 6)";*

ff. 6v-9v, Kalendas Februarius: rubric, *KL februarius habet dies .xxviii. luna .xxix.*;

ff. 9v-12v, Kalendas Martius: rubric, *KL martius habet dies .xxxii. luna .xxx. marcii*;

ff. 13-15v, Kalendas Aprilis: rubric, *KL aprilis habet dies .xxx. luna .xxix.*;

ff. 16-19, Kalendas Maius: rubric, *KL maius habet .xxxii. luna .xxx.*;

ff. 19-21v, Kalendas Junius: rubric, *KL junius habet .xxx. luna .xxix.*; the following obit is worth signaling: "Obiit nobilis vir dominus Johannes de Montmorency miles quondam dominus de Nangiaco qui legavit in suo testamento [...]: Je lesse aux esglises de Nangis, de Corcelles, de la Houssaye, de St Leup, de Taverny a chascune vint s[ols] de rente perpetue..." (bottom of f. 19v), the benefactor is either Jean II de Montmorency (1407-1477), grand chamberlan or his son, Jean de Nivelles, who also died in 1477, both members of the important and powerful Montmorency dynasty (Jean de Nivelles was disinherited by his father Jean II de Montmorency: father and son both deceased in 1477) [Anselme, III, pp. 574-574; see also F. Kermina, *Les Montmorency. Grandeur et déclin*, Perrin, 2002, pp. 35-42; Desormeaux (2000), p. 43 and p. 51]; further on, a late thirteenth- or early fourteenth-century rubric, *KL Cyrici et Julite. Obit dominus Bouchardi de Monmorency qui legavit .x. s. super census suos. Item fabrice tantum et debent offerre panem et vinum*: Bouchard de Montmorency is identifiable with either Bouchard I de Montmorency (died in 1284), or Bouchard II (died after 1333) and not Bouchard VI as indicated by a later hand in the margin (see Anselme, III, 624; Desormeaux (2000), p. 38: "Cette branche s'est éteinte en 1402 après avoir produit un grand-panetier de France en la personne de Bouchard II, seigneur de Nangis [...] un grand-maître et général réformateur des Eaux et Forêts de France en la personne de Bouchard III de Nangis").

ff. 21v-24v, Kalendas Julius: *KL julius habet dies .xxxii. luna .xxx.*;

ff. 24v-27, Kalendas Augusti: *KL augusti sancti Petrus ad vincula*;

ff. 27v-29v, Kalendas Septembris: *KL septembris Lupi Senonensis episcopi et confessoris;*

ff. 30-32v, Kalendas Octobris: *KL octobris habet .xxx. luna .xxx.;*

ff. 32v-35v, Kalendas Novembris: *KL novembris habet dies .xxx. luna .xxix.;*

ff. 35v-36, Kalendas December: *KL december;*

ff. 36v-37, List of land owned by the parish church of Nangis, in Latin and French: incipit, "Hec sunt terre ecclesie de Nangiaco. Primo. Juxta [...] ecclesie de Nangiaco tria arp[enta] in una pecia [...] Item juxta crucem de chartretes quatuor arp[enta]..."; "Item derrier [sic] lou courti Guillaume Labierge demi arpent qui n'est pas amortis...";

f. 37v, blank;

ff. I-IIv, Land owned by the parish of Nangis leased to residents of the town of Nangis for a period of six years, on paper, early sixteenth century hand: incipit, "C'ensuit les terres et prés appartenant a la cure de Nangis pour bailler par moy Jehan Pointloé [?] presbtre curé dudit Nangis jusques a six ans [...]".

This is certainly the most important surviving medieval book from Nangis, a small town in the Ile-de-France, preserving records of many of its inhabitants through several centuries. It was used to pray for the souls of benefactors of the parish. It gives the names and sometimes members of their families with their bequests, usually land and sometimes money. A systematic analysis would probably allow a virtual reconstruction of most of the local gentry and citizens and the rise and fall of their fortunes over many generations. At least one of the most important noble families in Nangis is well-represented, that is the Montmorency-Bouchard: "Les Britaud, continués par les Montmorency-Bouchard (1168 à 1437 environ), les Chailly, de Veres, de Brichanteau, de Guerchy (1437 à la Révolution)" (Barrault, (1959), pp. 19-20). Amongst the donors listed, some have been crossed out, their donation having expired, and other prestigious families such as the Montmorency-Bouchard family, owners of the local castle, have been respectfully preserved.

At the beginning are prayers for peace, written during the Hundred Years' War, and for the king of France "et pour le sanc Real" (the royal blood, or the Holy Grail), for the shopkeepers of the town, for visiting pilgrims and travelers, and for all parishioners. Few documents from the medieval period survive for the church of Nangis, and the present manuscript is an important supplement to information preserved in the departmental archives (see in particular Archives départementales de Seine-et-Marne, *Répertoire méthodique des archives ecclésiastiques*, 2001: G 321 – Immeubles et revenus (1484-1789) and G 322 – Dons et legs [1487-1741]). Furthermore, the present obit book is unrecorded in all the major

repertories such as Molinier, *Obituaires de la province de Sens*, tome I (dioc. de Sens et de Paris) (1902) or Lemaître, *Répertoire des documents nécrologiques français* (1980).

In this context, an obit is the recorded inscription that reminds the parish and its clergy to perform the service for the soul of a deceased person on the anniversary day of his or her death. Thus an obit book--also called an obituary or necrology (or necrologium), sometimes referred to as a martyrology or a *Liber vitae*--is in fact a register of anniversary days when services are to be performed for the dead. This book is mainly comprised of a calendar which mentions for each day the names of the donors to be honored by a mass, or the names of the relevant saints honored locally (this accounts for the fact that obit books are sometimes confused with martyrologies, which are catalogues of martyrs and saints arranged according to the order of their feasts). In the present case, although the binding is erroneously inscribed "Martyrologe de Nangis," the register is not a martyrology per se. The oldest obit books date back to the ninth century (obituary of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, c. 860).

This previously unknown and unrecorded manuscript is interesting for numerous reasons, in particular for the information it provides for anthroponymics or the study of proper names, local topography and toponomy, but also for the better understanding of the phenomenon of necrology-obituaries in the development of liturgical commemoration, well as an insight into the relationship of the Church to lay society. Such a record is an excellent base for paleographical and codicological studies in that it offers a recording of handwriting over more than two centuries. Finally, such a manuscript offers a precious record of local rural, social and economic terminology of philological and historical interest.

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