

Music and Performance in the Book of Hours

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Introduction

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Introduction

Salve regina, mater misericordiae,
Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.
Ad te clamamus exsules filii Evae.
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes in hac lacrimarum valle.
Eia, ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte;
Et Iesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exilium ostende.
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

*Hail Queen, Mother of mercy;
Our life, our sweetness, and our hope, hail.
To you we cry, poor banished children of Eve.
To you we sigh, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears.
Turn then, O most gracious advocate, those merciful eyes toward us;
And after this exile, show us the blessed fruit of your womb, Jesus.
O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.*

In the fifteenth century, the venerable *Salve regina* was on the lips of European sailors roughing the high seas. On many ships, the affective Marian text was delivered not as a spoken prayer, but rather in song, echoing the melody that had become etched in the Christian memory since its introduction into the liturgy three centuries earlier. In monastic settings, this plainchant traditionally resounded after the service of Compline, marking the end of each liturgical day for about half of the year.¹ More than one account reveals that seafarers mimicked religious communities, not just closing their days in prayer with the *Salve regina* but also observing other pauses for devotion during their time on board. In his late fifteenth-century travel diaries, the Dominican Felix Fabri from Ulm chronicled three daily commemorations, which included the sailors singing the *Salve regina* at sundown, a ritual known from the fourteenth century.² The custom of keeping hallowed hours for prayer and devotional song was not confined to monks, nuns, and mariners; lay Christians across late medieval Europe were well acquainted with the ceremonial practices of the Divine Office and able to imitate them each day. Personal devotional manuals known as books of hours ensured that the faithful at large could keep the church's distinguished rituals close at hand.

Books of hours (*horae*) offered guides to prayer that captured the experience of the daily Liturgy of the Hours in a compact, portable form. Sometimes lavishly decorated for wealthy owners, these books are one of the more familiar vestiges of late medieval and early modern European culture, earning the oft-repeated “best-seller” status among extant artifacts of these periods. Indeed, for more than 300 years, ownership of books of hours outpaced that of every

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other kind of book, including the Bible. In 1571, Pope Pius V banned the use of existing books of hours, but their widespread circulation and use took decades to decline.

Books of hours trace their heritage through psalters. Members of the clergy and monastic communities had long owned books of psalms for their private use, but by the eleventh century, the Christian laity joined in the possession of psalters. The best known of all biblical texts, the psalms formed the core of the daily liturgies practiced in monasteries, convents, and cathedrals, where all 150 psalms were organized into a weekly cursus for recitation.³ Psalters became more than a prescriptive textbook for the private enactment of the ritual hours; they also functioned as a pathway to learning Latin and absorbing Christian teaching. As ownership of psalters expanded, new devotional content crept in. Abbreviated office liturgies appeared in psalters, giving rise to the phenomenon of a hybrid psalter-hours. Among the offices, the “Little Office” for the Virgin Mary was the most common, but the number and length of these liturgies grew until another genre emerged when the two separated.⁴ The condensed offices plus ancillary devotions shed their connection to the psalters altogether and became stand-alone books of hours from the mid-thirteenth century onward.⁵ Production of books of hours was concentrated in French and Flemish scriptoria, but circulation grew across western Europe as printed copies commodified the genre by the early sixteenth century. As compilations with local variations, books of hours escaped the oversight of the church while still retaining many of the eminent texts and august rituals of ecclesiastical practice that the laity held dear.

Books of hours feature an array of devotional possibilities. They usually open with calendars to situate daily observances and could include gospel readings, the Litany of the Saints, the Seven Penitential Psalms, prayers to the Virgin Mary and the saints, and of course material associated with liturgical offices, the veritable work of God (*opus Dei*). An office for Mary remained central to books of hours but was paired with the Office of the Dead, which became the book’s second anchor. Psalms saturated both liturgies, along with readings, responses, and other genres that mirrored formal liturgical exercises. Each office contained different types of utterances one would encounter liturgically, from prayers in silence to communal speech and song.

Developed in monastic circles by the tenth century, the Office of the Virgin Mary must be viewed as part of the growth in Marian devotion that blossomed through the late Middle Ages. This “Little Office” (*Officium Parvum Beatae Mariae Virginis*) was sung in the choir alongside the daily prescribed liturgies, most notably at the Cathedral of Notre Dame of Paris.⁶ Fastened to each of the eight canonical hours, the texts of the Office of the Virgin must have been deeply ingrained in the minds of clerics, performed far more often than the once-per-year feasts at the main altar. Small wonder that the Office of the Virgin spun out in an isolated form and eventually in books of hours. The services in this office began with the celebration of Matins (sometimes condensed, which explains the modifier “Little”) and cycled through more modest observances of Lauds, the four minor hours (Prime, Terce, Sext, None), Vespers, and Compline. In illuminated *horae*, artistic cycles of images preceding each service reinforce that each of the eight hours marked a significant event in Mary’s life, from the Annunciation to her coronation as Queen of Heaven.

