

# Anglo Catalan Psalter



# ANGLO-CATALAN PSALTER

BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DE FRANCE, PARIS

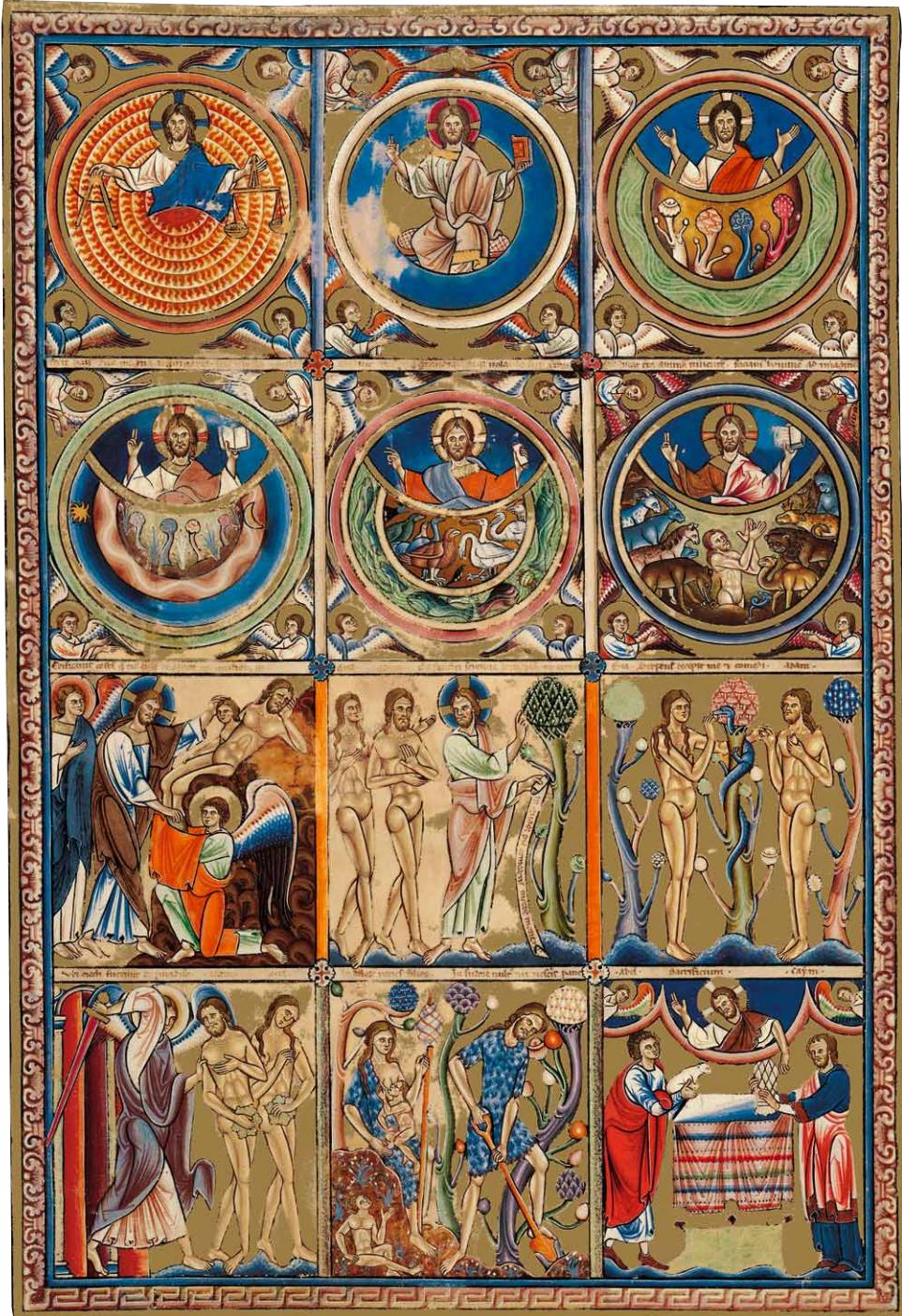
*«First, unique and unrepeatable edition strictly limited to 987 copies»*

