



A Psalter for a Danish Queen?

Remarks on London, British Library, Add. MS 17868

SYNNØVE MIDTBØ MYKING¹

London, British Library, Add. MS 17868 is an illuminated luxury psalter made in Northern France c. 1260. While nothing is known of its provenance before it was acquired by the library, the composition of the calendar is unusual for a French psalter in that it includes the Scandinavian saints King Olav, King Knud, and Knud Lavard. Alongside the physical characteristics of the psalter, which suggest the manuscript was made for a member of the uppermost strata of society, the calendar thus offers a hint as to the intended recipient. This article examines the psalter with a particular focus on the calendar. Placing the manuscript in the context of other illuminated psalters owned by members of the Scandinavian elite in the thirteenth century, it suggests that the psalter may have been made for Queen Ingeborg of Norway, daughter of the Danish King Erik Plovpenning and wife of King Magnus Lagabøte. This theory is supported by the historical circumstances as they are described in the saga of Håkon Håkonsson.

Introduction

A luxury psalter produced in Northern France around 1260, currently in the British Library, is remarkable for its calendar: amongst saints celebrated universally in the Roman church, as well as in France, England, and Germany, we find the feasts of the Danish Knud Lavard and King Knud, as well as King Olav of Norway. The translation of Ansgar, “apostle of Denmark”, is also included. The psalter was clearly intended for a Danish recipient, but the lack of an ex-libris or any other marks of ownership means that its owner’s identity is shrouded in mystery.

While some art historians have studied this psalter to various extents, it is virtually unknown amongst Scandinavian historians and manuscript researchers. The aim of the present article is thus twofold: first, to introduce the psalter to a wider audience,

¹ This article was written with the support of the Research Council of Norway under grant number 300975. I thank Ben Allport, the editorial board of *Collegium Medievale*, and an anonymous reviewer for their comments and suggestions.

and second, to provide a plausible proposition as to the manuscript's medieval provenance. To this purpose, the article focusses especially on the calendar, of which a transcription is included. Based on the material features of the manuscript and the composition of the calendar, the article argues that the psalter was made for a member of the Danish royal family. Queen Ingeborg of Norway (c. 1244–1287), daughter of the Danish King Erik Plovpenning, is proposed as a possible recipient for the manuscript.

The manuscript, its origin, and its characteristics

London, British Library, Add. MS 17868 is a richly illuminated psalter in a small format, measuring 210 × 145 mm.² It was acquired by the library from the London-based bookseller Henry Bohn in 1849, but nothing is known of its history before that date, nor are there any marks of ownership. Researchers have paid varying degrees of attention to the manuscript, which has been discussed mainly from an art-historical point of view. Based on the illuminations, the psalter was placed in Northern France; Robert Branner linked it to the Paris-based “Bari workshop” (named after a manuscript now in Bari), which also produced a missal for the church of Saint-Nicaise in Reims.³ Alison Stones suggested the psalter was made in Reims, albeit heavily influenced by Parisian styles and with the participation of a Paris-trained artist.⁴ The psalter was studied most recently and most thoroughly in an article by Marina Vidas, who agreed that the psalter could possibly have been made in Reims; she concluded, however, that it was most likely produced in Paris, dating it to the 1260s or 1270s on stylistic grounds (Vidas 2018: 47). The presence in the litany of the Dominican Peter the Martyr, who was canonised in 1253, means that the psalter was produced after this date (Vidas 2018: 22).

The material quality of the psalter is very high. The parchment is fine and thin; the manuscript is lavishly illuminated and decorated, including with multi-coloured

² For selected images, see the British Library's catalogue: www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8595&CollID=27&NStart=17868 (accessed 16.06.2023).

³ Branner 1977: 105–106, 229. An origin of either Paris or Reims has also been proposed by amongst others Higgitt (2000: 99), who includes the psalter in a group of manuscripts “from Paris and Northern France”; Cordey (1933: 221), who locates it to the “Nord de la France (ou Reims ?)”; Backhouse (1997: 78), who attributes it to Paris; and Jacoub (1976: 145), who places it in Reims.

⁴ Stones 2013: 405. Stones read the *Kanuti* on 25 June as *Ramiti*, a misspelling of *Remacli*, which she saw as pointing to the abbey of Stavelot; however, she also correctly named the Translation of Knut (the sole feast included on that day) as one of the Scandinavian feasts.

and figurative line fillers. The manuscript contains a calendar followed by a prefatory cycle of eighteen illustrations, the 150 Psalms, canticles, the Athanasian Creed, a litany, petitions, the Ambrosian Hymn, and collects. There is nothing in particular in the chants, prayers, or hymns to offer any clue as to the identity of the manuscript's original recipient; the masculine form of the phrase *famulos tuos* ("your servants") in the collect *Omnipotens sempiterne Deus qui facis mirabilia magna solus* ("Almighty, eternal God, who alone do mighty miracles") does not necessarily entail a man (or group of men), since this wording also appears in manuscripts made for women (Vidas 2018: 22, n43). The saints included in the litany (f. 191r–193r) are universally celebrated, mostly consisting of Biblical figures or Late Antique martyrs.⁵ Saints named as "confessors" and "virgins" are also included in the litany, but they, too, are universally celebrated figures.⁶ Only the calendar of the psalter may give us a hint as to the original recipient's background.

The calendar of Add. MS 17868

The calendar is the first component of the manuscript (f. 1v–13r). Each month is laid out on two pages (verso–recto), allowing the reader to view the entire month when the book was open. Every month opens with a beautifully decorated KL (kalends) in blue and gold, followed by a verse about "Egyptian days" or unlucky days (in gold) and information about number of days in the month (in blue).⁷ There are four columns: one with Roman numerals denoting the "golden numbers" (*aurei numeri*) to calculate the phases of the moon, one with the seven letters A–G (for the days of the week), and finally two specifying the date of the month, with Roman numerals followed by the letters *N(onae)*, *Id(us)*, and *K(a)l(endae)*. On the specific days, religious feasts are noted, alongside astrological and computational information, such as the change of Zodiacs.⁸ The calendar's composition does not point to the liturgical use of any particular diocese, which is common for psalters of personal devotion

⁵ Apart from the Holy Trinity and the Virgin Mary, the Biblical figures are the archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael; John the Baptist; and the apostles and evangelists Peter, Paul, Andrew, John, Thomas, James, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Simon, and Thaddeus, Matthias, Mark, Luke, and Barnabas. Those named as martyrs are Stephen, Clement, Cornelius, Cyprian, Lawrence, Vincent, Denis with companions, Maurice with companions, Sebastian, Thomas, and Peter.

