

A SELF-PROCLAIMED CANCEL FROM SAINTE-MENEHOULD

BIBLIOGRAPHERS ARE ALWAYS ALERT for the presence of the stigmata of cancellation: stubs, exceptionally signed leaves, variations in paper, and so on. It comes as a surprise to find a cancellans leaf which actually bears on its recto a printed announcement of its status. The cancellans in question is found in the National Library of Australia exemplar (RB CLI 1573) of a Missal published in 1722 at Sainte-Menehould, a small town situated between Châlons and Verdun in north-eastern France. The Missal is in two volumes in small octavo, and in the direction line (under the first column) of 2H1^r in volume two is the explicit statement 'Carton' — i.e. 'Cancel'. The reason for the cancellation is not obvious, but I assume that it is connected with the apparent problems encountered by a printer coping with the production of his first book, possibly in the aftermath of the destruction of the town by fire in 1719.

The title pages of the two volumes read:

MISSEL | ROMAIN | SELON LE REGLEMENT | DU CONCILE |
DE TRENTE. | *TRADUIT EN FRANCOIS.* | DEDIE' | A Monfeigneur
l'illuſtriffime NICOLAS | DE SAULX DE TAVANES *Eveque Comte | de Châalons*
Pair de France. | PREMIERE PARTIE [SECONDE PARTIE]. | [ornament,
45 x 59 mm., two angels flanking lamb on horizontal cross] | A
SAINTE-MANEHOULD, | Chez GABRIEL DE LIEGE Imprimeur-Libraire |
affocié avec FRANCOIS GODARD | Libraire à Reims. | [rule] |
M. DCC. XXII. | *Avec Approbation & Privilege du Roi.*

They collate:

I: *8 2*4 (-2*4) a⁸ b⁸ c⁶ χ¹ A-P⁸ Q⁸(-Q5-8) 2B-2M⁸
II: *⁶a⁸ b⁸ c⁶ χ¹ A⁸ B⁸ (-B7,8) 2χ¹ Q5-8 R-2A⁸ 2H⁸ (-2H1,2 + 2H1) 2I-2Y⁸

Testimony that this is the first production of its printer at Sainte-Menehould is contained in the dedication to de Saulx, in which Gabriel de Liège speaks of offering the first fruits [*les premices*] of his press as a token of his respect (volume one, *2^{r-v}). Whatever the printer's other problems, they must have been compounded by the novelty of his publication. Missals for the laity (i.e. in their own language) had been prohibited since 1661, and were to remain so until the end of the nineteenth century, though there are other French translations from the eighteenth century. The novelty of the venture accounts for the 'Avis pour se servir de ce Missel' (volume one, *4^{r-v}), which is designed for those unaccustomed to using one and explains the distinctions between the Ordinary, the Proper of the Season and the Proper of Saints. The 'Avis' also refers to the two-part division, effected for greater convenience in taking the Missal to church, though the nature of the division is not made explicit. In this exemplar both volumes contain the Ordinary, while volume one contains the Proper of the Season extending from the First Sunday in Advent to the Tuesday after Pentecost (B7^r-Q4^v, pp.1-278) and the Proper of Saints from 30 November (St. Andrew) to 19 March (St. Joseph) (2B1^r-2K8^v,

pp.415-558), and volume two contains the Proper of the Season extending from Holy Trinity to the last Sunday after Pentecost (2χ1^r-2A8^v, pp.277-414) and the Proper of Saints from 11 June (St. Barnabas) to 25 November (Ste. Catherine) (2H1^r-2R5^r, pp.513-663).

The evidence of the printed work suggests that the decision to divide it into two volumes was taken quite late in the process of printing off. Clearly Q must have already been set, since it now comprises eight disjunct leaves, four in each volume. That the decision was taken before the printing of 2H (and that it was decided to duplicate the signature sequence in completing the two volumes) is suggested by the fact that '*I. Partie.*' appears in the direction line of \$1^r in volume one in gatherings 2H-2M only (in volume two '*II. Partie.*' appears on A1^r and B1^r only). Despite the incidence of '*I. Partie.*' an ideal copy of volume two probably includes gatherings 2B-2G (pp.415-510), containing the Proper of Saints from 20 March to 10 June. However, that the corresponding gatherings in volume one do not have '*I. Partie.*' on them suggests in turn that they were printed *before* the assumed 2B-2G of volume two. But whatever the status of 2B-2G, the deletion of 2H1,2 in volume two and their replacement by a single leaf 'Hh' appears to be a consequence of imperfect dovetailing, or just possibly of imperfect imposition, since there is no interruption in the text between 2H1^v and 2H3^r (though with 2H1 assuming the pagination of 2H2 [513/514] there are no longer pages 511/512).

The major bibliographical curiosity of the Sainte-Menehould Missal is the 'Carton' statement on the cancellans 2H1. The standard French method of indicating cancellantia in the eighteenth century was to sign them with an asterisk, and perhaps the use of the 'Carton' statement is a result of inexperience, just as the original setting of 2H1,2 may well have been. A further hint of inexperience is contained in gatherings A and B in volume two: in both volumes the Ordinary occupies A1^r-B6^v, the Proper of the Season beginning on B7^r in volume one — had A and B been from the same setting in both volumes, the removal of B7,8 in volume two would have been understandable, but they are from *different* settings, so that the removal of the two leaves possibly derives from a slavish copying of volume one or from an imposition which produced two disjunct blank leaves rather than a conjugate pair which could then have been removed much more easily.

Three further features are of bibliographical interest: (1) a1^r,b1^r,c1^r (from the same setting in both volumes) are signed a* b* c*, presumably to locate them in the preliminaries; (2) much of the paper seems to be from double-sized sheets, resulting in the watermark appearing at the top outer corner of \$5,6,7,8; (3) the cancellans has a catchword on its verso, whereas the work as a whole has only quire catchwords.

All in all the Sainte-Menehould Missal is bibliographically an interesting publication. Whether its peculiarities derive from the inexperience of its printer,

from its provincial origins, or from some other cause is impossible to determine, but both inexperience and provinciality must clearly be constraints (not necessarily recognized) in any attempt to 'localize' printed books on the basis of compositorial practices.

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