

## Article

# The Medieval Apparition of the Virgin of the Girdle and the Marian Appendix of Liturgical Sequences in E-TO 135

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**Abstract:** Based on the fervor and devotion of the Virgin of the Girdle of Tortosa—which gained a strong establishment from the 17th century onwards—this article explores the possibility of a cause-effect relationship between the apparition of the Virgin in the cathedral in 1178 and the Marian appendix contained in the troper-proser E-TO 135 (c. 1228–1264). By comparing the narration of the miracle and the sequences in this appendix, we can verify the existence of an early and incipient veneration—both inside and outside the walls of the cathedral—that would predate what was previously believed.

**Keywords:** the Virgin of the Girdle; troper-proser; sequence; liturgical song; medieval devotion; medieval music; miracles; Tortosa

## 1. Introduction

“And with great affection, I say to you, as I did the first time: Farewell, Spain! Farewell, land of Mary!” With these words, Pope John Paul II bid farewell to Spain in 2003, and they certainly have their *raison d’être*. The Iberian Peninsula has been a land of deep-rooted devotion to the Virgin and a clear belief in the Immaculate Conception since early on. For example, there is the legendary apparition of the Virgin on a pillar to the Apostle St. James, whose popular fervor gave birth, according to a questionable tradition from the 7th century (St. Ildephonsus and St. Julian of Toledo), to the first particular feast dedicated to the Immaculate Conception (Peinado Guzmán 2012). Or, on 25 March 1858, the day of the Incarnation, there was her self-disclosure in the Patois language (similar to Catalan), “que soy era inmaculada Concepciou” (that I am/was the Immaculate Conception), during the apparitions of Lourdes in the Pyrenees (Laurentin 1988, p. 1160).

Nearly every village, nearly every corner of the Peninsula, had its own advocacy to Our Lady. In the case of Tortosa, which had been recently reconquered, this devotion was to the Virgin of the Girdle, thanks to yet another numinous apparition. According to tradition (Vidal Franquet 2008, pp. 53–64), on the night of 24–25 March 1178, the Virgin appeared to a canon who was about to celebrate Matins in the cathedral but was late amid *Te Deum*. She gave him the girdle that bound her mantle with the following words: “Et quoniam in honorem filii mei, et meum haec Ecclesia est constructa, et vobis Dertusensibus curae est me plurimum venerari, ideo quia diligo vos, pro quibus meum ad filium intercedo, soluens Cingulum, quo praecingor, a me fabricatum, super Altare illud pono, et vobis trado: ut hoc in pignus amoris mei memoriam habeatis”. (Martorel y de Luna 1626, p. 459) (And since this church was built in honor of my Son and in mine, and because I love the people of Tortosa who take care that I should be highly revered and for whom I intercede with my Son, loosening the girdle with which I gird myself, made with my own hands, I place on the altar. I give it to you so that you may keep it as a sign of my love). From then on, especially since the 17th century (Alanyà i Roig 2004), this relic has been the subject of strong devotion in Catalonia and throughout Spain as a miraculous gift, also on the part of both the Habsburg and Bourbon monarchs. For instance, from 1629 to modern times,



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it was customary for queens of Spain to receive the reliquary with the Girdle as a means of protection during childbirth, while Felipe V was the first monarch to be a member of the Archconfraternity of the Virgin of the Girdle (Bayerri Bertomeu 1989, pp. 147–52; Vidal Franquet 2008, p. 30). Precisely, the support of the Crown was decisive for the construction of a majestic chapel (Figure 1) in honor of the Virgin of the Girdle to guard the relic in the cathedral (Gil Saura 2008).



**Figure 1.** Baroque Chapel of the Girdle (1672–1725) seen from the main nave of the cathedral. Photographed by Amador Àlvarez (public domain picture).

The connection between the advocacy and the relic with childbirth is not coincidental. From the beginning, the fact that the relic of the *Cinta* (Girdle) was considered a protector of women in labor, as a sign of the Virgin's motherhood, could have originated from the meaning Saint Isidore's *auctoritas* gave to *incincta* (*in-cincta*): "*sine cinctu; quia praecingi fortiter uterus non permittit*" (*Etymologiarum* X, 151) (Oroz Reta and Marcos Casquero 2004, p. 818) (without girding, because the uterus does not allow itself to be forcefully girded). There may have been a mistaken assimilation of this term with the vernacular term *encinta*, meaning pregnant. Although etymologically debatable (Corominas and Pascual 1980, pp. 598–99), the initial steps of devotion towards this advocacy by women in labor were likely taken under the same principle of authority, surely promoted by the Cathedral Chapter of Regular Canons of Saint Ruf of Avignon.