The Office of the Dead, the other liturgical pillar of a book of hours, unfolded in three services (Vespers, Matins, and Lauds) and reflected Christians’ perpetual concern about the prospect of death. This office was also a near-daily occurrence in monastic institutions, given the exhaustive list of the departed, from brothers and sisters of religious communities to local leaders and benefactors. Testators often specified that the Office of the Dead—the primary funeral liturgy—be sung for a period of time after burial, as the soul was considered to be in

an especially fragile state in the immediate days after death.⁷ This office for the deceased, an event sometimes followed by a Requiem Mass, was not infrequently open to public mourners. In some English books of hours, musical notation accompanied the Office of the Dead, a sign of both luxury and the role that singing must have played among lay attendees.⁸ In a mid-fifteenth-century book of hours from the Provence region, the Office of the Dead opens with a miniature of monks gathered around two books performing the funeral rite, one of the books visibly bearing notated music.⁹ This office was by no means designed only for public use; Christians could recite it in private using their books of hours as a way to remember their ancestors or to prepare for their own death and judgment in a structured, ritualized way.

From sights to sounds

Surviving in the tens of thousands and scattered among libraries, museums, and private collections around the world, books of hours have been the subject of scholarly interest for more than a century and have arguably become the best-known relic of late medieval and early modern culture. Investigations have scarcely concerned the two offices that consume most of the book's contents; rather, the intricate color miniatures, ornate borders, and other visual splendor have long attracted historians to books of hours as *objets d'art*. Since the late nineteenth century, art historians have tended to dominate major studies of books of hours, what might be called "general" studies of the genre.¹⁰ Still today, catalogs of books of hours, in print and online, may be indexed by their illuminations, which often signal new sections. Collectors too have foremost gravitated to books of hours for their exquisite imagery, less concerned with the revered texts contained in these devotional guides. Iconography, however, was a means to assist with the experience of prayer: studies of the alluring images and borders in books of hours should not diminish the esteem the faithful had for the powerful words of the rite. One scholar of the genre, Gregory Clark, has noticed an inclination in the field to study the art first and text second, likening it to enjoying dessert before eating one's broccoli.¹¹ Rachel Fulton has also criticized scholars for dismissing the experience of devotion through formulaic prayer: "it is not the artifacts (books, exercises, formulas) that are at fault but, rather, ourselves."¹² Recurring recitation and habit-forming rehearsal of venerable texts lie at the center of Christians' daily encounters with books of hours and demand attention to balance study of the genre.¹³

In the early fifteenth-century *Book of the Three Virtues*, French court poet and author Christine de Pizan counsels a princess about her responsibilities to her young daughter, explaining that the latter must know "her religious offices and the mass" before receiving books of devotion and of good behavior.¹⁴ Fluency in the liturgy evidently preceded the development of literacy, a gesture as much to the ear as to the eye, a point that guides the study ahead. As the aristocracy began to lose its exclusive grip on books of hours in the fifteenth century, near mass production and the dawn of the print age resulted in widening circulation of these books among a more modest social class, which included traders, lawyers, judges, teachers, and secretaries. If a household was lucky enough to own a single book, that book was likely a book of hours—some owned several copies.¹⁵ Though these books were cherished family heirlooms, the centrality of the liturgical hours remained. Hubert Meurier, a sixteenth-century canon of Reims Cathedral, wrote that the laity, notably women and small children, "knew most of the office of the sacrament as if they had been brought up from the start among ecclesiastics."¹⁶

Scholars used to assume low levels of literacy from the Christian laity, which in part may explain the lure of visual artistry for historians of books of hours as much as their owners.

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But the reality was that many books of hours had few or no illustrations; this suggests that users hungered for the stipulated liturgical texts, psalms, and prayers that ordered public life.¹⁷ Investigations of prayer texts and the nature of reading steadily emerged from literary scholars and others attentive to lay interaction with the content of books of hours. It is by now accepted that owners of all stripes had much more familiarity with the Latin prayer texts than was traditionally credited to them. As with learning to read, acquaintance with psalms, hymns, and other omnipresent devotions must have been made through a combination of hearing texts and sounding out the phonemes from a young age from a primer or book of hours.

Beyond the subject of literacy, historians of the book and material culture have probed experiences with books of hours more deeply, further rebalancing the attention that had been given to pictorial artistry. Sandra Penketh, Virginia Reinburg, and others have pursued the topic of female ownership and involvement with books of hours, whether from the nobility or lower social ranks.¹⁸ This topic has led the way to ethnographic studies and social histories of books of hours. Studies have looked to these intimate prayer guides to discover the identities of their owners and their family histories, traced through customizing elements and annotations that unveil personalization of the artifact. Combining some of these elements in a large-scale study of English books of hours, Eamon Duffy deliberately avoided an art-historical perspective and instead provided a “tribute to scribbles,” or marginal writings, in books of hours, which can evince “clues to the beliefs and devotional habits of medieval people—not least to the innermost thoughts of women, who formed a large proportion of the medieval market for such books.”¹⁹ At the same time, the work of Duffy and others has tended to bypass the central texts of books of hours, focused instead on personal touches and marginalia as objects of study.²⁰

While no one will admit that charming miniatures and ornate marginalia of some books could not distract the eye in an experience with prayer books, the liturgies and prayer texts were the foundational substance for handwritten books of hours and had a “look” of their own that is not shown often enough in studies. Although these durable texts for modern observers may not hold the immediate visual grandeur of, say, a detailed miniature of the Annunciation, the words of the liturgy, the arrangement of time-honored rites, and the presence of potent prayer texts seem to have prompted an experience that was just as enticing as any illumination for its owner. Hallowed and vibrant for devotees, the written word crackled with familiar sounds, inextricable from the ancient texts that flooded the pages of books of hours.