- Shelfmark: Lat. 8846.
- Date: 13th/14th C.
- Size: ± 480 x 332 mm.
- 356 pp. and more than 140 fascinating miniatures embellished with gold.
- 190 ornamental letters upon gold ground with plants motifs
- The text, set in three columns, contains the Hebrew, Roman and Gallican version of the Psalms.
- Full-colour commentary volume by: Prof. Rosa Alcoy, University of Barcelona, Prof. Nigel Morgan, University of Cambridge and Prof. Klaus Reinhardt, University of Trier.



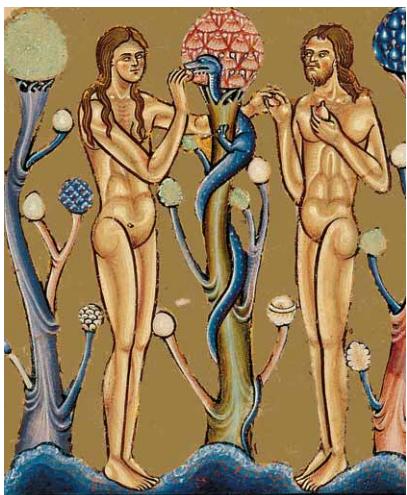
## CANTERBURY, AROUND THE YEAR 1200

Henry II is king of England and following his marriage to Leonor of Aquitaine his dominions encompass part of France too. In 1170, Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, has returned from his exile in France with a series of splendid manuscripts illuminated on the continent which were to influence the style of the Christ Church scriptorium, one of the most important centres making illuminated codices in England.









At that time this workshop was a hive of activity thanks to a fascinating and ambitious project: a triple Psalter featuring the Latin, Hebrew and Gallican versions of the Psalms in addition to glosses in Anglo-Norman, a dialect stemming from the French spoken in England for three centuries following the Norman conquest, and considered to be an educated language and the one preferred by the court and the upper classes.

The Canterbury workshop, in keeping with Carolingian tradition, designed a codex that combined texts and images in such an ingenious composition that it constituted, in the words of Professor Klaus Reinhardt Ph.D., a peerless masterpiece. The English artists organised the spaces allocated to text and specified the position and size of the miniatures. They copied virtually the whole text in impeccable script, there being no sign of any mistakes or corrections, and illuminated the first part of the codex.

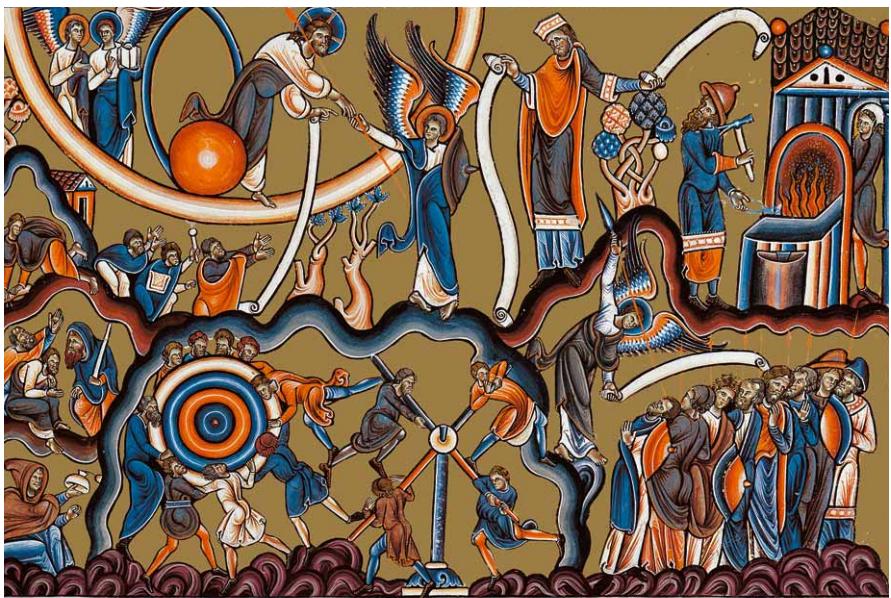
The English masters decided to begin the psalter with daring paintings intended for an erudite audience. They created four full-page, illuminated folios that could not fail to impress the patron or anyone else privileged enough to see them. The Canterbury artists created a dazzling