Precisely, the membership and affiliation of Tortosa's Cathedral Chapter to the reforming spirit emanating from Saint Ruf of Avignon is not a trivial aspect of this matter. Alongside the monastic arm of Cluny, Saint Ruf of Avignon had become the canonical arm with which the Gregorian Reform was articulated, and in this, the emphasis on the figure of the Virgin was a key element (Vones-Liebenstein 1996). Thus, just 30 years after Tortosa was recovered from Muslim hands (1148) and 20 years since the construction of the new temple dedicated to Saint Mary began (1158), the second consecration took place in the same year as the appearance of the Virgin (Ramos 2005). Therefore, it is logical to think

that from the times of the first bishop and abbot Gaufred of Avignon (1151–1165) until the consecration by Bishop Ponç of Monells (28 November 1178), the promotion of a faith in which Mary had a preponderant role was the usual trend, as evidenced by the cathedral's own dedication. From then on, in this sense, the miracle of the girdle became the definitive endorsement in devotional terms.

On the other hand, as is so often the case in the Middle Ages with extraordinary events of a sacred nature such as apparitions, and this one should not be an exception, once they gain popularity and become widely known, the need to bring them quickly into the liturgy arises. This process involves an exchange and composition of chants in which a diversity of roles come into play, some of them representing an extension of old uses and materials, while others are new and, to a certain point, largely original areas of creativity, with new nuances and meanings. Following this process, the Ciceronian axiom *variatio delectat* flies over medieval creative consciousness, where the production of something new could also have included the practice of expanding or adapting something that already existed and would have been valued as such by tradition. In other words, “the new is usually presented with the look of the old since the river is always the father of the stream” (Tello Ruiz-Pérez 2016, p. 22).

However, where are the medieval chants for the Virgin of the Girdle? We know that in 1508, bishop Alfonso of Aragon and the Cathedral Chapter of Tortosa jointly commissioned an *Officium Cinguli Beate Marie, suntu[m] ex breviario antiquo Ecclesie Dertusensis*<sup>1</sup> (Figure 2) (O’Callaghan, I pp. 174–77; Bayerri Bertomeu 1989, pp. 77–81; Querol 1999, pp. 86–87; Alanyà i Roig 2004, pp. 62–63) (Office of the Girdle of Blessed Mary, taken from the ancient breviary of the Church of Tortosa) from Francesc Vicent, prior of Tarragona (Toldrà i Sabaté 2003), for a new proper worship on the second Sunday of October, but we have no trace of earlier chants directly related to the Girdle ... Does this mean that it was not venerated before in Tortosa?

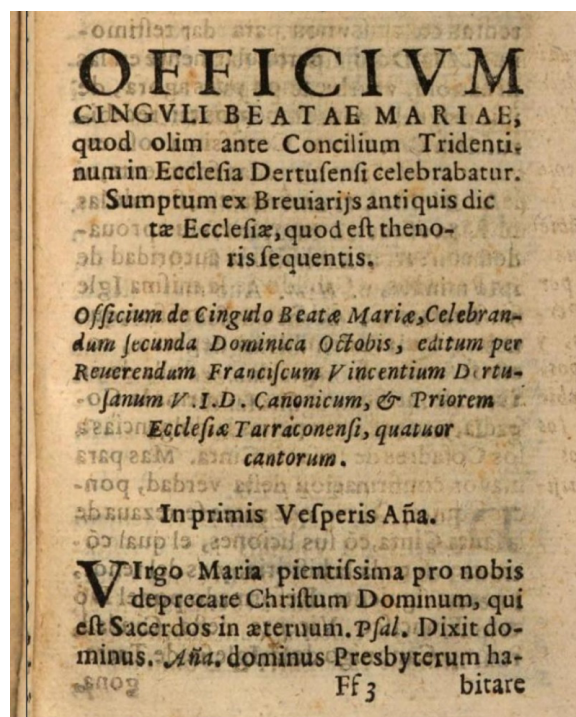


Figure 2. Incipit of the Office of the Girdle of Blessed Mary (1508) (Martorel y de Luna 1626, p. 453).

Using the evidence from the Marian sequences found in the Tortosa troper-proser, Chapter Library Cod. 135 (E-TO 135),<sup>2</sup> compiled during the mid-13th century (c. 1228–1264) (Peláez Bilbao 2021), and specifically those collected in an unusual Appendix dedicated to the Virgin, this article examines the interrelationships between the selection of chants



from the manuscript and early devotion to the Virgin of the Girdle. The Marian anthology, comprising 22 sequences, nine Alleluias, and one Sanctus (non-troped), draws mainly from the repertoires of the so-called “second-epoch”, “victorine”, or “classical” sequence (from the 12th century onwards) (Peláez Bilbao and Tello Ruiz-Pérez 2021, pp. 476–84), where four sequences are unique to Tortosa, seven have a very limited diffusion (sometimes only between peninsular sources), and 11 have pan-European dissemination. The analysis focuses on the literary and musical connection points of these sequences with the main features of the apparition and devotion of the Virgin of the Girdle, such as her self-presentation as *Maestas Mariae* (*in solio*, on a throne), the emphasis on her title as a patroness of women in labor, the allusion to her womb (girdled by the girdle), and her love for humankind.

