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## Episode 5 - Where is the rest of you?

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*University of Iowa*

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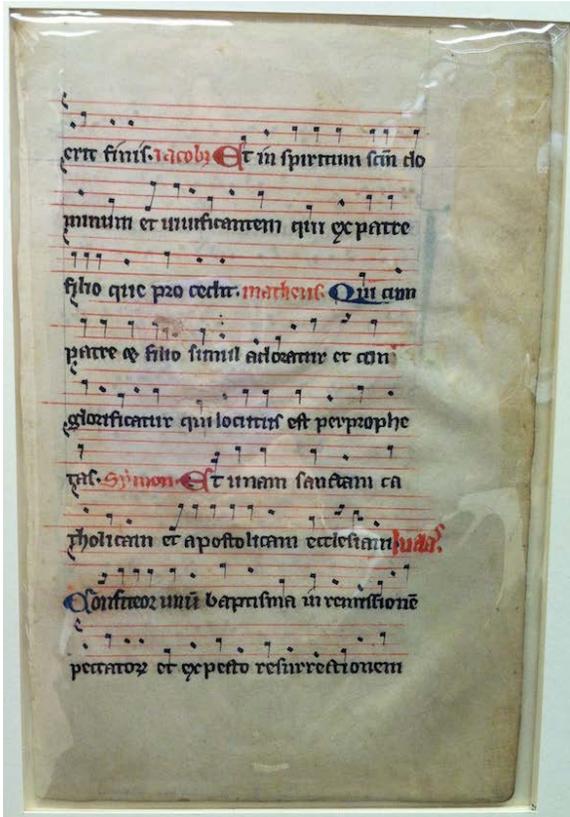
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## Episode 5 - Where is the rest of you?\*

Heather Wacha  
University of Iowa

8 Mar 2016



Wilton Processional. The University of Iowa  
Libraries, Special Collections, xMMs.Gr3

Perhaps you are looking at this leaf and wondering... what makes you so different? Why kind of story can you possibly tell that has not already been told?

Well, this leaf is clearly not a stand alone leaf. The recto begins mid-sentence, indicating that some kind of music and text preceded it. And the verso ends with a bit of a cliff-hanger, with the answer lying on the following folio.... which of course we don't have!

Fasten your seatbelts because the clues from this single manuscript leaf led us down the rabbit hole of all manuscript leaves and out the other side! And all we did was ask the question:

**What can you tell us about where your other leaves are?<sup>1</sup>**

**Watch the video here and read more about the manuscript below!**

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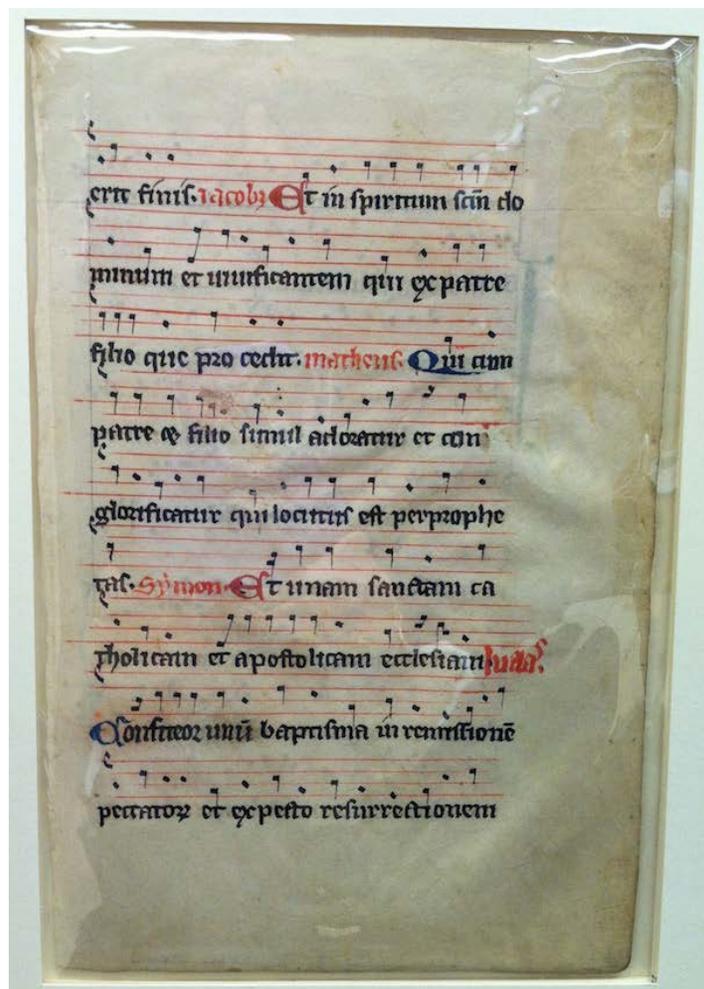
\* Originally published in Omeka:

<http://thestudio.uiowa.edu/historycorps/exhibits/show/books/episode5>

1 We dedicate this episode to the work of Dr. Alison Altstatt, who was the first person to identify this leaf and to study it further. Because of her efforts, this leaf, along with thirty-three others, has been identified as part of the Wilton Processional, a manuscript that had been missing since 1860. For more, see Altstatt, Alison. "Re-memembering the Wilton Processional." *Notes: the Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association* 72 no. 4 (June 2016), 690-732. [doi:10.1353/not.2016.0061](https://doi.org/10.1353/not.2016.0061)



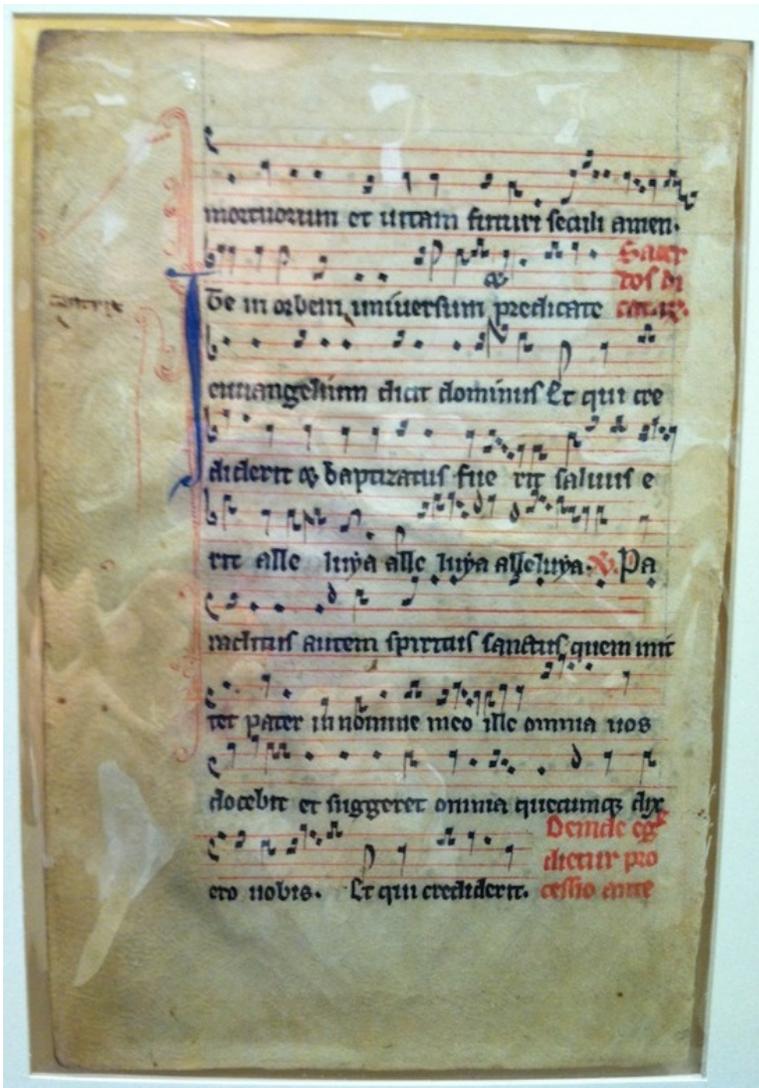
## CLUE 1 - THE TEXT AND THE MUSIC



Wilton Processional. The University of Iowa Libraries, Special Collections, xMMs.Gr3

Since this leaf displays some lovely musical notation, we decided early on to bring in Michele Aichele, who helped us with another leaf in Episode 3. In turn, she introduced us to Dr. Alison Altstatt and what we thought to be a simple question turned into a wonderful road of discovery!