Concerned with manuscript reception studies in general, Pamela Sheingorn reminds us that a “full encounter” with the open book represents a multisensory, embodied experience.²¹ Other studies of medieval cultures have also emphasized the somatic aspects of texts.²² Human interaction with text necessarily involves sight, but the sense of hearing and the recollection of sound prompted by texts invite consideration for those interested in recovering the phenomenology of books of hours. These precious prayer books were more than an archive of sacred texts; for many, the words of the liturgy and extraliturgical devotion cued an experience with a network of assorted sounds—not ephemeral noises, but melodic echoes that were recognizable because they simultaneously recalled performance and were performable by nature.

As has often been repeated in studies of books of hours, the lay experience with these prayer manuals foremost constituted the act of emulation of monastic practice. The *horae* allowed Christians to move beyond the role of spectator into one of active participation through the structure and patterns of the liturgy. The offices in a book of hours, which account for the majority of its contents, establish a ritualized rhythm for the faithful, summoning the

unceasing liturgical exercises of monks, nuns, and secular clergy, no small part of it delivered musically. Virginia Reinburg has highlighted that the liturgies and other devotional items in books of hours reflected religious “speech,”²³ but the varied kinds of speech in turn embed sounds, imagined or performed by the user of a book of hours. Many of the utterances in books of hours are in fact recoverable melodies.

Musicologists are no strangers to books of hours. A natural outgrowth of art-historical studies, surveys of organological iconography constitute music specialists’ early engagement with the genre. In the mid-1970s, Edmund Bowles’s “checklists” of musical instruments in illuminated manuscripts in part addressed those drawn in books of hours.²⁴ Margareth Owens’s dissertation focused exclusively on books of hours and musical iconography (instruments and musicians), including what they can teach us about late medieval practice.²⁵ Apart from these early studies centered on the familiar territory of images and marginalia, musicologists have noticeably remained at an arm’s length from these popular devotional books.

Extant psalters occasionally reveal musical notation for antiphons, but in books of hours notation was rare, a seeming dead end for music historians.²⁶ Since the 1990s, however, musicologists have alluded to books of hours in a selective and peripheral way. Mentions of the genre in music-oriented studies tend to occur in connection with investigations of sixteenth-century choral polyphony. Howard Mayer Brown’s study of early printed music highlighted the predominance of devotional texts that reflected those found in books of hours.²⁷ Bonnie Blackburn, David Rothenberg, Julie Cumming, Geneviève Bazinet, Patrick Macey, John Constant, and David Crook have each independently discovered similar links between texts in books of hours and those set in polyphony, especially by early sixteenth-century composers.²⁸ Kate van Orden’s illuminating study of literacy, music, and sixteenth-century print culture further traced connections between repertoire, aural memory, and lay devotion as expressed in primers and prayer books including books of hours.²⁹ The ties to the Renaissance musical canon are undeniably many and there are doubtless more to discover, but musicologists have avoided mapping the sounding phenomena within books of hours themselves.

Encoded sounds

Through the genre of books of hours, Paul Saenger identified a cultural shift in the fifteenth century from reading aloud to silent absorption of texts.³⁰ “Silence” must be qualified, though. More recent strands of scholarship have underscored the user’s sound experience of prayer books with attention to the “inner ear.” Intent to remedy manuscript studies that omit sound from discussion, Beth Williamson identified musical notation and depictions of music-making in prayer manuscripts, which she interpreted as appeals to the interior senses rather than to physically sounding music.³¹ Similarly, in a detailed analysis of images from the late fifteenth-century “Gualenghi-d’Este Hours,” Tim Shephard, Laura Ștefănescu, and Serenella Sessini further explored the inner sensorium through suggestive depictions of music-making, introducing the concept of “silent music.” They argue that silent music is preferable to physical sounds and especially efficacious in prayer. This is an exceptional kind of music that a devotee could recall, hear, and create “with the heart,” taking a cue from the words of St. Paul (Ephesians 5:19 and 1 Corinthians 14:15).³² Both studies lean on patristic writings to confirm the inner senses as a means of drawing one closer to God. In the *Confessions*, Augustine famously described Ambros achieving a state of meditative contemplation with an active form of reading done in silence.³³ This silent but lively type of engagement could help explain how some users of books of hours interacted with prayer texts, seeing the text to prompt the memory of pronounced and sung words.

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The early medieval encyclopedist Isidore of Seville wrote about song and the voice: “Their sound, because it is something perceived by the senses, vanishes as the moment passes and is imprinted in the memory . . . for unless sounds are held by the memory of man, they perish, because they cannot be written down.”³⁴ Historians typically cite this passage to confirm that a formal notation of sound did not exist in the early seventh century. Texts had long preserved sound before musical notation could independently harness melodies. Books of organized chant texts pre-date our earliest surviving notated manuscripts by more than two centuries.³⁵ Even in the ninth century, Notker of St. Gall set poetry to long melodies of liturgical sequences so that the individual notes could remain tethered in his memory.³⁶ If words themselves could tie down the elusive nature of the sonic realm, it will be worthwhile to consider how texts in books of hours may awaken a sound bank in the user’s memory, instead of being understood as prayers to be read and reread in abject silence.