As a result of our approach, the Marian appendix and private or public devotion can be seen as two sides of the same coin, the apparition, finding many common elements and mutually explaining each other. Thus, going beyond establishing a simple direct dependence that would place these sequences as the possible first testimony of liturgical veneration related to the Virgin of the Girdle, something which, on the other hand, is entirely plausible, our intention is to present both as realities imbued by the unique expansive wave of the miracle.

## 2. Main Features of the Apparition

Unfortunately, we do not have a complete narration of the events that took place surrounding the apparition before 1508. The *breviarium antiquum* on which Francesc Vicent based his work, later edited by Martorel y de Luna, has not come down to us. However, what we do have are two references to the existence of the story, in the form of prayer without music, collected in two cathedral cartularies (E-TO 14, f. 173r and E-TO 81, f. 183r),<sup>3</sup> both from the early 14th century. Therefore, it is worth quoting Martorel’s account of the miracle in extenso in order to examine its characteristics. Distributed among the third and ninth lessons of Matins, this is essentially what the Office says:

[Third Lesson]: In Tortosa, there was a virtuous priest [canon] with a God-fearing heart. Although we do not know his name, it is clear from the following account that he was a pious man. He had renounced the world to follow Christ and turned his attention to heavenly things, particularly to the Virgin Mary, mother of God, whom he honored diligently. One ordinary day, in the middle of the night, he woke up to attend Matins at the church of Tortosa, as was his custom. Miraculously, he was transported by the Lord to the gates of the church adjoining the cemetery. Still wondering how he had arrived there, he heard the *Te Deum laudamus* chant and was saddened, saying to himself, “Alas! I am late for church because I have slept too much. But since today there should be a ferial service, what is this solemn service that I hear inside the church?”

[Fourth Lesson]: While he was silently pondering these things, the doors of the church opened, and an immense brightness of light appeared to him as he stood at the threshold. From the chevet of the church to the very threshold, he saw the holy angels of God clothed in white, standing on either side of the choir and holding lighted white candles in their hands. The sight of them made him tremble. The angels nodded to him, handed him a lighted candle, and beckoned him to approach the high altar. The priest obeyed them and went to the altar, where he saw a very beautiful woman sitting on a throne adorned and crowned. Two men stood at her sides, and she looked at him and asked him: “Do you know me, priest?” In terror, the priest answered: “Although I suspect who you are, lady, I am not quite sure”. Then she said to the priest: “I am the mother of God, to whom you serve and pay the highest homage. These two men beside me are the principal apostles of Christ: on the right, Peter the Vicar of Christ, and Paul, the doctor of the gentiles, on the left”.



[Fifth Lesson]: Then the priest knelt down and said to her: “Oh, the Holiest Virgin Mary, mother of our Lord Jesus Christ and my Lady! Being an unworthy priest and a sinner, Queen of heaven, why do I deserve to see you while I still dwell in the flesh?” And the Holiest Virgin Mary said to him: “Because you have always tirelessly served me, you have deserved to see me in this life and be here among the choirs of angels. And since this church was built in honor of my Son and in mine, and because I love the people of Tortosa who take care that I should be highly revered and for whom I intercede with my Son, loosening the girdle with which I gird myself, made with my own hands, I place on the altar. I give it to you so that you may keep it as a sign of my love. And you will tell all these things to the bishop of the city, the clergy, and the people”. Having said that, she untied it and placed it on the altar, handing it over to him. The priest said to her: “Considering that I am alone, if I tell them all these things they will not believe me”. Then the most pious Virgin Mary said to him: “Behold, you have the major monk (“monachus maior”, i.e., deacon)<sup>4</sup> who is in the choir, and he saw everything. Therefore, you two will report on all these things to each and every one of them”. And after these words, the vision disappeared. [...]<sup>5</sup>

As can be observed, the pace of the narrative in actions and situations sets the progression of its features. Initially, the distinction between the ordinary and the extraordinary lies in the difference between the past and present tenses, respectively. The narrative’s past tense portrays the daily reality that coincides with the present of the narrator and our present time. On the other hand, the present tense serves as an open door (as described in the story) to the wonderful, similar to the timeless present of the liturgy. While this may appear obvious, it is an essential detail for the narration. The liturgical chant (*Te Deum*) grants access to a supratemporal reality, enabling the eruption of heaven on earth. The narration demonstrates that participation in the liturgy is the open door to heaven, to miracles, and to encounters with things beyond our world. In the words of Cabié, “the ‘Divine Liturgy’ is, in a sense, heaven come down to earth and the focal point of a cosmic vision of reality. Here the entire universe is transfigured by the Holy Spirit in the offering of the sacred gifts [ . . . ] thus the singing echoes the singing of the angelic choirs”. (Cabié 1986, p. 148).