prologue providing a detailed summary of the history of humanity according to the scriptures in fabulous images.

The spectacular nature of the project, the splendour of the manuscript and the lavish use of gold suggest it may have been a psalter for a king: Henry II himself, Louis VII of France or even Philip Augustus in the early years of his reign. Another candidate of noble birth could be Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony.



◀ details, folios 10r & 20r

The English artists created a universe brimming with unusual scenes whose singularity and complex symbolism made them difficult to interpret. The almost dream-like portrayal of nature, with unreal, imaginary forms, is stunning. The painters endowed the animals with a personality of their own, depicting them with such expressive faces that they sometimes seem to be speaking to each other. The wealth of colours and lavish use of gold make this manuscript a veritable gem.

However, the English miniaturists' painstaking task was mysteriously interrupted. Something happened to the workshop or the codex that prevented the Canterbury masters from completing the meticulous illumination work they had undertaken.



► detail, folio 5v

## BARCELONA, MORE THAN A CENTURY LATER

Pedro the Ceremonious was crowned king of Aragón and Catalonia in 1336. The painter and miniaturist, Ferrer Bassa, had already returned from his journey acquiring knowledge in Tuscany where he had been in contact with the most fertile and creative painting in the Italian Trecento.

Bassa produced several works commissioned by the king in his Barcelona workshop. A splendid psalter of English origin came into his hands, but, for some unknown reason, it was unfinished. The English masters had, however, left sketches for seven miniatures and allocated blank spaces for the rest. It is highly likely that Pedro the Ceremonious insisted on Ferrer Bassa completing this spectacular psalter for him whilst respecting its sumptuous lavishness. Modern-day researchers have found many clues linking its completion to the king himself.

The seven paintings drawn by the Canterbury masters and painted by Ferrer Bassa a century later are the result of a truly unique combination of the Anglo-Byzantine culture close to the 1200 and the pictorial forms of the 1300 Italianate Gothic. They constitute a remarkable fusion of cultures, a hybrid art in which no boundaries of space, time or culture exist.

In the second part of the manuscript, Ferrer Bassa's brushstrokes reinterpret the Byzantine dimension of English painting with greater artistic license, revealing a thorough knowledge of trecentist pictorial resources. Bassa's images convey new



¶ non est mi  
quitas in eo.

¶ non est mi  
quitas in eo.