⁶ The "confessors" are Silvester, Hilary, Martin, Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory, Nicholas, Dominic, Francis, Jerome, Benedict, and Anthony. The "virgins" are Mary Magdalene, Felicity, Perpetua, Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, and Catherine.

⁷ On calendar verses denoting "Egyptian days", see Hennig 1955: 81–89.

⁸ A transcription of the calendar is included in the Appendix.

(Vidas 2006: 18). George F. Warner (1903) suggested that it was compiled based on a martyrology. Although he did not go into detail, his proposal may have been due to the cases where martyrology-like phrasings specify the place of death of certain saints, as in the entry of 17 December: *Apud Ciprum beati Lazari et Marthe* (“In Cyprus, [death of] blessed Lazarus and Martha”, f. 13). There is also the fact that some saints are commemorated on days ascribed to them by martyrologies such as that of Ado of Vienne, rather than on their “official” feast days.⁹

The most striking feature of the calendar, as pointed out by Vidas (2018: 14), is the presence of feasts of Danish saints, which indicates that the intended reader was of Danish origin. The feasts in question are the translation of Duke Knud Lavard (25 June, in gold) and King Knud of Denmark (10 July). Saint Olav of Norway (29 July) is also included, strengthening the Scandinavian connection.¹⁰ The same can be said for the translation of Ansgar (9 September), known for his missionary efforts in Denmark and Sweden in the ninth century. The other saints included are mainly Roman martyrs and other universally venerated figures, as well as some more regional saints.¹¹ French saints feature heavily, a fact which may be at least partly influenced by the manuscript’s place of production, although it is worth noting that Geneviève (3 January), the patron saint of Paris, is not present. However, a considerable number of saints from England, the Low Countries, and Germany are included, and to a greater extent than in other contemporary luxury psalters from Paris, such as the so-called psalter of Saint Louis, dated to c. 1270.¹² None of the English saints of Add. Ms 17868 (Cuthbert, Alphegus, Augustine of Canterbury, Botolph, and Alban) are present in the Louis psalter.¹³ Saints associated with the medieval Low Countries in Add. Ms 17868 include Remaclus (3 September), Bertin (5 September), Lambert (in gold, 17 September), Crispin and Crispinian (25 October); apart from Remaclus, they are also represented in Louis’s psalter.¹⁴ The typical German saints, besides Ansgar,

⁹ For instance, Gallus’s feast is on 20 February and Barbara’s on 16 December, the days ascribed to them by Ado (cols. 231 and 415), rather than the standard 16 October and 4 December.

¹⁰ Olav was venerated across the Nordic region and to some extent in England and on the continent, see Ekroll 2012.

¹¹ A transcription of the feasts is given in the Appendix.

¹² Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, latin 10525, digitised here: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b8447877n/f1.item>.

¹³ Unlike Vidas (2018: 16), I do not consider Thomas Becket an “English saint” but rather a universal one, since his cult spread so quickly across Europe. Both his feast day and its octave are included in the Louis psalter.

¹⁴ Some of the saints of Add Ms 17868 counted as French by Vidas (2018: 15–16), such as

are Gallus (20 February), Maximus (29 May), Bonifacius (5 June), Paulinus (31 August), the two Ewalds (3 October), Severinus (gold, 23 October), and Cunibertus (gold, 12 November). Except for Severinus, these saints are not included in the psalter of Saint Louis.

A psalter for a royal

In short, the psalter in the British Library contains a calendar composed by feasts both universal and from multiple regions, indicating that the psalter, while probably Parisian in origin, was not intended for a Parisian reader. The most conspicuous of the included feasts are those of Scandinavian saints. Knud Lavard, whose feast is marked in gold, deserves particular attention. The father of King Valdemar I “the Great” (r. 1154–1182), Duke Knud of Slesvig was the ancestor of the Danish royal line. He was slain by his cousin Magnus in 1131 and buried at the monastic church of Ringsted. Valdemar campaigned to have his father recognised as a saint, including by having his remains moved to a shrine, which caused some conflict with Archbishop Eskil of Lund. In 1169, Valdemar’s efforts were rewarded when Pope Alexander III canonised Knud, proclaiming 25 June as his official feast day.¹⁵ The following year, a great ceremony took place at Ringsted on this date to celebrate what had become the feast of Knud’s translation; on the same occasion, Valdemar’s son Knud VI was crowned. Ringsted continued to be the centre of Knud’s cult, its monastic community enjoying close ties with the Danish royal family, several members of whom are buried in the monastery church. While Knud Lavard was also celebrated elsewhere in Denmark, this mostly happened on the day of his death (7 January), which was never formally recognised by the church.

The presence of Knud Lavard’s translation feast, and especially the fact that it was highlighted in gold, raises the question of whether the psalter Add. MS 17868 may in any way have been linked to the Benedictines of Ringsted. The presence of Benedict of Nursia (21 March; translation 11 July, gold) and his sister Scholastica (10 February) could perhaps be taken to point in this direction; however, these saints are found in many non-monastic calendars, including in psalters of personal devotion,

Quentin (31 October, gold), Eligius of Noyon (1 December), and Arnulf of Soissons (16 August), could also be said to fall into this category. Quentin is included in the psalter of Saint Louis, but Arnulf is not, unlike his namesake Arnulf of Metz (18 July). Vidas (2018: 15) identifies the Arnulf of Add Ms 17868 as Arnulf of Metz, which is also a possibility since Usuard’s martyrology places his feast on this date.