Precisely the latter, despite the overwhelmed fears of our canon/priest, suggests that in heaven, the same chants are sung as on earth, and in the same way: here, the *Te Deum* is sung antiphonally, with two angelic choirs, or more specifically, with the two halves of a choir (“standing on either side of the choir”). Hence, under “an immense brightness of light,” the two rows of angels form a corridor that leads directly to the Lady. She appears as the beautiful Queen of heaven crowned, enthroned, and flanked by the two visible heads of the apostolic college, Saint Peter, and Saint Paul, with typical attributes of the iconographic theme of the *Maiestas Mariae* (see e.g., Forsyth 1972; Verdier 1980; Thérél 1984; Piano 2003; Salvador-González 2012, pp. 175–209). Such a mise-en-scène is key and fundamental to understanding the vassalage relationship established between the Virgin and the canon, where she occupies the dominant position of the *dompna/dame/domina* (lady) of the troubadours as if she were a feudal lord, and he assumes the position of the vassal/lover who bows before the mighty presence of the beloved lady (“domina mea”) in gestures of service, worship, respect, and homage. Overall, we see how mystical fervor portrays itself with the earthly feet of courtly love.<sup>6</sup>

Within the codes of courtly love on which this relationship is based, the girdle would then become the *gazardo/guizardo* (reward) for the merits of our spiritual lover, as a representative of the people of Tortosa and, we could say, all of humanity. Apart from the point at which she individually grants the canon the prize of being able to participate for a few moments in heavenly glory, thanks to his loyal and tireless service to her, the change from “my lady” to “our lady” is articulated. The girdle is, therefore, a gift for everyone, as evidenced by the fact that the lady sends the canon to tell everyone what has just happened, assuring that he will be believed by the deacon’s testimony.

Here, the displayed portrait of Mary depicts her as a queen, as the beloved, but above all, as a mother (“I am the mother of God”), and this detail is of paramount importance in regard to the holy girdle. The girdle, being a garment that was made by the Virgin with her own hands, and used to girdle her belly and womb, was immediately recognized as a symbol of her motherhood. It is not surprising, as there existed very extensive imagery since ancient times in which Mary was depicted as the tabernacle, monstrance, container, and reliquary of Christ, that is, of *Corpus Christi*. Just to give an example, we have these eloquent words from Saint Germanos I of Constantinople (c. 634–733 or 740):

Of that belt, which encircled that all-holy body and covered God who was hidden in her womb. Of that belt, which adorned the ark of God in a beautiful and sacred fashion. Of that belt, which was often enriched by undefiled drops of milk from the one who was wholly undefiled. [ . . . ]

For if a vessel which has been in contact with myrrh even for a short time knows how to preserve its sweet smell for a long time after it has been emptied, what might one say about the belt that was wound about and attached for a long time to that truly inexhaustible and divine myrrh—I mean the most pure and wholly unblemished body of the Theotokos? Would it not preserve eternally the sweet smell of healing and fill those who approach it with faith and desire? [*Oratio IX*, 4–5]<sup>7</sup> (Cunningham 2008, pp. 249–250; Migne, PG 98, 376B–C)

The correlation between the living vessel and the Word-made-flesh explains the early association of the holy girdle with the fruit of Mary’s womb. This identification was developed to such an extent that, even in the time of the Virgin, the holy girdle or *τιμιάς ζώνης* (holy belt) was revered as a relic of Christ himself. We can trace this association far back in time because the episode of Tortosa, to a certain extent, replicates the one narrated by the Pseudo-Joseph of Arimathea about the delivery of the belt to Saint Thomas Apostle while Mary was taken up by angels into heaven<sup>8</sup> (Salvador-González 2013, 2019). In fact, several girdles have come down to us in different parts of Europe (Constantinople, Prato, Puy-Notre-Dame, and Bruton), each with its specific devotion (Réau 1957, pp. 62–66). However, in all these pious manifestations, the most important aspect of being observed is not so much the diversity of the girdles themselves but rather the fact that they are interconnected in one way or another. For instance, all of them are seen as a sign of the Virgin’s universal motherhood and a means of maternal protection during childbirth.<sup>9</sup>

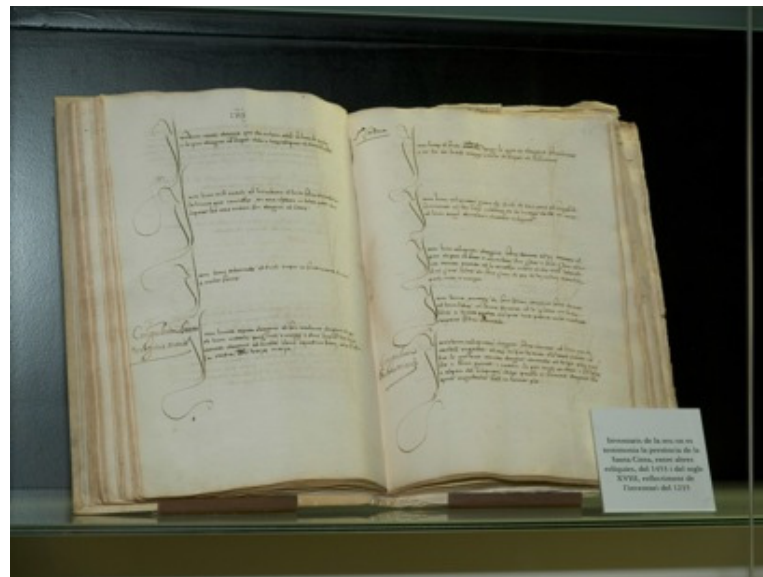
For the first time in 1347 (and later also in 1363), the “Inventari Antic de les Sanctes Relíquies” (Ancient Inventory of the Holy Relics) from Tortosa (Figure 3) recorded these practices as follows:

Ítem, té el monge major, en una caixa de fusta pintada, una Cinta, la qual se diu ésser de Santa Maria, la qual és de seda blanca et és feta a manera de eixàrsia de pescar, la qual presta a les dones que van en part et no poden enfanter, et és nuada en sinch llochs et hay 12 palms de llonch e més de 1 de ample, e hals caps és feta a manera de trena fil o de cairell, et hai un tros de couro lligat a cada un cap a 4 palms, la qual se diu que Santa Maria la ha tinguda Cintada en esta sgleia com hic apparet segons que pus llongament és contingut en un miracle, lo qual és escrit en alguns llibres segons ques diu.

(O’Callaghan, I, p. 160; Bayerri Bertomeu 1956, p. 488; Alanyà i Roig 2004, p. 60; Ballester 2004)

[Item: The deacon possesses a Girdle in a painted wooden box, which is believed to have belonged to Saint Mary. The Girdle is made of white silk and is shaped like a fishing tackle. It is customary to bring it to women in labor who have complications. It has five knots, 12 spans in length, and more than one span in width. At each end, it resembles the shape of a braided thread or hair braid, with a piece of leather tied to four spans. It is said that Saint Mary wore the Girdle

(“Cintada”) in this church, as mentioned in a miracle that is reportedly more extensively written in some books.]



**Figure 3.** Ancient Inventory of the Holy Relics (1357) from Tortosa (E-TO c.n. 73, s.n.). @ Tortosa Chapter Library. Picture used with permission.

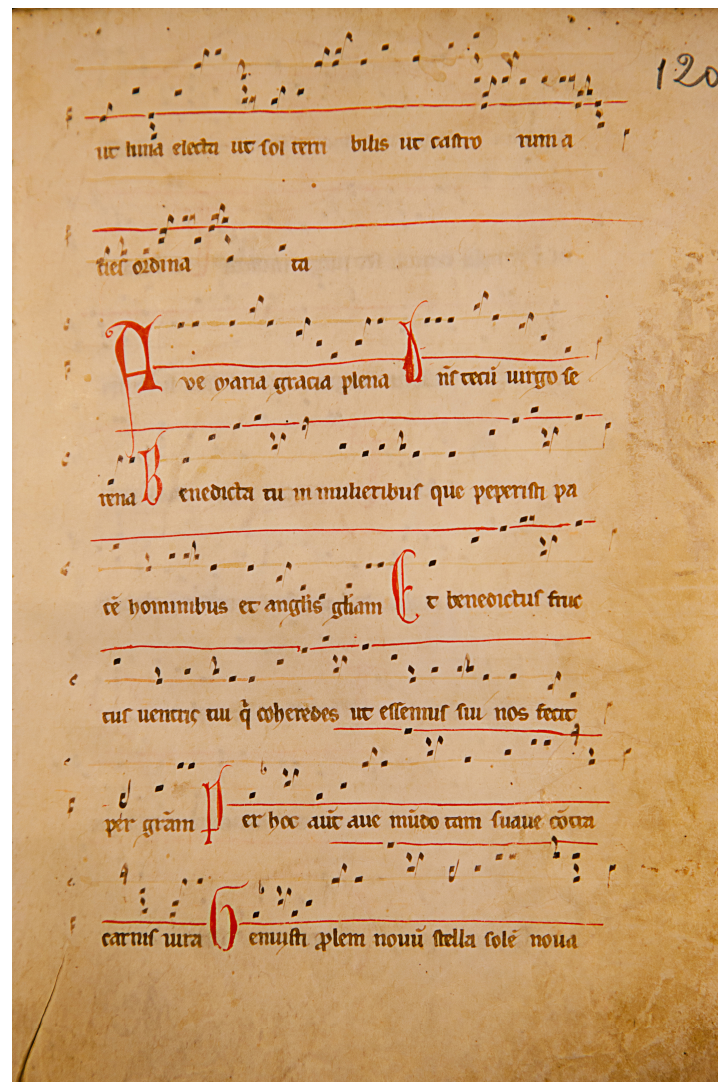
As previously mentioned, it is highly probable that the term *cintada* (and, by extension, *encinta*) may have been confused with the Isidorian definition of *incincta*, whether intentionally or not. However, it is a fact that the Virgin Mary was already regarded as a protector of women in labor, as evidenced by other girdles that preceded this one in time. The interesting issue for our purposes is the significance of this protective dimension for the people and the city of Tortosa. As discussed by Amades (1932), in 1148, after the reconquest of the city by Berenguer IV in the context of the Second Crusade, many lives were lost. It was crucial to ensure safe childbirths, and the apparition of the Virgin at that moment provided confidence and hope to a Tortosa that had lost its bearings. Out of love, the Virgin was with them, and now the people had to entrust themselves to her through their devotion and songs of praise. Thus, an ideal environment existed for the compilation of a specific repertoire.