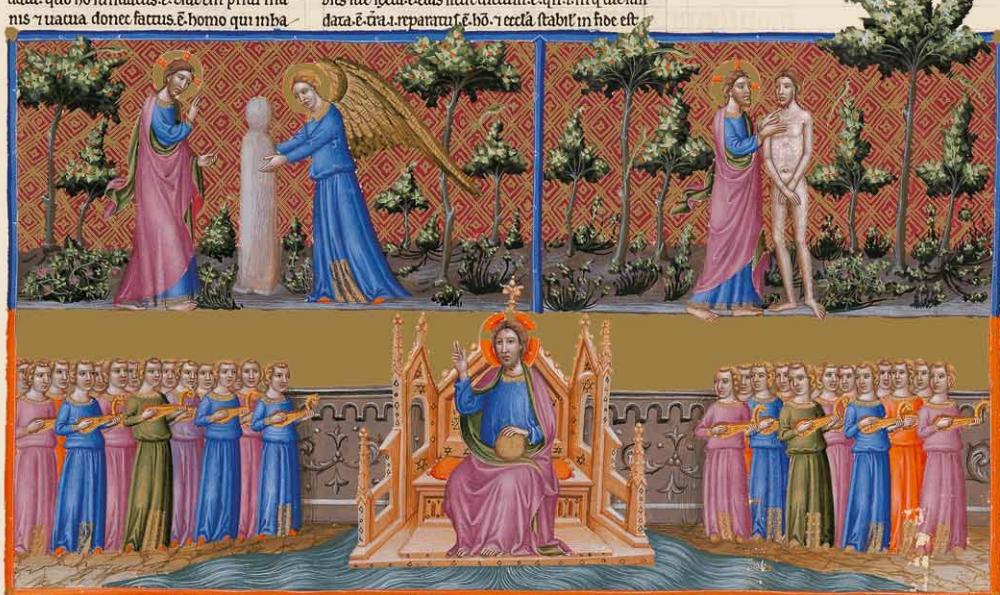
**G**a nobis dñe ut plantati in  
domo tua tuis semp in atri  
si floreamus.nec cnsitoria falla  
cia a te sicut fenu exordi simul  
cū peccatoribz sed afferentes fru  
ctum penitentie te solum qui in  
eternum pmanes,pspiritate ppe  
tua potiamur. ¶

**G**in regn dcor. Quando fundata est tra  
 sexto die. Seco die non legit fundata  
 tra h̄ miseric dñ. quādūr' ro die posse dū fu  
 data: quo hō fundatus. ē. Erat enī pñus ma  
 nis r' uacua donec factus. ē. homo qui imba

¶ non est mi  
quitas in eo.

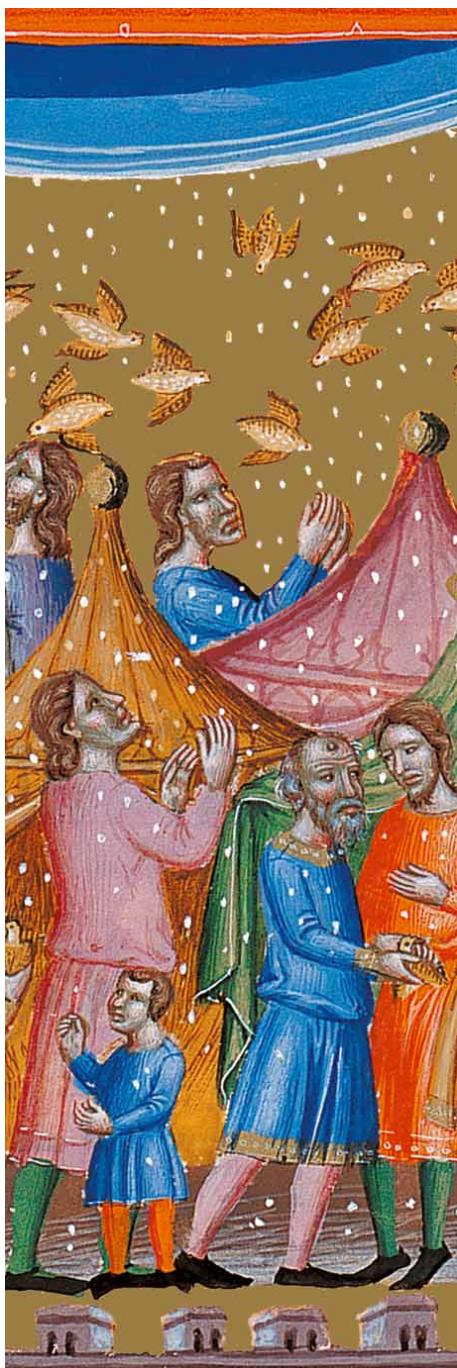
buitam tam vñ quidam titulus h̄m mhabnata. s;  
 q; de mischia fundacione agit melius est fundata.  
 Seco mag die fundata est terra. hō creatus ē. h; q;  
 stabitis non fuit r' lapsum ad litterā non sati con  
 uementē dī tra fundata. s; allegorice. Pst̄ dies sig  
 nificant̄ sex etates. q; p sextum dī sexta etas. hā  
 sicut hō in sexta die creauit̄: ita in sexta etate in  
 via feria. vñ hora reparatus est. lumen q; fundata est  
 terra qñ bono ad imaginē dei plene reformatu. ē.  
 & stabitis factus de qua fundatione agit̄ in hoc psō.  
 et. dī titulus. ps̄ iste est laus dñi xp̄i quē laudat pphā  
 de fundatione. tr̄ i. reparantibus hōis. vñ r' cantu. ē.  
 cum maxima iocunditate brñda. laus dico habita  
 in dī. in consideratione opis facti ante sabbatum.  
 dies nre sexta. ē. etas sicut dictum. ē. qñ. i. in q; die fun  
 data ē. tra i. reparantibus hō. r' ecclā stabil' in fide est.