As studies in music and literature have shown repeatedly, the rise of literacy in the late Middle Ages did not signal the death of orality in the reading and performance of texts. Oral processes complemented literary contexts, often reinforcing one another rather than standing in opposition.³⁷ This study of music and performance in books of hours attempts to answer Beth Williamson’s call for an “aural turn” within medieval studies that admits sound, speech, and song into devotional practice.³⁸ From an “ear first” perspective, it seeks to identify not only signals for the sound-specific contents of books of hours—whether or not the sounds were realized by users—but also indications of performative action associated with the sound that these pages can offer. Emma Dillon proposes a “complex practice of sound in prayer,” recognizing the book of hours in particular as inherently sonorous, even filled with its own brand of notation.³⁹

Identification of genre is a simple but important task in the quest to unlock the sound world of books of hours. The offices in particular unveil a variety of liturgical items, all of which were performed vocally and perchance recollected as vocal performances. The genres ranged from poetry to prose and fluctuated from elaborately sung to murmured in silence. The textual and sonic gamut produced an array of unexplored vocal “textures” in the book of hours. It is hardly a mystery to recognize these textures, as scribes diligently provided rubrics and scripts of variable sizes to distinguish liturgical genres. These conscious designs allow “saccadic” indexing for the eye to grasp major shifts on the page while moderating the pacing of text.⁴⁰ Although Katherine Zieman finds “little evidence that users of such books made practical variations in their private performances to signal the distinction,” this positivistic view unnecessarily restricts the possibilities of realizing the material of the page.⁴¹ Taking a more accommodating and imaginative approach, Pamela Sheingorn has suggested that calling attention to new sections of text “encourages the reader-viewer to ‘hear’ the new passage in a specific voice distinct from that of the passage that preceded.”⁴² As paratexts, rubrics announced the principal chants and prayers, and were reliable indicators of modifications in vocal tone that fit the text, whether it was a florid musical passage reserved for a soloist, a short communal response as part of a dialogue, or a simple prose oration uttered by a priest. Specifications of genre alert the owner of a book of hours to the kind of voice that may be imagined or even produced.

Performing the *horae*

One large task of this project is to identify the sounds referenced in books of hours, but another aim seeks to understand how texts might be internalized or performed. Scholars seem to have dismissed the texts of books of hours as frozen in time rather than laden with

prompts for action. While the popular prayers “O Intemerata” and “Obsecro te” may strike one as streams of lengthy prose in the *horae*, many scribes elsewhere laid out folios and presented lines in a way that suggests the texts were echoes of a performance.⁴³ Instructions for reenactment are of course not divulged outright, but neither should the possibility of execution (or imagined execution) be excluded. The early thirteenth-century statutes for both lay and clerical workers at a hospital in Montdidier (northern France) required those who knew the Office of the Virgin to sing it (*decantet*), not recite it. If they knew only the Seven Penitential Psalms, they were to sing those instead as part of morning prayer.⁴⁴ From these widely adopted orders, one can rest assured that these texts, all found in books of hours, stirred some users to enact or express the musical sounds of prayer.

Hovering over the question of performance of the texts are thorny issues of public and private consumption of the book of hours. While standard definitions of the book of hours emphasize its use in private devotion in the home, it has already been intimated that usage of the *horae* in public was not an uncommon practice. With a flexible context in mind rather than an unconstructive binary opposition, one can imagine different types of performative interaction with the book of hours, generating a web of engagement possibilities. We know that “private” devotional activity was fostered in the public context of Mass, for instance.⁴⁵ Mass itself exhibited different levels of vocality and gesture to consider in the ritual act. Outward participation was also conventional for public funeral rites, but domestic contexts did not prevent these voices from reemerging on a similar embodied spectrum to produce a state of *meditatio*. Reinburg has described the exercises revealed in books of hours as “both individual and collective, public and private” all at once.⁴⁶ This study seeks to keep open these possibilities when journeying through the central texts of books of hours, particularly in light of signs of a performance-oriented *mise-en-page*. It further acknowledges the close connection of reading and sound, allowing for the presentation of texts to reveal their own “charisma,” evoking voices of differing types and contrasting styles of performance.⁴⁷

In a study of orality and the written word, Thomas Cohen and Lesley Twomey assert, “Script is . . . silent. But the reader’s mind is loud, as is the writer’s, and script must labour if it is to command that interior loudness by script-devices that coax or compel the reader’s mind to align itself at least partly with the writer’s interior voice.”⁴⁸ The user’s reaction to both texts and “script-devices” may take different forms in the experience of the *horae*. Whether listening to the mind’s ear, murmuring, or outright singing, supplicants’ responses to texts are necessarily variable and are all put on equal footing in the investigation ahead.⁴⁹ Notably, the chapters of this book avoid the term “reader” for the owner of a book of hours. Replacing this word with “user,” “owner,” “supplicant,” and the like, this study reminds us of the performative potential of every opening in a manuscript, much of it filled with musical correlates from the liturgy presented without conventional staff notation.