### 3. The Marian Appendix in E-TO 135

At this juncture, we arrive at the crux of our hypothesis. Is it plausible that an appendix of sequences (Figure 4), such as that found in the troper-proser E-TO 135, was compiled to exalt the Virgin of the Girdle? This would imply that, in one way or another, from a liturgical standpoint, veneration and devotion to the Girdle were active in Tortosa long before its specific feast was established in the 16th century and certainly long before what was previously believed. Why else would an appendix of Marian nature be included in a liturgical codex that already covered Marian festivities within its overall corpus?

However, as we have already pointed out, seeking a direct and explicit dependence relationship of the repertoire with respect to the entire current of devotion aroused by the miracle—such as, for example, that of protection during childbirth spread among women in labor—would be too simplistic a way of seeing things. Perhaps it would be much more useful here to employ the concept of “interdependence” between both dimensions, liturgical and popular, as two coetaneous fruits of the same tree, each with its own subtleties and characteristics. One is reflected and explained in the other because both have the same origin—the same root.





**Figure 4.** Incipit of *Ave Maria/gratia plena*, first sequence of the Marian appendix (E-TO 135, f. 120r). @ Tortosa Chapter Library. Picture used with permission.

The troper-proser TO 135 can be considered one of the most representative within the Spanish repertoire of sequences for three main reasons (Peláez Bilbao 2003, 2021). Firstly, because it contains a large number of sequences, no less than 77, surpassed only—as far as sequences with melody are concerned—by E-H 4 (another troper-proser), dated to the early 12th century, from San Juan de la Peña (Tello Ruiz-Pérez 2017). Secondly, it provides a fairly balanced sample of all the styles of the medieval sequence as a genre. Finally, precisely because of the presence of this interesting, enigmatic, and unusual Marian appendix.

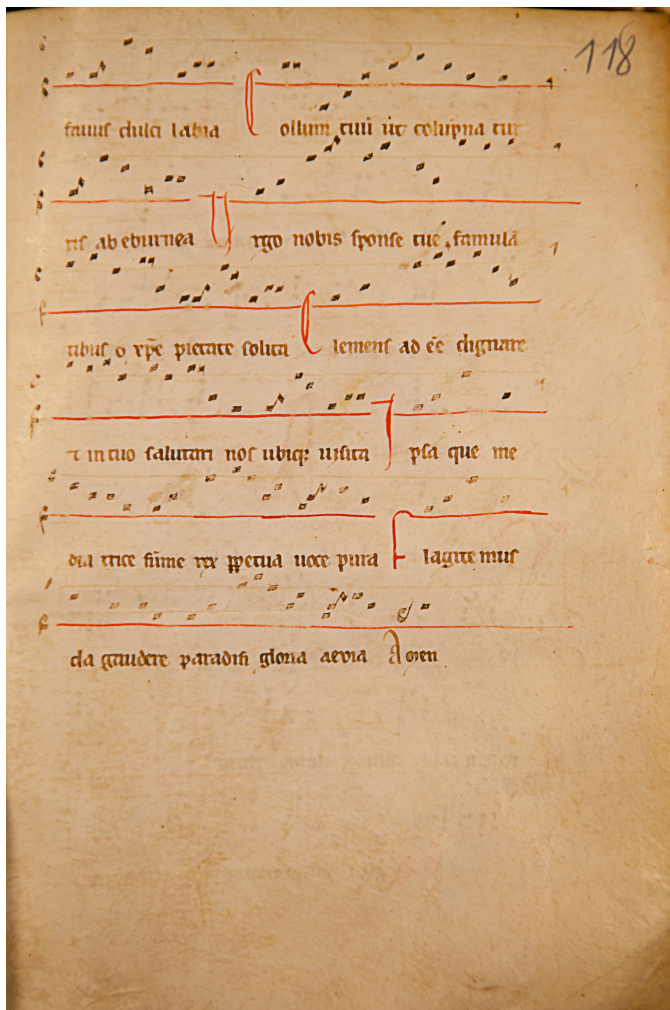
The organization of the manuscript (Appendix A) is established by collections that develop without interruption, followed by our appendix: Kyrie (ff. 1–9v), Gloria (ff. 9v–15v), Sanctus (ff. 15v–32v), four Episcopal blessings (ff. 32v–33r), Agnus Dei (ff. 33r–39r), sequentiary or proser (temporal, sanctoral, and common) (ff. 39r–118r), and Marian appendix (ff. 118v–144v). Each section change is marked by an illuminated initial of the first piece that starts a new collection (for example, the sequentiary: Figure 5). This occurs in all cases except in the appendix, which was added by a contemporary hand (Figure 6b): it is precisely where the sequentiary ends (f. 118r) and the appendix begins (f. 118v)—the only point of the manuscript in which this continuum is interrupted, since the sequentiary ends in the sixth line of the folio (Figure 6a). That is, there is a clear intention to separate the Marian appendix as a section apart from the rest of the manuscript.