fundata. Materia est fundatio tr̄ i. reparatio ho  
 minis. Intentio ē. xp̄m fundatorem tr̄ i laudare.  
 mod̄ demonstrauo gnie uirtut: laudat xp̄m p  
 phera. pmo à pulchritudine c̄i hoc ē decorē induit̄  
 ē. Scđ a foecunditate induit̄ dī. Et cni. f. o. t. tertio  
 ab opibz. Parata. s. t. quarto. à poteestate. Et cni. f. o. t. tertio  
 f. quinto à laudibz uniuersitatis. contra q; laudes  
 mare. scđ inuicibilis elationes oportuit. Testimo  
 na. t. c. Sexto à uirtute dicusp. Domi. t. d. s. Sep  
 tumo à laude domus que est de reparato homine  
 à xp̄o: quem sic laudauit fundata. ē. quā deet sicut  
 do. i. firma fundatio. Jn. i. 5.



Venit xp̄s funda  
tum. r' in fide funda  
ut hominem. unde agit  
psalm.

¶ In diem an sabbon. i. sextum dī. quo factus est hō ad mag. r' sumit̄ dī. fñs omibz que erant ualde bona: reueunt sabbō  
p̄signans qd̄o requestim in dī. si faciat̄ bona opa: que cū labore fuit. in quo deficeret hō: n̄ spes quiescere teneret.  
 r' qd̄ hō opa finem h̄m sextu dies qd̄ fuit: hō uepam. Sabbon non hō ut vi. die fecit dī hominem. sexto sed uenit  
 reformare. Jn. v. 1. die n̄ legit fundata tra. h̄ miseric dñ. Cum hō fundat̄ in fide immobil: tunce hō ab imagine  
 dī. quod significat sextus dies.



ways of structuring space along with more naturalist landscapes.

Ferrer Bassa, considered to be the finest painter in the Crown of Aragón in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, developed a personality of his own, clearly marked by the Tuscan styles of the Trecento, particularly those of Florence and Siena with which he was so familiar. A painter making a delicate, elegant and refined use of colour.

Bassa was the painter of the Catalan-Aragonese royal household and the preferred artist of Alfonso the Kind and Pedro the Ceremonious, who both commissioned him to produce several works for their residences and chapels royal. Most of them were apparently portraits, now missing.

Sed: quoniam mundi delicta solunt: et saure  
bōnum opatur p̄tāc expectantes aī aduentū  
antq̄s: et alios in p̄tāc aduentū s̄ā querentes  
in se n̄ frustari: ido quia om̄ia equanimit̄  
sustinet: lat̄ illata mala p̄tāct̄. Tercio: ab  
oī p̄tāct̄ malis p̄ se q̄ parte sua opposita: u  
benivolentia capat a p̄sona iudicis: sua et  
ad adūctarū: et a causa utēsq; partis do iu  
diciūt cognita. Quartu: ex consensu dūmne  
undicte in p̄cando adūctarū: penā p̄ iniq̄ta  
te xp̄bar. Quinto: q̄ uictimas s̄ā sua parti de  
passione supponit̄ os ad laudē di p̄ quē cā ut  
lēm comutationē: i. salutē suscepunt̄ mui