¹⁵ DD I 2, no. 190. It has been suggested that the Pope deliberately did not choose the day of Knud’s death to make a point about the non-official cult, which by this point had existed for years (Gertz 1908-12: 171, n1).

such as that of Saint Louis. As stated above, the feasts of the London psalter's calendar do not map precisely onto any given diocese, which is not uncommon for personal psalters. Admittedly, the lack of any precise knowledge of feasts celebrated by the Benedictine's of Ringsted in the second half of the thirteenth century means we cannot rule out that all of the London psalter's feasts would have been observed there; however, a monastic psalter intended to be used for liturgical practice is likely to have shown signs of use. Moreover, even a wealthy institution such as Ringsted is unlikely to have acquired a luxury manuscript of this kind: the level of illumination, materials, and artistic skills involved in the production of Add. MS 17868 indicates an extremely wealthy recipient from the uppermost strata of society, most probably a royal.

A royal recipient of Danish origin would explain not only the presence of Scandinavian saints, but also the fact that Knud Lavard, ancestor of the Danish royal family, is the only one of these saints to have been highlighted in gold. His feast on 25 June, which commemorates the translation of his relics at Ringsted, was the officially recognised feast day. The inclusion of the feast of his translation in the psalter calendar, rather than the day of his death (7 January), is therefore to be expected. Moreover, the translation feast must have held a special meaning to the royal family: after all, not only had the official sainthood of their forefather been celebrated on that date, but King Knud VI, son of Valdemar I the Great and brother of Valdemar II "the Victorious", had been crowned on the same occasion. Bearing all this in mind, the question then arises: what Danish royal and descendant of Knud Lavard would have been the most likely recipient of such a book in the years around 1260–1270?

The Scandinavian elite and their psalters

Only a small number of decorated psalters survive intact from medieval Scandinavia.¹⁶ Of the thirteen known intact psalters with a medieval Nordic provenance discussed by Tue Gad (1968), four are linked to royals and aristocrats: the Copenhagen psalter (Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, Thott 143 fol.), the psalter of Margrete Skulesdotter (Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, 78 A 8), the psalter of Kristin Håkonsdotter (Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 1606 quarto), and the Sunesen psalter (London, British Library, Ms Egerton 2652). Apart from the psalter of Kristin Håkonsdotter, whose ownership is attested by the ex-libris of a later possessor, these manuscripts have been attributed to their owners based on notes and additions. The oldest of the four psalters, the Copenhagen psalter (England, c. 1170–1175), contains

¹⁶ The collections of manuscript fragments used as binding material in the post-Reformation period include several fragments from psalters, see Ommundsen 2013.

an inscription mentioning the death of Duke Erik of Jutland, son of King Abel, in 1272, as well as an added prayer (*Suscipere digneris sancta Trinitas hos psalmos consecratos*, “May you deign to receive, Holy Trinity, these hallowed psalms”) mentioning *anima Byrgeri ducis* (“the soul of Duke Birger”). The prayer uses feminine forms (*miserima, peccatrix*), and this, combined with the mentions of Erik and Birger, has led to the common assumption that the psalter belonged to Erik’s mother, Queen Mechtilde, who after Abel’s death married the Swedish Earl Birger.¹⁷ It is not known when the Copenhagen psalter came to Scandinavia, but Patricia Stirnemann (1999, 2004) has proposed that it was made for the coronation of Knud VI in 1170.¹⁸ There are, however, no Scandinavian saints included in the calendar, neither by the original scribe nor by later additions.

The prayer *Suscipere digneris* was also added to the second of the psalters mentioned, the psalter of Margrete Skulesdotter (England, 1210–1220).¹⁹ The most famous additions, however, are those of the deaths of altogether 31 Norwegian kings and archbishops to the calendar, all carried out by the same thirteenth-century hand (Bø 2017: 278). Due to these additions, the psalter is assumed to have belonged to Queen Margrete of Norway (1210–1270), since the last death added is that of her

¹⁷ Gad 1968: col. 585. Erik Petersen (2011: 53, 60) goes against this assumption, arguing that if Mechtilde was the owner, she would also have mentioned her other son, Valdemar, as well as King Abel. He suggests that the psalter may have belonged to an unknown daughter of Mechtilde and Abel.

¹⁸ Stirnemann’s argument is, as the author herself acknowledges, based on circumstantial evidence. The psalter is so lavish it was clearly intended for royalty; moreover, it seems to have been made for a very young person, as the alphabet was included before the *pater noster* prayer, a combination often used when teaching someone to read (Stirnemann 1999: 69). In 1170, Knud VI was only seven and therefore fits the bill. According to Stirnemann (1999: 70), there are no equally likely English candidates.

¹⁹ The version of the prayer found in both manuscripts contains some unusual and idiosyncratic wordings, suggesting a shared environment for the psalters and their owners when the prayer was added (Petersen 2011: 58–59). The prayer in the Margrete psalter includes “Duchess I.,” which has been interpreted as referring to Ingeborg Håkansdotter (d. 1361), meaning that the owner would be Eufemia Eriksdotter (d. 1370), Ingeborg’s daughter (Gad 1968: col. 586). Petersen (2011: 59) suggests the “Duchess I.” refers to Ingeborg Eriksdotter (d. 1254), meaning that the owner of the Margrete psalter at the time of the prayer’s addition would have been one of Ingeborg and Birger’s children. This is in line with Bø’s argument that the Margrete psalter was owned by Rikissa, daughter of Ingeborg and Birger, who was married to Margrete’s eldest son Håkon the Young (d. 1257) and who may have received the psalter from her mother-in-law as a gift (Bø 2017: 278). Bø identifies the parents included in the prayer as Håkon and Ingeborg, and points to the notes of the deaths of both Ingeborg and Håkon the Young in the calendar.

father, Duke Skule Bårdsson (d. 1240). Again, it is not clear when the psalter came to Norway, but it is generally accepted that Margrete (if she were the owner) was not the original recipient. It has been suggested that the manuscript was made for Queen Isabella of Angoulême, the wife of King John (Gad 1968: col. 586). A queenly recipient may be reflected in the iconography found in the initial B of psalm 1, *Beatus Vir*, which shows Mary as the Queen of Heaven, being crowned by Christ – a parallel to Isabella's own coronation in 1200 (Bø 2017: 284). Again, there are no Scandinavian saints included in the calendar, neither originally nor as additions.