The Marian appendix comprises eight Alleluias, 21 sequences, an additional Alleluia, one Sanctus, and a final incomplete sequence. It can be considered a kind of anthology, specifically, a Marian anthology. In fact, the appendix lacks illuminated initials and rubrics assigning each item to a feast of the Virgin or other occasions, thus exhibiting a high degree of simplicity. The last incomplete sequence (*Uterus virgineus*), with the ambiguous rubric “*Sancta Maria*”—added by another hand that made corrections to the manuscript during the 14th century—is an exception. As with any anthology, liturgical versatility and interchangeability are essential traits of the repertory. In this regard, as previously mentioned several times, discovering an appendix with similar characteristics is exceedingly uncommon. In the current corpus of 3381 manuscripts with sequences from all over Europe in our database, we could only identify a certain resemblance to six sources,<sup>10</sup> all of which are later than E-TO 135 (i.e., from the 14th to the 16th centuries) and have an anthological nature centered on the figure of the Virgin Mary. This scarcity of comparable testimonies further enhances the value of this Tortosa appendix.



**Figure 5.** Beginning of the sequentiary (E-TO 135, f. 39r). @ Tortosa Chapter Library. Picture used with permission.





(a)



(b)

**Figure 6.** (a) End of the sequentiary (E-TO 135, f. 118r); (b) Beginning of the Marian appendix (E-TO 135, f. 118v). @ Tortosa Chapter Library. Picture used with permission.

It is worth noting that, out of the total of 32 items in the appendix, including the Sanctus (not troped), exactly a quarter (8) are *unica*: four out of nine Alleluias (as shown in Table 1) and four out of 22 sequences (as shown in Table 2). Moreover, while the remaining Alleluias have generally had very limited circulation, half of the sequences (11) have been disseminated to a greater or lesser extent among European sources. These figures indicate that almost two-thirds of the items have either had regional circulation, with E-TO 135 often being the earliest source, or that E-TO 135 is the only surviving record of them. Both scenarios suggest a limited use, which is well suited for a focused devotion or worship, such as that of the Virgin of the Girdle. Furthermore, even among the sequences that have been more widely disseminated, their association with Alleluias that are relatively uncommon confers a special character upon them.



**Table 1.** Alleluia concordances of Marian appendix (E-TO 135).

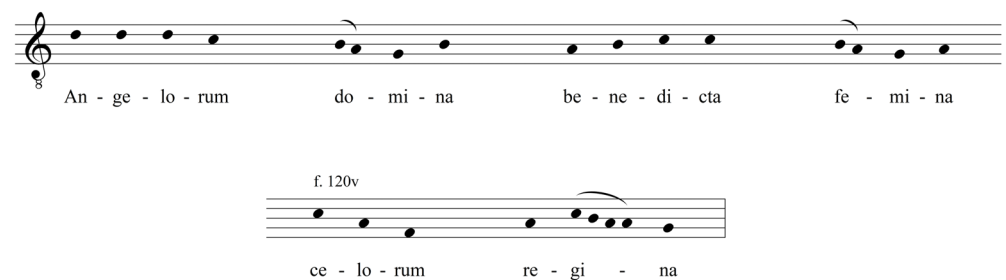
Alleluia	Concordances
Dulcis virgo dulcis mater	I-Ac 695 (c. 1230), from Reims
Es rosa vernalis	unicum
Felix mater	unicum
Mater Christi gloriosa	unicum
Ora pro nobis pia	( <a href="#">Cantus n.d.</a> , chant ID No. g02266)
Que est ista	E-BULh 11 (c. 1320), from Las Huelgas
Salve virgo mater Christi	E-BULh 11 (c. 1320), from Las Huelgas
Virga iesse floruit	( <a href="#">Schlager 1965</a> , ThK 259)
Virgo sacra	unicum