Limits

Giacomo Baroffio recognized the performative experience one could have with a book of hours in the absence of music notation. His 2011 study established the heavy musical stamp on books of hours, cataloging the organization and transmission patterns of liturgical melodies in connection with Italian books of hours in manuscript form, mainly from the fifteenth century during their prime.⁵⁰ The survey ahead will likewise confine observations principally to fifteenth-century manuscript books of hours, but of French provenance. General studies of the genre have long centered on France, which dominated production of books of hours in the late Middle Ages. Artistic traditions in the circle of John, Duke of Berry (1340–1416)

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have attracted considerable attention, but workshops in the north, Paris especially, constituted a hub of book copying and illustrating.⁵¹ The few inventories of manuscripts available in the aggregate indicate that extant books of hours in France account for more than half of the global count. In the age of print (outside the scope of this study), Parisian presses similarly controlled production of the *horae*, credited with 90 percent of all editions from 1470 to the end of the sixteenth century.⁵²

Besides the temporal and geographic boundaries of this investigation, an additional restriction of liturgical “usage” will be placed on this exploration of musical sound in books of hours. The collation of items in the liturgy was by no means stable across Europe. The office liturgies recorded in books of hours either reflected local liturgical practice or—increasingly in the fifteenth century—offered the conventional “use” of Rome, a rite adopted in the thirteenth century by the Roman curia from the Franciscans and later standardized after the Council of Trent. Some cities, like Paris, Amiens, and Rouen, had their own emphases in the calendar and special assortment of liturgical items; scholars have consequently identified “use” as one of the basic properties of a book of hours. Various “tests” have been developed to determine usage, with focus not only on the local calendar but also on the Office of the Virgin, the Office of the Dead, and stipulated saints in the Litany.⁵³ By focusing primarily on the popular Roman usage in this study, sources can be compared more readily, and nuances in the *mise-en-page* can emerge more visibly as textual variants are kept to a minimum. (The liturgical specifications for Advent in the Office of the Virgin in most books of hours are beyond the scope of this study.) Even with the chronological, geographical, and ritual guardrails in place, variants within sources remain numerous. Digital access to well over 100 books of hours meeting these criteria—many from the Gallica website of the Bibliothèque nationale de France—has made the project manageable and allowed insights to surface more swiftly than could have been imagined even a few years ago.

Both the beauty and frustration of working with manuscript books of hours involves their individuality. Each copy must (rightly) be accepted as a customized document and often as a family treasure; this principle goes far to justify the preponderance of single-source studies.⁵⁴ The resulting paucity of general studies, though, creates an environment where broad observations and interpretations of the corpus may be left unsaid. Common traits in books of hours may go unnoticed if attention is largely fixed on individual peculiarities. Many sources brought out in this book would never attract individual study. Not only might they lack imagery, but their precise ownership and chronology may also be unidentified. Such books of hours find a home here, however, as universal lessons about content and signals of engagement within the texts of the *horae* can be learned without detailed knowledge of a source’s full context. And while patterns and trends in the display of liturgical and devotional texts may be distilled from a high level, there is still room for exceptional cases to be explored among the dozens of sources.

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There are different ways one could organize a study of the musical sounds and cues to performative action in books of hours. Since these prayer manuals contain a relatively conventional progression of sections, most of which have musical content, it would be possible to lead the reader through the various sections of books of hours from start to finish, noting sounds along the way. Such an approach would miss larger points common to these sections, however. One could also survey the genres of music encountered in books of hours, often rigorously rubricated. Prescriptions for plainchant and other utterances, ranging from simple

responses to mellifluous melodies, abound in most extant sources. But an entire examination of genres may leave the reader untethered in the context of these highly sectionalized books. The investigation therefore attempts to integrate these approaches in its design, on one hand highlighting key genres within the major liturgical offices of books of hours, while on the other hand probing the kinds of sonic structures, vocal textures, and performative cues provided in some distinct sections of these devotional books.

The book overall divides into two formal parts: I. Music of the Offices and II. Music beyond the Offices. If the user experience with a book of hours was centered on the emulation of the liturgy, then an examination of the contents in the offices is of urgent importance. In his magisterial study of books of hours in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Victor Leroquais rightly considered the Office of the Virgin and Office of the Dead to be essential elements of a book of hours, though he relegated the abbreviated Hours of the Cross and Hours of the Holy Spirit to secondary status.⁵⁵ In its first five chapters, this study considers the substance of all of these liturgies together, as they unveil similar genres, forming a core vocal repertoire for the book. Each of these chapters explores a category of liturgical song with discrete compositional characteristics: psalms, antiphons, hymns, responsories, and dialogues.

Psalms have long been taken for granted in studies of books of hours but will be restored here to their pride of place as the principal liturgical occupation of the Divine Office. As both pedagogical and exegetical texts, the Book of Psalms constitutes the heartbeat of the two chief offices in books of hours. Chapter 1 examines the nature of the psalms in the context of the office, not only reviewing the expected material content but connecting it with the practices of vocal alternation in psalmody and the realization of the *media distinctio*—the structural, devotional, and performative pause in the middle of a psalm verse, which is sometimes indicated in manuscript books of hours. The second chapter highlights the concise liturgical melodies known as antiphons. Antiphons frame the recitation of a psalm or group of psalms in the offices and form a dialogue between the Old Testament and nonscriptural sentences.⁵⁶ As short texted pieces of monophony with modest musical contour, antiphons have an idiosyncratic way of unfolding in books of hours, led by an incipit that reaches its plenitude only after the completion of the psalm. The performative tradition of interweaving the invitatory antiphon with Psalm 94 will be also examined, along with the role of the well-known Marian antiphons in the *horae*.