Of all the manuscripts discussed here, the psalter of Kristin Håkonsdotter (Paris, c. 1230) has the best-known provenance, although its history still raises some unanswered questions. Due to an *ex-libris*, we know that the manuscript was originally owned by Kristin (d. 1262), the daughter of Margrete Skulesdotter and King Håkon Håkonsson of Norway. According to the same note, the psalter was then owned by the noblewoman Ingeborg Erlingsdotter (d. 1315), who gave it to her daughter Elin (d. 1355). Another *ex-libris* states that the manuscript was subsequently owned by the lady Sigrid Erlendsdotter, who received it from her husband Håkon, Elin's grandson; according to a document from 1391 concerning this gift, Håkon had received the psalter from his mother, that is Elin's daughter (Bø 2017: 287). The psalter subsequently passed to the Benedictine nunnery of Nonneseter in Oslo. How or when Kristin first received the psalter is not known, but Marina Vidas (2006) has proposed that the gift was related to the occasion of Kristin's marriage to the brother of King Alphonse X of Castille and Leon in 1258. Kristin's husband, Felipe, was a great-nephew of Queen Blanche of Castille, who may have been the original commissioner of the manuscript (Vidas 2006). While the original manuscript, which was made in France, contains no Scandinavian feasts, several of these were added to the calendar by its later owners.

The fourth psalter, the Sunesen psalter (Paris, c. 1220–30), is not linked to royals, but to the powerful Danish Hvide family, and more specifically to Jacob Sunesen (d. 1246). He was the brother of Archbishop Anders of Lund (d. 1228) and Bishop Peder of Roskilde (d. 1214), two important ecclesiastical figures in their time, who both had studied in Paris and had extensive connections in France. This family would thus be well placed to commission a psalter from expert Parisian craftsmen. The attribution of the psalter to Jacob is, again, mainly based on additions to the calendar, which commemorate the deaths of various persons related to him.²⁰ Unlike the Copenhagen

²⁰ Vidas 2015: 188–190. Scholarship dealing with these inscriptions tends to rely on the transcriptions made by A. W. Franks (1881). Having seen the psalter in person, I could not verify most of the readings, as they are quite illegible, though I do not have any particular reason to question them. Nor do I have any reason to question the theory of Jacob's ownership,

psalter and the psalters of Margrete Skulesdotter and Kristin Håkonsdotter, the original calendar of the Sunesen psalter contains the feasts of the Scandinavian saints Olav, King Knud, and Knud Lavard, as well as two feasts for Lucius, the patron saint of Roskilde (Vidas 2015: 186). This manuscript is thus a clear case of a psalter that was intended for a member of the Danish elite from its conception; in this sense it is the closest analogy to Add. MS 17868.

Queen Ingeborg of Norway: A possible recipient?

As is clear from these cases, illuminated psalters were precious objects which served to highlight their owners' status as well as to document their family connections. The psalter in London would certainly fulfil the first function, and again we are faced with the question of who the intended recipient might be. The probable candidate would be someone from the very highest strata of society (i.e. royalty), someone who might reasonably be expected (or expect) to own such a psalter, and someone of a Danish background – most likely a descendant of Knud Lavard. One person fits this profile very well: Ingeborg (d. 1287), daughter of the Danish King Erik Plovpenning (d. 1250) and Queen of Norway after her marriage to King Magnus Lagabøte (d. 1280), the son of Margrete Skulesdotter and Håkon Håkonsson, in 1261.

The circumstances of this marriage were somewhat unusual. According to the saga of Håkon Håkonsson (HH, ch. 304), in 1260 Norwegian messengers approached the underage King of Denmark, Erik Klipping, and his mother, Margrete Sambiria, to negotiate a marriage between Magnus and Ingeborg, Erik's cousin. Ingeborg's father, King Erik, had been killed in 1250, most likely by his own brother Abel. After Abel was slain in turn only two years later, the third brother, Christoffer, became king. He and King Håkon of Norway had had their conflicts, but when Håkon came to Denmark with a large army in 1257, he met with Christoffer on friendly terms, and the two kings settled on an agreement to be allies (HH, ch. 293). However, Christoffer died in 1259, whereupon his son Erik Klipping was crowned. As he was still a child, his mother Margrete Sambiria ruled on his behalf. The saga claims that Margrete agreed to the marriage between Magnus and Ingeborg, promis-

though I must note that I am not convinced by the argument proposed by Tue Gad, that the psalter must predate Vilhelm of Æbelholt's canonisation in 1224, since otherwise his feast would be included, given the Hvide family's ties to Vilhelm (Gad 1968: col. 588; Vidas 2015: 186–187). It would have been perfectly possible for the psalter's owner to add Vilhelm's feast to 16 June, especially as there are no other feasts on that day. The owner cannot have been afraid to modify the calendar, given that Dominic's feast was added to 5 August, as also noted by Vidas (2015: 187). This suggests that either Jacob was not the owner of the psalter, or he was less concerned with Vilhelm's feast than has been assumed. In either case, the absence of the feast in the original calendar is inconsequential as a dating criterion.

ing the Norwegian ambassadors that she would equip her niece with all that was necessary for marriage (HH, ch. 305). However, when the envoy came from Norway to the convent in Jutland where Ingeborg was staying, it became clear that she was not prepared at all, and that Margrete was not willing to let her go, blaming this reluctance on her own conflict with Duke Erik of Jutland. The Norwegian envoys nevertheless convinced Ingeborg to come with them, promising her she would be given all the equipment that was necessary (HH, ch. 306). When Ingeborg came to Bergen, the saga states that King Håkon, Magnus's father, took an immediate liking to her, and that she was married to Magnus in grand splendour, with a wedding feast such as had "never been seen in Norway before" (HH, chs. 308–309). Immediately after the feast ended, the crowning of the young King and Queen took place under similar splendour (HH, ch. 310). This was the first time a queen had been crowned in Norway.