ans. Satu: mef. orō. Qm̄ inūter̄: a. p̄ubata p̄se  
curo. Que n̄ rapin: e. Grat̄ sustinuit̄ q̄ ad al  
p̄tāct̄ deliquerit̄. Os u. suis: pars ii. p̄munt̄ orōnem  
sua ut audiat̄: q̄ si sua s̄ā mundi delicta uenit collere  
et opari salutē om̄niū. Non erubestant̄. Orō. Qui  
expectant̄: p̄p̄s aī aduentū. Qui q̄rit̄. In ipso  
aduentū: sua p̄ea. Qm̄. p̄c. f. dicit q̄nta eq̄umira  
te sustinuit̄: lat̄ sua mala p̄tāct̄. Ego u. pars.  
iii. orō. p̄ se et parte comunit̄. Qm̄ benigna ē. Qā  
misericors ē. uoluntate: et misericordia ipsa exhibi  
tione. He altas f. a. p̄a p̄sona sua duplicit̄: q̄ hu  
mif. ē. et supple. q̄tulationib; q̄stanci. Intende  
ate mee. q̄ humilitate q̄ exhibet extus. h̄c ī alia

m̄ius. Prop̄ im̄cos. m̄. Ab adūctarū duplicit̄: ut ur  
sfundant̄: u. uir conūtant̄. Tu siū imp̄. m̄. A causa  
sua q̄ ē. iudici manifesta. Tu siū imp̄. m̄. A causa  
im̄cos q̄ ī conspectu v̄. E. Imp̄p̄. e. m̄. A p̄o  
na sua q̄ ut̄. q̄ obediētā expectant̄: sustinuit̄.  
Eiārū. p̄s. m̄. Imp̄ano. Ego siū. p̄. v̄. pars. v̄. Sa  
i. t. d. s. Uoluntate de passione t̄ m̄bs. Laudabon. d.  
laudat̄ p̄ sua comutatione: rat̄os futur̄. E. p̄. c. m̄.  
dano laud. Qm̄. v̄. s. f. Exponit bona q̄ ex hac comuta  
tione sequant̄. Et edificat̄. c. q̄ ī fit ad altā.  
Et habitabit̄ ibi. Ondo inhabitan̄ xp̄ian. ē. serui.  
Et sen̄. s. c. p̄. In p̄s. possidebit̄ ea: m̄ fit oī m̄ q̄  
dilect̄ nonī ē. habitabit̄ ī eā. c. festem tertī.



Comutat̄ ē. ex forma di in deauſ.  
Adam in q̄ om̄is monuit̄: comu  
tan̄ de mato fidet̄ ī met̄. p̄ grāt̄  
ē. passione q̄ ē. t̄t̄iuit̄ de mundo  
ad p̄m̄. in q̄ ē. nos̄ t̄t̄iure facit̄.  
ē. defendit̄ et col̄ q̄ condit̄. q̄o  
p̄st̄o ebraice. i. t̄t̄iuit̄. grecie  
p̄st̄o passione figuit̄.  
Primo p̄tāct̄ salut̄ hier̄. q̄a  
muta pat̄ī q̄nta ab se ḡat̄. h̄  
q̄o all̄ raput̄ soluit̄.

Aque. i. turbe p̄tāct̄ occi  
dere xp̄m̄. In se transformat̄ m̄b̄.

## The Anglo-Catalan Psalter: a brilliant example of the internationalisation of culture

Two periods, two places, two artistic styles and two workshops for a single manuscript: the Anglo-Catalan Psalter.