Chapter 3 concerns the genre of the hymn in the book of hours. Like psalms, hymns represented an important building block of one's elementary education. Scribes usually denoted both psalms and hymns in larger script, projecting an oversized presence among the items in the offices. Structurally, however, psalms and hymns diverge: whereas psalm recitation relies on a flexible musical prescription for execution, hymns consist of distinct melodies, some of which became the liturgy's most popular tunes. The rhythmical structure and characteristic rhyme of hymns made them ripe for memorization. This chapter traverses the central hymn texts of the main offices, as well as those of the Hours of the Cross and Hours of the Holy Spirit. Included in the survey is a close look at the *Te Deum*, the multipurpose "hymn" of the Christian faith, which has recitational characteristics of a psalm.

Flowing from the melody of hymns comes a chapter on responsories, the most elaborate type of song one could hear in a performance of the Divine Office. Dispatched in the service of Matins in both the Office of the Virgin and the Office of the Dead, responsories followed individual lections in practice and represented an ecstatic musical outpouring given in response to the word of God. Florid melodies infused responsories and their attendant verses, each part duly delineated in books of hours. The customary vocal repetitions (*repetenda*) in

responsories are treated with care by scribes, fulfilling liturgical prescriptions while remaining attentive to the user experience with the page. Responsories occupy yet another “texture” in books of hours separate from the monotony of surrounding readings, one that was ornate and fit for a talented soloist. Among the responsories, *Libera me Domine* from the Office of the Dead will be scrutinized.

Versicles and their attendant responses—together known as dialogues—round out the examination of genre and execution in the Office repertoire. These liturgical items are scattered throughout the liturgies and function as linking devices between different genres or types of action. Structured in a call and response-type format, the dialogues notably introduce each canonical hour of a liturgical office, following a simple recitation formula. They are arguably the most familiar of musical items in the liturgy but have scarcely been recognized in the literature on books of hours as near-automatic vocal exchanges fixed in Christian consciousness. This chapter includes exploration of the Pater noster in office liturgies: while not properly a versicle and response, a brief dialogue occurs at its conclusion, sensitively marked for the eye and ear in many books of hours.

The second part of this study involves musical content and performative gesture outside of the liturgical offices; it highlights four discrete sections of the book of hours, three of them standard and one an infrequent occurrence, though rich with sonic potential. First, the Seven Penitential Psalms (numbered 6, 31, 37, 50, 101, 129, and 142) represent the venerable psalms of confession, indistinguishable in appearance from other psalms in the book of hours. In illustrated books, the set will open with a miniature featuring King David, the reputed author of the psalms. Musical sound figures into these miniatures as the scene routinely shows David with his characteristic harp. The variable role of the harp in the Davidic imagery will be examined, followed by a review of performance contexts for the Seven Penitential Psalms and close analysis of the antiphon *Ne reminiscaris Domine*, which frames all seven psalms in the *horae*. As we will see, a hitherto unrecognized supplement curiously attaches to *Ne reminiscaris Domine* in books of hours, presenting a sonic conundrum.

The Litany immediately trails the Seven Penitential Psalms in the book of hours and will likewise follow in this part of the book. The dialogic exchanges witnessed in Chapter 5 are taken to their extreme in the Litany, a hypnotic listing of saints whom the faithful begged to “pray for us” with the iterative intonation *ora pro nobis*. The recitation of the Litany is still practiced widely today, reserved for special occasions, and is always sung. Often performed in procession in the Middle Ages, the congregational responses were of the simplest sort and incessant in their repetition. The variety of requests from beyond the realm of saints (and their modest congregational responses), rarely discussed in the literature, receive further attention. Perhaps more than any section of the book of hours, the *mise-en-page* of the Litany communicates the spirit of a performance, separating the cantor’s invocation from the corporate response, often with use of ornate line-fills. While the cues for performance and signals for engagement with the text remain evident, the artistic decoration and relentless text repetitions further argue against the traditional inclination to save space in manuscripts. A performance-oriented *mise-en-page* requires careful planning to apportion the proper amount of space needed to reflect the desired vocal sound, texture, and action.

The entreaties to saints from the Litany intensify in the section of a book of hours dedicated to suffrages, the subject of Chapter 8. Devotion to a roster of handpicked saints—much narrower than that found in the Litany—was a hallmark of medieval life. In the absence of relics for veneration, individuals could experience the power and intercession of the saints by reading about their lives (*vitae*) or reciting select mantric prayers, such as those found in suffrages. While office liturgies were highly conventional and followed standard liturgical

usages, the suffrages represent one of the more personalized and variable sections in books of hours. Suffrages for provincial saints have further helped researchers localize source material and understand the patterns of devotion by individual supplicants. The structure of each saint's suffrage (also called a "memorial") consists of an antiphon, versicle, response, and prayer (*oratio*), meticulously labeled as such. All four items would have been intoned if encountered in a liturgical setting. The musical bedrock of prevalent antiphons will be outlined, as well as key dialogues found across the suffrages. The chapter takes an important detour by highlighting the occasional use of the liturgical sequence in place of a suffrage antiphon. Scribes recognized the rhymed and rhythmical profile of the sequence and brought these musico-poetic gems to life on the page for the active user.