Did the equipment promised by the Norwegian envoys to Ingeborg include a psalter? We do not know, but considering that both Magnus's mother Margrete, his sister-in-law Rikissa (who probably inherited Margrete's psalter, see Bø 2017: 278), and his sister Kristin owned their own decorated psalters, it seems unlikely that his new bride would be the only one of his immediate female family members to not own such a book. If the manuscript was commissioned specifically for Ingeborg, as the inclusion (and highlighting) of especially Knud Lavard's feast could suggest, this would certainly fit the circumstances of the wedding feast and coronation ceremony, both occasions that had not been seen in Norway before.²¹ Ingeborg was the first Queen of Norway to be crowned; why should she not also be the first Queen of Norway to have a psalter commissioned specifically for her?

If Ingeborg was the recipient of Add. MS 17868, this might help to explain one of the illuminations in the psalter. On f. 31, Mary is depicted on her heavenly throne, sitting in judgement of the sinners in Hell. This imagery is not common in psalters (Vidas 2018: 32). However, Ingeborg's husband Magnus is famous for his law reforms, as is evidenced by his surname of Lagabøte ("Law-Mender"): his Code of the Realm of 1274 was the first law to apply to all of Norway's legal provinces. The legal reforms had been started by Magnus's father, Håkon, under whose long reign (1217–1263) Norway consolidated and expanded its power, formed new alliances (including by Kristin's marriage to Prince Felipe), and received new cultural and literary impulses, notably from France; Håkon famously commissioned translations of Old

²¹ Whether the psalter was commissioned in time for the wedding itself is dubious, given that the Norwegians first approached Margrete Sambiria about the possible marriage in 1260 and that the wedding took place the same year. However, the psalter could have been a gift to commemorate the anniversary of the wedding and the coronation on a later occasion.

French works into Old Norse.²² That the Norwegian royal family could also commission manuscripts from France is indicated by the will of Magnus and Ingeborg's son, King Håkon V, which mentions a breviary "recently written in Paris" (DN IV 128). As was the case for the Danish Sunesen brothers, several members of the Norwegian elite had studied in Paris and elsewhere in France, including Archbishop Einar Smørbak (d. 1263), who according to the saga was very fond of Magnus (HH, chs. 291, 312). The Norwegian royal family thus had the means, the willingness, and the connections to commission a psalter from Paris for the new queen. The imagery of Mary, the Queen of Heaven, sitting in judgement would seem fitting for the consort of a king who must have been undertaking legal efforts by the 1260s, following the work of his father. The acknowledgement of Ingeborg's Danish ancestry through the calendar would not only please the recipient (who may well have expressed her own preferences as to the feasts included), but also serve to highlight the fact that she was a member of the Danish royalty and had claims on her heritage in Denmark.²³

Concluding remarks

What happened to the psalter London, BL, Add. MS 17868 after it was initially given to its owner, whether this owner was indeed Queen Ingeborg or someone else? We will never know, but its pristine condition suggests that the manuscript was kept safely and used sparingly. The lack of inscriptions and additions points in the same direction. The primary object of the manuscript thus seems to have been to serve, as stated above, as a symbol of social status and capital. The devotional aspect was, in this case, less important, but it is possible that the owner had access to another less precious, more modest psalter for everyday reading, praying, and even commemorations. If this owner was Ingeborg, the very splendour of the London psalter served to demonstrate the status of not only Ingeborg herself, but of the dynasty she had married into – a dynasty with the resources to provide the royal lady with an unequalled wedding feast, an unprecedented coronation, and a brand-new psalter, the first to be made specifically for a Nordic queen.

²² The Old Norse translations of French literature have been the focus of several studies; for a recent overview, see Kleivane and Johansson 2018. On political and intellectual Franco-Norwegian contacts at the time of Håkon Håkonsson's reign, including the question of Norwegians in Paris, see Myking 2017: 130–171 with references.

²³ Ingeborg herself was very conscious of this and strove to get hold of her property, but was sabotaged by her cousin, Erik Klipping.

Appendix: Transcription of feast days in London, British Library, Add. MS 17868

I include here a transcription of the feasts in London, British Library, Add. MS 17868. The transcription was done directly from the manuscript, as no photography was allowed. Fat type indicates that gold was used for the entries. I have spelled out the abbreviations, but for simplicity's sake the numbers of the days are not included.

January (f. 1v–2r)

Prima dies mensis et vii. truncat ut ensis. Ianus *habet* dies xxxi. Luna xxx.

- 1 **Circumcisio domini. Dies. xi hora.**
- 2 *Octava sancti Stephani*
- 3 **Octava sancti Iohannis**
- 4 *Octava sanctorum innocentum*
- 5
- 6 **Epyphania Domini**
- 7 *Claves septuagesime*
- 8 *Beluaco*²⁴ **Luciani sociorumque eius**
- 9 *Deductio Domini in Egyptum*
- 10 **Pauli primi heremite**
- 11 **Reductio Domini ab Egypto**
- 12
- 13 **Remigii. Hilarii**
- 14 **Felicis in pincis**
- 15
- 16 **Marcelli pape**
- 17
- 18 *Sol in aquarium primum. lxx.*
- 19 **Marcii**²⁵ **et Marthe**
- 20 *Fabiani et Sebastiani martyrurum*
- 21 **Agnetis virginis**
- 22 *Vincentii martyrís*
- 23 **Emerentiane virginis**
- 24 *Tymotei apostoli et martyrís*
- 25 **Conversio sancti Pauli. Dies. hora. vi**
- 26 *Policarpi episcopi et martyrís*

²⁴ Beauvais, referring to Lucian and his “socii”, who were martyred in Beauvais and who are celebrated on 8 January.

²⁵ This should have said “Marii”.