Around the year 1200, English art experienced one of its most brilliant periods, a time when the last Romanesque stage, a marked influence of Byzantine art and the beginnings of a new style known as Gothic all came together. This rich, artistic amalgam was to merge, more than a century later, with the finest, Italianate Gothic introduced into the Iberian Peninsula by Ferrer Bassa. The result is a perfect symbiosis between the most splendid English painting of the late 12<sup>th</sup> century and the most innovative and interesting Catalan painting of the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

This convergence of the two different figurative cultures of England and Catalonia, more than one hundred years apart, is one of the most important features of the codex, a facet that makes it unique in the history of art. The *Anglo-Catalan Psalter* is an essential manuscript for an understanding of medieval European painting.

This lavish psalter captivated the leading figures of western history and occupied a place of honour in their libraries. It belonged to the exquisite Jean, duc de Berry and the first female bibliophile in history, Margaret of Austria, who bequeathed it to Mary of Hungary, emperor Charles V's sister. Napoleon Bonaparte removed it from the Bourgogne library in Brussels and took it to Paris in 1796. In 1809 it received the binding featuring Napoleon I's coat of arms that it has retained to the present day.



◀ detail, folio 108v

ibutacione. Omnes enim qui uolunt in Christo pie uiuere. p.p. Deus in nomine t.s.m.f. in presentia. In uirtute iustitia i. separata in futuro.

Quoniam alieni. Supposita est pietas. Etce enim deus. Diapstema pars secunda salutis fidelium populi. Auerte mata. Imperio quasi certa enuntiatio.

de damnatione zipheos. Voluntarie. Iota que liberatur postulat. Quoniam ex omni tribulatione hic est intellectus huius psalmi.

93



Gymnus. En ad usus vs laudans.

Vixit in psis e  
rudia dicitur uenit  
sent ziphei et dix  
issent saul nunc  
dicit abscondit. e  
apud nos. vox  
xpi ad prem.

In fine i carmine  
bi intellexit dicitur  
et uenisset ziphei  
et dixissent  
saul nunc ecce  
dicit abscondit  
et apud nos.

**D**eus  
el in no  
tuo mine  
tuo sal  
fatu mei  
ua me. &  
en ra  
in fortitudine  
fate tua ultiscere  
me. **D**eus  
exau di  
orat  
la mei  
orat 10

**E**ius  
in no  
mine tuo sal  
uum me fac.  
& in uirtute  
tua libera  
me. **E**ius  
exau di  
orat  
la mei  
orat 10

modo latet dicitur. bi  
quos uita abscendi  
ta est ei ipso me flo  
rentes huius seculi. nec  
quos sunt uites &  
abscendi.

Uite ziphei oratio.  
florentes in mundo

**I**n fine i carmine intellexit  
que uir impensis non intelligere. tamen cognoscere. quoniam inuenire stat  
fieri. quibus non punit sua potest  
dicitur uenissent ziphei et dixissent  
et dicitur in nocte. ibi enim datus est saul in manum domini.

**S**ent saul. nunc dicit abscondit  
tuis est apud nos.

**E**ius satua in no  
tuo mundo  
minre post in timeo uidiani iur  
predicatum. **E**ius in no  
mine tuo sal  
care. **E**ius in mundo.

uum me fac.

Scriptura a ziphei.

**I**n fine iudicio.  
& in uirtute tua iudica  
me. **E**ius exaudi oratio.

Ne dicitur poteris  
rep. ne tarder.

Ziphei uicus permanebat ad tri  
bunum uide unde dicitur. alibi autem  
flore qui panderunt.

Verba ecclie larentis inter zipheos. curius bonum intus est.  
mercede occulta. atque animis pe  
tent liberari. ego in tuo no  
mene.

EBR.

Roos.

Gall.



M. MOLEIRO → THE ART OF PERFECTION

Travesera de Gracia, 17-21 - 08021 Barcelona, Spain  
[www.moleiro.com](http://www.moleiro.com) - [www.moleiro.com/online](http://www.moleiro.com/online)