The most contoured of melodies in the Christian liturgy are found in the celebration of the Mass. And while liturgical offices dominate books of hours, a Mass for the Virgin Mary will appear sporadically as an accessory section and will be treated in the final chapter of this book. The Lady Mass usually consists of texts for the Proper chants and lections, beginning with the elaborate Introit *Salve sancta parens*, which entered the repertoire in the eleventh century. Given the frequency that the laity requested and interacted with the votive Mass for the Virgin, it is hard to believe that owners of books of hours would not have heard or known these melodies. The chapter describes the sounds that were invoked in these crucial texts of the Marian Mass and how they were presented as scripts for envoicing. While the Mass was a relatively uncommon inclusion in fifteenth-century books of hours, especially rare strings of masses in select manuscripts will be exposed to conclude the study.

The sonic terrain of books of hours is vast and ripe for investigation. Through the lens of fifteenth-century French books of hours, this study endeavors to reclaim the devotional vademecum as a storage site of sound material with performative potential as revealed in various cues and layouts. Studies of books of hours have tended to focus on the periphery of these volumes—miniatures, marginalia, and subtle artistic clues to ownership. The survey ahead returns to the central premise of the book of hours—the emulation of the daily liturgical hours and recitation of ubiquitous devotional texts. By shifting attention almost entirely to the principal texts and key sections of books of hours, a latent sound world, though silent on the page, emerges in plain "sight." The presence of words prompts a range of well-known pieces of music, vocal interactions, and sound textures. Let us unleash the unsung voices and listen.

Notes

- 1 For key studies on the history and circulation of the text and melody, see Maier, *Studien zur Geschichte der Marienantiphon Salve Regina*, and Canal, *Salve regina misericordiae*, 27–125. The earliest extant manuscript to contain the *Salve regina* is the mid-twelfth-century Cistercian antiphoner BnF, n.a.l. 1412, associated with the abbey of Morimondo, southwest of Milan. The chant inspired the development of Marian *Salve* services in lay confraternities of northern Europe, providing another context for the prayer. On the development of *Salve* service, see Forney, "Music, Ritual, and Patronage."
- 2 Fabri, *The Wanderings*, 1: 140–50. On the practice, see Remensnyder, "Mary, Star of the Multi-Confessional Mediterranean," 315. The singing of the *Salve regina*, other liturgical staples, and observances of the traditional hours aboard the ships of Christopher Columbus is described in Hale, *The Life of Christopher Columbus*, 38; Grant, *The Last Crusader*, 25–26.
- 3 For a short history of the psalter, see Joseph Dyer, "Psalter, Liturgical," *NG* 20: 518–520.
- 4 The abbreviation of Matins to a single nocturn accounts for the use of the word "little" (*parvum*) in connection with the office; the office is otherwise a full complement of services and texts.
- 5 On the birth of books of hours from psalters, see Leroquais, *Les livres d'heures manuscrits*, 1: ix–xiv; Delaisse, "The Importance of Books of Hours," 204.