Michele and Dr. Altstatt were able to clearly articulate the content of our leaf and set it within a larger context. On the recto side of this leaf, the music and text belong to a liturgical chant called the Credo, or the Nicene Creed. The Credo is part of the “mass ordinary:” those chants that are sung at every mass in the Roman Catholic Latin liturgy. Because Special Collections holds only this leaf of a much larger book, we can only see the latter part of the Credo. Even so, it soon becomes clear that this is not your typical

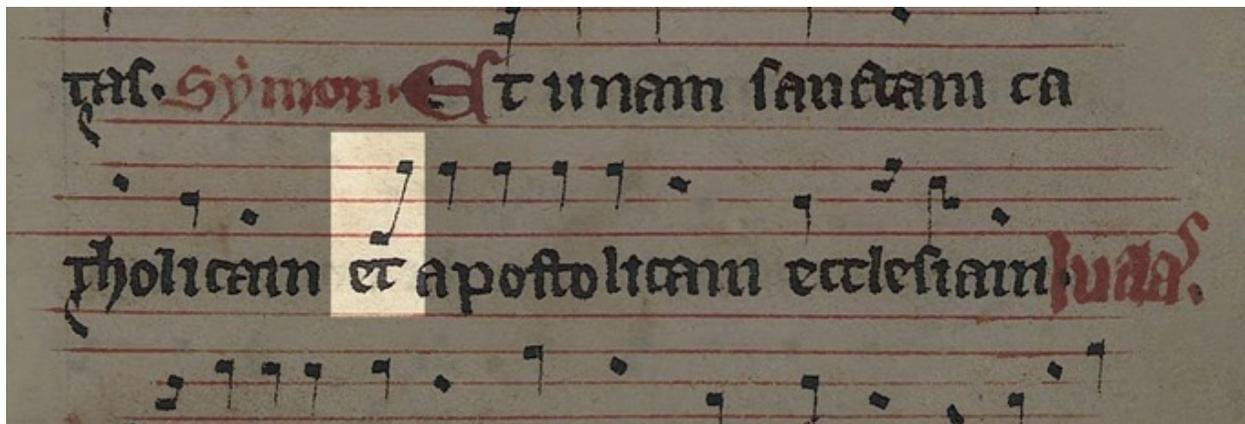


Wilton Processional. The University of Iowa Libraries, Special Collections, xMMs.Gr3.

Credo. Something unusual is taking place. In addition to the lines of the Credo, the leaf transmits rubrics listing the names of four of the twelve apostles from the New Testament; there is no musical notation above any of the names, indicating that they were not meant to be sung. Rather, they served to signal which apostle sang which line. Medieval legend credited each of the twelve apostles as having created one line of the Nicene Creed. So if the apostle Matthew has a line to sing, our text must represent some kind of performance where a member of the clergy or monastic order played Matthew and sang his line. Similarly, others must have played the parts of Jacob, Simon and Judas, singing their respective lines as well. A dramatic representation of the Creed!

So we can at least say that this leaf is NOT from a gradual, as previously classified in Special Collections. Indeed, the clues from the text and music suggest that this was perhaps an early form of a creed play – a genre of medieval drama that has been documented in later English iterations from the fifteenth century.

On the verso of this leaf, the Credo is followed by a responsory chant where the singing shifts from a stand-in apostle to a priest. A rubric indicates that the priest intoned the responsory *Ite in orbem universum*. The text of this responsory was adapted from the Gospel of Mark 15:16, which relates Jesus's command to his apostles to disperse into the world to preach the gospel. In the context of the liturgical year, this responsory is assigned either to the Feast of the Ascension or to Pentecost. The folio ends with a rubric that directs the procession “to continue in front of...” and then breaks for the next page! “In front of...” what? Where were the players headed? The rubric supports the idea that our leaf is one from a larger manuscript called a processional but leaves us wanting to know more... <sup>2</sup>



With the expert eyes of Michele Aichele and Dr. Alison Altstatt of the University of Northern Iowa, we were also able to understand the important elements of musical notation displayed in the leaf. First, there are nine staves of four red lines each. The musical notation itself consists of dark black squares, but with a more pronounced curvature than what we saw in the gradual from Episode 3.

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2 Graduals contain the chants of the mass. Processionals are small, portable books that contain music to be sung in processional rituals outside of the mass.



Second, the notation appears to be from thirteenth-century England, as evidenced by such details as the right hand slant to the rising two-pitch pes, the B-flat clef used on the verso, and the absence of the custos, the cautionary symbol placed at the end of a line in later manuscripts to indicate the starting pitch of the next line.

The text and musical notation provide enough clues to tell us not only what type of manuscript this leaf comes from, but also to tell us its date and place of origin! What lies in front of us is a processional, likely English and likely from the thirteenth century.

## CLUE 2 - THE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS



*The University of Iowa Libraries, Special Collections, xMMs.Gr3.*

The physical characteristics of our leaf will be important if we are to find other leaves from the same manuscript. Manuscript leaves are often measured in millimeters and

there can be several measurements for the same leaf. The full extent of our parchment leaf measures 185 mm x 125 mm. But over time, the measurements of a parchment leaf may have changed. The leaf may have been cropped for selling, marketing, or rebinding purposes. Thus a more reliable indicator, particularly when looking for matching leaves, is the extent of the text block, or writing area. The writing area for our leaf measures 135 mm x 85 mm.