- 27
28 **Agnētis secundo. Claves xl.**²⁶
29 *Valerii episcopi*
30 **Mathie episcopi**
31

February (f. 2v–3r)

- Quarta dies ledit et tertia qui sibi credit.** *Februarius habet dies xxviii. luna*²⁷
xxix
- 1 **Brigide virginis**
2 Purificatio *sancte Marie*
3 *Blasii episcopi et martyris*
4 **Dies hora viii**
5 *Agathe virginis*
6
7 *Summus terminus*
8 **Claves xl. Primum xl**
9
10 *Scolastice virginis*
11
12
13
14 **Valentini martyris**
15 **Sol in pisces**
16
17
18
19
20 *Sancti Galli episcopi. Ver oritur*
21 **Ultimum. Lxx.**
22 **Cathedra sancti Petri**
23 **Vigilia**²⁸

²⁶ What appears to be a c-shaped abbreviation mark over the x may suggest this should be a different number.

²⁷ The sign here could perhaps also be taken to mean *vel* (“or”), to account for the leap year. The system of *bissextile* (adding a day to 23/24 February) is not mentioned (but see note 26).

²⁸ The line for the following date is left blank, rendering it unclear what this vigil is for,

24

25 **Iohannis. D[ies?]**

26 **Dies. x. hora.**

27

28

March (3v–4v)

Martis primametum mortis dat quartas letum. *Martius habet dies xxxi. luna xx.*

1 **Albini episcopi. Dies hora i**

2 Mutant concurrentes

3

4 **Sancti Lucii pape et martyris**

5 Septimus embolismus

6 **Tertius embolismus**

7 Perpetue et Felicitatis

8 **Prima incensio lune pasche**

9

10

11 Claves pasche

12 **Rome sancti Gregorii**

13

14 **Ultimum quadragesimum**

15

16

17

18 Sol in ariecem et primus dies seculi

19

20 **Cuthberti episcopi et confessoris**

21 Benedicti abbatis. *Equinoctium vernale*

22

23

24 **Locus concurrentium**

25 Annunciatio *Domini* Crucificio *Domini*

26

27 **Resurrectionis domini nostril**

unless it is related to the leap year (see note 25).

28 Guntramni regis. **Dies hora ii.**

29

30

31 **Sancte Balbine virginis**

April

Dena dies sternit. Undenaque federa spernit. Aprilis *habet* dies xxx *luna* xxix.

1 **Theodore virginis**

2 **Sancte Marie egyptiace**

3

4 Ambrosii *episcopi* [.] *primus communis annus*

5 **Ysodori episcopi**

6 *Ultima incensio lune pasche*

7

8

9

10

11 **Leonis pape. Dies hora i.**

12

13

14 **Tiburtii et Valeriani**

15 **Sol in taurum. Claves rogationum**

16

17 *Sol in tauro*

18 **Ultimus terminus pasche**

19 *Alfegi archiepiscopi*

20 **Dies hora xi.**

21

22 **Inventio corporum sancti Dionisii Rustici et Eleuterii**

23 *Sancti Gregorii et martyris pape*²⁹

24

25 **Marci evangeliste. Letania maior**

26

²⁹ This looks to have been a case of the scribe's forgetting to insert 'pape' before the 'et', though the entry remains mystifying, for there are no papal saints called Gregory who are also martyrs. 23 April is the feast of St George (Georgius), which may help to explain the confusion, though George was not a pope.

- 27
- 28 **Vitalis martyris**
- 29 Claves Pentecostes
- 30 Egressio Noe de archa

May

- Tertia sit vetita privat. Lux. septima vita. Maius habet dies xxx luna xxix**
- 1 **Philippi et Jacobi apostolorum**
 - 2 Athanasii *episcopi*
 - 3 **Inventio sancte crucis. Dies hora vi**
 - 4
 - 5
 - 6 Iohannis ante portam latinam
 - 7
 - 8
 - 9 Primus terminus pentecostes *claves*
 - 10 **Gordiani et Epimachi martyrum. Puerorum(?)**
 - 11 Mamerti *episcopi*
 - 12 **Narei Achillei atque Pancratii**
 - 13 **Ascensio Domini**
 - 14
 - 15 **Spiritus sanctus super Apostolos venit**
 - 16
 - 17
 - 18 Sol in geminis
 - 19
 - 20
 - 21
 - 22
 - 23
 - 24 **Ultimus terminus rogationum**
 - 25 **Urbani pape et martyris. Dies hora x**
 - 26 Augustini *episcopi. Estas oritur*
 - 27
 - 28 **Parisius sancti Germani**
 - 29 *Sancti Maximi episcopi et confessoris. Episcopi [sic]*
 - 30 **Felicis pape et martyris**

31 Petronille virginis

June (6v–7r)

Denus palescit quindenus federa nescit. Iunius *habet dies xxx luna xxix.*

1 Nichodemis *presbyteri et martyris*

2 Marcelli et Petri

3

4

5 **Bonifacii episcopi**

6

7

8 Medardi et Gildardi *episcoporum*

9 **Primi et Feliciani**

10 **Dies hora vi.**

11 **Barnabe apostoli**

12 Basilidis Cirini *et Naborii martyrum*

13

14 **Viti et Modesti**

15 **Dies hora iiiii**

16

17 Botulfi *abbatis*

18 Marci et Marcelliani *fratrum*

19 Gervasii et Prothasii *martyrum*

20

21

22 **Albani martyris**

23 **Vigilia**

24 Nativitas *sancti Iohannis baptiste*

25 **Translatio sancti Kanuti**

26 Sancti Iohannis et Pauli *fratrum*

27

28 **Sancti Leonis pape. Vigilia**

29 Natalis *apostolorum Petri et Pauli*

30 **Commemoratio sancti Pauli**

July (7v–8r)