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- 6 Baltzer, "The Little Office of the Virgin."
- 7 Gittings, *Death, Burial, and the Individual*, 162–163; Loades, "Rites of Passage," 209; Ottosen, *The Respositories and Versicles of the Latin Office of the Dead*, 44–49.
- 8 Schell, "The Office of the Dead in England," 189–227.
- 9 Philadelphia Museum of Art, Department of Prints, Drawings, and Photographs, MS 1945-65-8, fol. 77r.
- 10 Among the early art historical studies is Pollard, *The Illustrations in French Books of Hours*. Later landmark studies include Harthan, *Books of Hours and Their Owners*; Wieck, *Time Sanctified*; Avril et al., *Les petites heures de Jean, duc de Berry*; König, "Französische Buchmalerei um 1450"; Plotzek, *Andachtsbücher des Mittelalters aus Privatbesitz*; Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion in Fourteenth-Century England*. Crucial inventories include Leroquais, *Les livres d'heures manuscrits* and Randall, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Walters Art Gallery*.
- 11 Clark, "Beyond Saints," 213.
- 12 Fulton, "Praying with Anselm," 732.
- 13 One such survey that attends to devotional texts in addition to visual representations in books of hours is Wieck, *Painted Prayers*.
- 14 de Pizan, *The Treasure of the City of Ladies or the Book of the Three Virtues*, 68.
- 15 Hindman, "Books of Hours," 5.
- 16 Meurier, *Traicté de l'institution*, fol. 43r.
- 17 Wieck, *Time Sanctified*, 40; Reinburg, *French Books of Hours*, 6–8.
- 18 Penketh, "Women and Books of Hours"; Reinburg, "'For the Use of Women.'" See also Bell, "Medieval Women Book Owners"; Driver, "Mirrors of a Collective Past"; and Bennett, "A Thirteenth-Century French Book of Hours for Marie."
- 19 Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, VIII.
- 20 The rationale can be found in *ibid.*, 4. Duffy's focus on devotional texts and special charms and prayers in English books of hours (*primers*), however, are profitably detailed in *The Stripping of the Altars*, 233–298.
- 21 Sheingorn, "Performing the Illustrated Manuscript," 57.
- 22 See, for example, the essays in Fulton and Holsinger, *History in the Comic Mode*.
- 23 Reinburg, "Oral Rites," 376–79; Reinburg, *French Books of Hours*, 4, 140.
- 24 See four articles by Bowles, "A Checklist of Musical Instruments . . .," each surveying a major library or museum (British Museum, Pierpont Morgan Library, Walters Art Gallery, and the Bibliothèque nationale de France).
- 25 Owens, "Musical Subjects."
- 26 Neither type of prayer book, however, has fielded much musicological attention, though other early pre-modern sources without notation have drawn rightful attention. See, for example, Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety*, and McIlvenna, "The Power of Music." English books of hours that contain notation for the Office of the Dead are explored in Schell, "The Office of the Dead in England."
- 27 Brown, "The Mirror of Man's Salvation."
- 28 Blackburn, "Te Matrem Dei Laudamus," 58; Blackburn, "The Virgin in the Sun"; Blackburn, "Messages in Miniature," 161–62; Rothenberg, *The Flower of Paradise*; Rothenberg, "The Most Prudent Virgin," 40–46; Cumming, "Petrucci's Publics"; Bazinet, "Singing the King's Music"; Macey, "Josquin, Good King René"; Constant, "A Book of Hours for Pope Leo X," 330–332; Crook, "The Exegetical Motet."
- 29 Van Orden, "Children's Voices."
- 30 Saenger, "Books of Hours and Reading Habits."
- 31 Williamson, "Sensory Experience in Medieval Devotion."
- 32 Shephard et al., "Music, Silence, and the Senses."
- 33 Augustine, *Confessions*, 97–98 (Bk. VI, iii).
- 34 Isidore of Seville, *The Etymologies*, 95.
- 35 The earliest notated sources (for example, BnF, lat. 1154 and lat. 1240) are generally dated around the end of the ninth century.
- 36 For a discussion of Notker's *Liber ymnorum*, see Bower, *The Liber ymnorum of Notker Balbulus*, 1: 1–55.
- 37 Lord (*The Singer of Tales*) and Parry (*The Making of Homeric Verse*) tended to view orality and literacy as opposites. The complex interaction of the two was recognized in later scholarship. See,

- for example, Ong, *Orality and Literacy*; Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral*; Stock, *The Implications of Literacy*. Among the major musicological studies, particularly involving memory and notation, see Busse Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory*; Boynton, "Orality, Literacy, and the Early Notation of the Office Hymns."
- 38 Williamson, "Sensory Experience in Medieval Devotion," 42–43.
- 39 Dillon, *The Sense of Sound*, 174, 188.
- 40 Edwards ("Dynamic Qualities," 52) has alluded to the different kinds of sonic contrasts in the liturgy.
- 41 Zieman, *Singing the New Song*, 36–37.
- 42 Sheingorn, "Performing the Illustrated Manuscript," 64–67.
- 43 Unsurprisingly, these extensive prayers have no links to the world of plainchant or polyphony. Johannes Ockeghem's *Intemerata dei mater* (*Collected Works*, 3: 8–12) shows no resemblance to the text from books of hours after its first address of the Virgin Mary. And while the Josquin-attributed motet *Obsecro te domina* (*New Josquin Edition* 24.8, incl. Critical Commentary volume) does paraphrase the conventional opening text of the "Obsecro te" from books of hours, the connection stops after the first 11 words and adds just a few additional phrases.
- 44 Le Grand, *Statuts*, 37–38.
- 45 Morgan, "English Books of Hours," 75; Boynton, "Prayer as Liturgical Performance," 897.
- 46 Reinburg, *French Books of Hours*, 6.
- 47 Zieman, *Singing the New Song*, 83.
- 48 Cohen and Twomey, *Spoken Word and Social Practice*, 9–10.
- 49 On the efficacy of the murmur to avoid distraction in a meditative state, see Quintilian, *The Institutio oratoria*, XI, ii, 33–34.
- 50 Baroffio, "Testo e musica."
- 51 For examples highlighting John, Duke of Berry, see Avril et al., *Les petites heures de Jean, duc de Berry*; Limbourg and Colombe, *The Très riches heures of Jean, Duke of Berry*; Meiss et al., *French Painting in the Time of Jean de Berry*. Ghent, Bruges, Flanders, and Utrecht, were also major centers of production for books of hours.
- 52 Labarre, *Le livre dans la vie amiénoise*, 166.
- 53 Plummer, "'Use' and 'Beyond Use'"; Clark, "Beyond Saints," 224. Variant usages could number in the hundreds.
- 54 See, for example, Smith, *Art, Identity and Devotion*, which investigates three books of hours separately in a single volume.
- 55 Leroquais, *Les livres d'heures manuscrits*, 1: xv–xvi.
- 56 On the Marian and Christological connections between the antiphons and the Psalms as a reflection of the ancient Temple worship tradition, see Fulton, *Mary and the Art of Prayer*, 107.

