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This issue is dedicated to Dr. Sheryl Murphy-Manley

An Unattributed Renaissance Gradual in the Trinity University Special Collections

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Abstract

The Trinity University Special Collections possesses an anonymous early Renaissance gradual manuscript, gifted to the university by the estate of a well-traveled major donor. There is no other information regarding the bequest. The manuscript lacks archival tags and bibliographic records, and scholars outside the Trinity community are unaware of the item. As a result, the manuscript sits untouched.

Gradual manuscripts are records of historical liturgical practice, and also serve as reflections of local usage, allowing a glimpse into traditions that have long been lost. This project examines and catalogues the content of this resource and seeks to situate it through analysis of its contents, marginalia, physical condition and treatment, and liturgical associations. A preliminary compilation date for the manuscript has yet to be established, though comparisons of notation and script suggest the early Renaissance. Marginalia and certain spellings locate it for at least a period of its existence in Spain and the inclusion of certain chants indicates an association with the Dominican Order.

The initial transcription of the chants unique to this collection as well as digitization of its folios should encourage further research. While still a work-in-progress, this project enables information on this unattributed treasure to circulate in the academic world. At the project's completion, the Trinity manuscript can be studied alongside and with reference to contemporary manuscripts worldwide.