Tredecimus mactat denus iulii labefactat. *Iulius habet dies xxxi luna xxx.*

1 *Octava sancti Iohannis baptiste*

2 **Processi et Martiniani martyrum**

3

4 **Translatio sancti Martini**

5

6 *Octava apostolorum*

7 **Nicostrati Claudii sociorumque eius**

8

9

10 *Septem fratrum Kanuti regis*

11 **Translatio Benedicti abbatis**

12 *Sancti Pii pape*

13 **Margarete virginis. Dies.**

14 *Incipiunt dies canicularum*

15 **Divisio apostolorum**

16

17

18 *Ordinatio sancti Nicholai. Sol in leonem*

19

20

21 **Praxedis virginis**

22 *Marie Magdalene. Dies xi hora*

23 **Apollinari episcopi et martyris**

24 *Kristine virginis et martyris. Vigilia*

25 **Sancti Jacobi apostoli fratris Iohannis ewangeliste Christo fratris**

26

27 *Apud Ephesum VII dormientem [sic]*

28 **Pantaleonis martyris**

29 *Felicis simplex. Fausti et beati Olavi*

30 **Abdon et Sennen.** *Saltus lune secundum egyptios*

31 *Germani episcopi*

August (8v–9r)

Prima sit iprienda (?) de fine secunda verenda. Augustus habet dies xxxi *luna*
xxix

1 Ad vincula *sancti* Petri. *Dies xvi hora*

2 **Stephani pape et martyris**

3 *Inventio sanctorum* Stephani, *Nicomedi*

4

5

6 **Sixti episcopi sociorumque eius, Felicissimi et Agapiti martyrum**

7

8 **Ciriaci martyris**

9 *Romani martyris.* *Vigilia*

10 **Laurentii martyris**

11 *Tiburtii martyris*

12

13 **Ypoliti sociorumque eius**

14 *Eusebii presbyteri*

15 **Assumptio sancte Marie**

16 *Arnulfi episcopi*

17 **Octava sancti Laurentii**

18 *Agapiti martyris.* *Sancte Helene*

19 **Magni martyris**

20

21 *Autupnus [sic] oritur*

22

23 **Timothei et Ypolliti martyrum.** *Vigilia*

24 *Bartholomei apostoli*

25

26

27

28 **Hermetis martyris. Sancti Augustini episcopi**

29 *Decolatio [sic] sancti Iohannis baptiste*

30 **Felicis et Audacti martyrum.** *Dies vii hora*

31 *Paulini episcopi et confessoris*

September (9v–10r)

Tercia septembris et denus fert mala menbris [sic]. September *habet* dies xxx
luna xxx [sic]

1 Egidii abbatis

2

3 Remachi [= Remacli] *episcopi*

4 **Sancti Marcelli martyris**

5 **Bertini abbatis**

6

7 *Sancti Evurcii episcopi et confessoris*

8 **Nativitas sancte Marie**

9 Gorgonii *martyris*. Ansgarii *episcopi*

10

11 Proti et Iacinti *martyrum*

12

13

14 Exalatio *sancte crucis*. Corneli et Cipriani

15 **Nicomedus** [sic] *presbyteri*

16 Eufemie *virginis*

17 **Sancti Lamberti episcopi et martyris**

18

19

20 **Vigilia**

21 Mathei *apostoli et ewangeliste*. Dies hora iiii

22 **Mauricii sociorumque eius**

23 Tecele *virginis*

24 **Conceptio sancti Iohannis baptiste**

25

26

27 Cosme et Damiani *martyrum*

28

29 **Commemoratio beati Michaelis archangelis**

30 *Sancti Ieronimi presbyteri*

October (10v–11r)

Ternus et denus est sicut mors alienus [sic]. **October habet dies xxxi vel xxix**

1 Remigii. Germani

2 **Leodegarii episcopi et martyris**

3 *Duorum Ewaldorum. Dies hora v*

4

5 Appollinaris episcopi

6

7 Marci pape. Marcelli et Apulei *martyrum*

8 **Dionisii, Rustici et Eleutherii martyrum**

9

10

11

12

13

14 **Calixti pape et martyris**

15

16

17

18 Luce *evangeliste*

19

20

21 **Undecim milia virginum**

22 Marci episcopi et *martyris*. Severini episcopi. *Dies ix hora*

23 **Severini episcopi**

24

25 Cripini [sic] et Cripiani [sic]

26

27 **Vigilia**

28 *Apostolorum* Symonis et Iude

29

30

31 **Quintini martyris. Vigilia omnium sanctorum**

November (11v–12r)

Scorpius est quintus et tercius est nece quintus [sic]. November *habet* dies
xxx luna xxx.

- 1 **Festivitas omnium sanctorum**
- 2 *Sancti Eustachii cum uxore et duobus filiis*
- 3 **Sancti Marcelli confessoris**
- 4
- 5 *Dies hora viii*
- 6 **Sancti Leonardi confessoris**
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 **Martini pape**
- 11 *Sancti Martini episcopi*
- 12 **Gumberti [= Cuniberti] episcopi**
- 13 *Sancti Briccii episcopi*
- 14 **Serapionis martyris**
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19 **Maximi episcopi**
- 20
- 21 *Hyemps oritur*
- 22 **Cecilie virginis**
- 23 *Clementis episcopi et martyris. Columbani abbatis*
- 24 **Crisogoni martyris**
- 25 *Sancte Katerine*
- 26 **Sancti Lini pape et martyris**
- 27 *Agricole et Vitalis. Maximi confessoris*
- 28 **Rufi martyris. Dies v[?]**
- 29 *Saturnini martyris. Vigilia*
- 30 **Andree apostoli**

December (12v–13r)

Septimus exangnis [= sic] **virosus denus ut anguis**. December *habet* dies xxxi
luna xxix

- 1 Eligii *episcopi*
- 2 Veri *et Securi fratrum martyrum* primus.
- 3 **Cassiani martyris**
- 4
- 5
- 6 **Sancti Nicolai episcopi**
- 7 Octava *sancti Andree apostoli*. Dies hora xvi
- 8 **Conceptio dei genitricis Marie**
- 9
- 10 **Eulalie virginis et martyris**
- 11 Damasi *pape*
- 12 **Pauli episcopi et confessoris**
- 13 *Sancte Lucie virginis*
- 14
- 15 **Maximini abbatis**
- 16 *Barbare virginis*. Ithe sororis eius³⁰
- 17 *Apud Ciprum beati Lazari et Marthe*
- 18 **Sancti Cantiniani episcopi confessoris**
- 19
- 20 **Vigilia**
- 21 *Sancti Thome apostoli*. Solsticium
- 22 **Sancti Basilei**. Dies vi hora
- 23 *Victorie virginis*
- 24 **Vigilia**
- 25 *Nativitas domini nostri Ihesu Christi*
- 26 **Sancti Stephani prothomartyris**
- 27 *Sancti Iohannis apostoli et evangeliste*
- 28 **Passio innocentium**
- 29 *Sancti Thome archiepiscopi*
- 30 **Sabini episcopi**
- 31 *Sancti Silvestri pape*. Columbe *virginis*

³⁰ I have not come across other calendars or sources claiming that saint Itha (Ida) was the sister of Barbara, who according to the traditional legend was an only daughter (Denomy 1939: 149).