The musical notation will also prove an important consideration. We will be on the look out not only for the nine red four-line staves, but also the shape of the individual neumes and the unusual clues mentioned above.

Finally this leaf is written in (proto-) Gothic script and the shape of certain letters like the "g" or the "s" or the "d" or the "a" may help us identify a script consistent with the script displayed in our leaf.

### CLUE 3 - CANTRIX



This clue is a single word—but a word that reveals so much information! On the recto of our leaf, in the left margin and in brown ink is the word *cantrix*, which means “female singer.” Medieval *cantores* (m. pl.) and *cantrices* (f. pl.) were responsible for leading choir rehearsals, directing musical performances, copying and correcting books, and teaching music at the religious institution, be it an abbey or a cathedral. The location of this word suggests that the responsory chant was to be sung by the *cantrix*. If so, then it is very likely the entire manuscript was received and used by a female house of sisters or nuns. It may have even been composed and copied by the nuns for their own house.

Of course the next question would be: Which female house?

## THE MANUSCRIPT'S JOURNEY AND HOW ITS OTHER LEAVES WERE FOUND



Dr. Altstatt used the clues above to connect the leaf from the University of Iowa Special Collections to another leaf she had seen earlier at Indiana University's Lilly Library. She examined the Lilly leaf and found that the size, the script, and the musical notation all aligned with the Iowa leaf. And even more exciting was the fact that the Indiana leaf also contained English processional chants!

When Dr. Altstatt dug further into the acquisition history of the Indiana leaf, she found that it had arrived at the university along with forty-nine other leaves in a portfolio entitled *Fifty Original Leaves from Medieval Manuscripts, Western Europe, 12th-16th Centuries*. This portfolio was compiled by Otto F. Ege, a mid-twentieth-century book dealer who made a living by buying manuscripts, breaking them up, and selling off their individual leaves. In this case, Ege compiled forty portfolios of fifty different leaves each, and sold them as collections rather than as individual leaves. Several American universities bought the *Fifty Original Leaves* portfolio, but to our best knowledge, The University of Iowa was not one of them. How the leaf came to be in our Special Collections has yet to be discovered.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Scott Gwara of the University of South Carolina has documented many of the public and private institutions that bought Ege's *Fifty Original Leaves* portfolios. Fred Porcheddu and Greta Smith of

Otto Ege must have acquired the manuscript sometime in the 1930s, perhaps from another dealer in New York or perhaps when he traveled to Europe. His philosophy of breaking books and selling their leaves individually or in collections was based on his pedagogical background. He hoped to expose many students to a variety of manuscript leaves without universities or institutions having to buy entire books.



*The University of Iowa Libraries, Special Collections, xMMs.Gr3.*

With the help of a host of scholars and librarians, Dr. Altstatt has identified and examined a total of thirty-four leaves held at public institutions today, as well as some that are in the hands of private collectors, in order to gain a better understanding of what this manuscript comprised. Appearing on one of the leaves is a litany of the saints, which invokes the saints by name, begging for intercession. The litany includes the names of two unusual saints: Saint Edith and Saint Iwi. Both were patron saints of Wilton Abbey, an Anglo-Saxon women's Benedictine community established in the ninth century. At this point, it seemed highly probable that our leaf and the ones Dr. Altstatt found were from a manuscript that had once belonged to this abbey.

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Denison University have put together a website that includes digital images of Fifty Original Leaves portfolios from twelve of the owning institutions. See Scott Gwara, *Otto Ege's Manuscripts: A Study of Ege's Manuscript Collections, Portfolios, and Retail Trade*, (Cayce, SC: De Brailles Publishing, 2013); and the Denison University Otto F. Ege Collection, <http://ege.denison.edu/>



But there is even more to the story! In the nineteenth century, monks at Solesmes Abbey in France began a project to copy medieval manuscripts that held Gregorian chant. A monk of Solesmes made a complete copy of the Wilton processional in 1859/1860. But after it had been copied, the original manuscript disappeared from the documentary record. When Dr. Altstatt compared the manuscript leaves with the Solesmes copy of the Wilton Processional, she found them to be one in the same manuscript. Thus a portion of the Wilton processional, believed lost for 150 years, has been recovered!



Congratulations to Dr. Altstatt! We feel so honored to be a part of her story.