Bibliography

Primary sources

- ADO = Ado Viennensis Archiepiscopus, *Martyrologium*, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. CXXIII, ed. J.P. Migne [retrieved from http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/04z/z_0850-0874__Ado_Viennensis_Archiepiscopus__Martyrologium__MLT.pdf.html]
- DD I 2 = *Diplomatarium Danicum*, 1. ser., vol. 2: 1053–1169, eds. C. A. Christensen, Gustav Hermansen & Herluf Nielsen. København: Det Danske Sprog- og Litteraturselskab/C. A. Reitzel, 1975.
- DN IV = *Diplomatarium Norvegicum*, eds. C.A. Lange & Carl R. Unger. Christiania: P.T. Mallings Forlagshandel, 1857.
- HH = *Soga om Håkon Håkonsson*, transl. Kr. Audne. I *Noregs kongesoger*, vol. IV: 21–345. Oslo: Det Norske Samlaget, 1979.

Secondary literature

- BACKHOUSE, Janet. 1997. *The Illuminated Page: Ten Centuries of Manuscript Painting in The British Library*. London: British Library.
- BRANNER, Robert. 1977. *Manuscript Painting in Paris during the Reign of Saint Louis: A Study of Styles*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- BØ, Ragnhild M. 2017. Margrete Skulesdatters og Kristina Håkonsdatters psaltere. In Karoline Kjesrud & Nanna Løkka (eds.), *Dronningen i vikingtid og middelalder*, 273–295. Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press.
- CORDEY, Jean. 1933. L'exposition de manuscrits français à miniatures au British Museum. *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 94: 219–224.
- DENOMY, Alexander Joseph. 1939. An Old French Life of St Barbara. *Mediaeval Studies* 1: 148–178.
- EKROLL, Øystein. 2012. The Cult of St. Olav in the Norse cultural Sphere – and outside it. In Steinar Imsen (ed.), *Ecclesia Nidrosiensis 1153–1537: Søkelys på Nidaroskirken og Nidarosprovinsens historie*, 45–66. Trondheim: Tapir akademisk forlag.
- FRANKS, Augustus W. 1881. On Two Manuscript Psalters in the Collection of William Bragge, Esq. *Archæologia* 46: 241–248.
- GAD, Tue. 1968. Psalter. In *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder*, vol. XIII: cols. 583–595.
- GERTZ, M. C. (ed.). 1908–12. *Vitae sanctorum danorum*. København: G. E. C. Gad.
- HENNIG, John. 1955. Versus de mensibus. *Traditio* 11: 65–90.
- HIGGITT, John. 2000. *The Murthly Hours: Devotion, Literacy and Luxury in Paris, England and the Gaelic West*. London: British Library.

- JACOB, Dorothée. 1976. Quelques manuscrits français de la fin du XIIIe et du début du XIVE siècles dans les bibliothèques conventuelles autrichiennes [compte-rendu]. *Bulletin Monumental* 134.2: 145–147.
- JOHANSSON, Karl G. & Elise KLEIVANE. 2018. *Konungs skuggsjá* and the Interplay between Universal and Particular. In Karl G. Johansson & Elise Kleivane (eds.), *Speculum septentrionale: Konungs skuggsjá and the European Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*, 9–34. Oslo: Novus.
- MYKING, Synnøve Midtbø. 2017. *The French Connection: Norwegian Manuscript Fragments of French Origin and their Historical Context*. Ph.D. diss., University of Bergen.
- OMMUNDSEN, Åslaug. 2013. Psalms Interrupted: The Psalter Fragments in the NRA in Oslo. In Espen Karlsen (ed.), *Latin Manuscripts of Medieval Norway: Studies in Memory of Lilli Gjerløw*, 279–305. Oslo: Novus.
- STIRNEMANN, Patricia. 1999. Københavnerpsalteret. In Erik Petersen (ed.), *Levende ord & lysende billeder: Den middelalderlige bogkultur i Danmark, Essays*, 67–77. København: Det Kongelige Bibliotek.
- . 2004. The Copenhagen Psalter Reconsidered as a Coronation Present for Canute VI (Kongel. Bibl., ms. Thott 143 2°). In F. O. Büttner (ed.), *The Illuminated Psalter: Studies in the Content, Purpose and Placement of its Images*, 323–328. Turnhout: Brepols.
- STONES, Alison. 2013. *Gothic Manuscripts 1260–1320. Part One, Volume Two*. London: Harvey Miller Publishers.
- VIDAS, Marina. 2006. *The Christina Psalter: A Study of the Images and Texts in a French Early Thirteenth-Century Illuminated Manuscript*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press.
- . 2015. Devotion, Remembrance, and Identity: The Hagiographic Entries and Obituaries in a Parisian Thirteenth-Century Illuminated Psalter Made for Jakob Sunesen. *Fund og forskning i Det Kongelige Biblioteks samlinger* 54: 183–195.
- . 2018. The Construction and Transcultural Dissemination of Negative Images of Jews in a French Thirteenth-Century Illuminated Psalter Made for a Danish Reader. *Fund og forskning i Det Kongelige Biblioteks samlinger* 57: 7–50.
- WARNER, George F. 1903. *Illuminated Manuscripts in the British Museum: Miniatures, Borders, and Initials*. London: British Museum.

Synnøve Midtbø Myking, Department of Linguistic, Literary and Aesthetic Studies, University of Bergen. E-mail: synnove.myking@uib.no