**Table 2.** Sequence concordances of Marian appendix (E-TO 135).

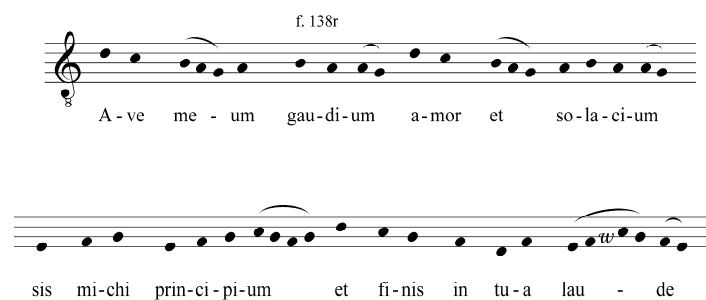
Incipit	Melody	Author	Spain	Meridional Group	Southwest	West	East	Italy	Total
Ave gloriosa/Virginum regina		Philip the Chancellor	2		1	7			10
Ave Maria/gratia plena			8	4	4	61	116	11	204
Ave mater domini/Flos odoris gemini	Veni sancte spiritus/Et emitte		3				2		5
Ave mater gratiae/Speculum ecclesiae	Veni sancte spiritus/Et emitte		1						unicum
Ave porta gratiae			1						unicum
Ave spes mundi Maria			1	2	3	57	56	3	122
Ave virgo virginum/Ave salus hominum			3			2		1	6
Dolens auctor omnium			3			1			4
Hodiernae lux diei/Celebris		Adam of St. Victor	5	4	3	63	75	3	153
Iesse virgam humidavit		Henricus of Pisa	3		4	16	5	2	30
Maria virgo virginum/Ora pro nobis Dominum			5			1			6
Missus Gabriel de caelis			5	4	3	29	18	5	64
Mittit ad virginem			3	1		27	66	2	99
Nativitas Mariae virginis			6	6		8	57	6	83
Promereri summae laudis			3					1	4
Salve mater salvatoris flos			1						unicum
Salve sancta Christi parens			2	1		7	17	3	30
Sancti spiritus/assit nobis gratia/Quo fecundata	Cithara/Occidentana		3			2	1		6
Uterus virgineus/Thronus			1			3	30		34
Verbum bonum et suave			7	6	2	37	142	33	227
Virga Iesse generosa			1						unicum
Virgini Mariae laudes/intonent christiani/Eva tristis	Victimae paschali laudes		5	2	5	20	111	3	145

However, we must keep in mind that medieval mentality is not the same as our own. Even though these data indicate a high proportion of locally or regionally disseminated compositions, the sense of originality was far different from what we currently understand. In this way, a composition chosen for a particular aspect and used locally did not cease to be considered and felt as if it were “one’s own,” even in cases where it was widely spread and not composed ad hoc for a specific community. On the contrary, the weight of tradition, as attested by the general dissemination of a particular item, could even further authorize its suitability for a specific use. Only when the general corpus could not meet local needs did medieval creativity turn to the composition of new pieces, which ultimately tended to seek to present themselves with the appearance of pre-existing ones. We want to emphasize this idea because we believe it is essential to put the peculiar nature of our repertoire in its proper perspective in connection with the miracle and veneration of the Virgin of the Girdle.

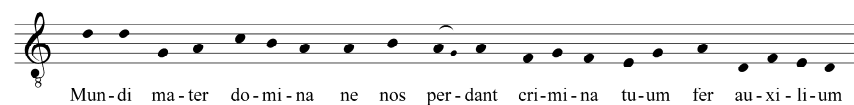
From this perspective, with regard to the thematic connections of this anthologized repertoire with the main features that we have emphasized of the Virgin of the Girdle, it can be observed that they are plentiful and appear to multiply. Some examples of this can be found in the portrayal of the Virgin as “the beautiful and blessed woman, Queen of heaven, Lady (*dompna*) of the angels” in the sequence *Uterus virgineus* (Dreves et al., AH 54, No. 248; p. 389; Peláez Bilbao 2021, II No. 77, p. 961), which is already significant enough in its incipit, “Virgin womb”:



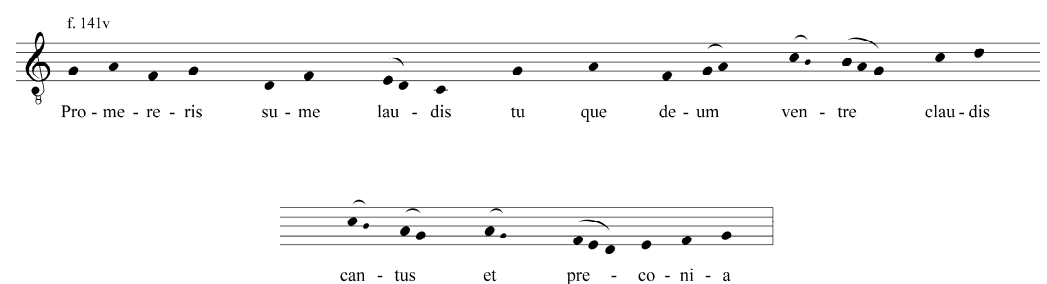
In *Ave virgo virginum/Ave salus hominum* (Dreves et al., AH 42, No. 65; p. 75; Peláez Bilbao 2021, II No. 73, p. 911), the Virgin is addressed as the beloved, with the words “Hail, my joy, love and solace! Be my beginning and end in your praise”:



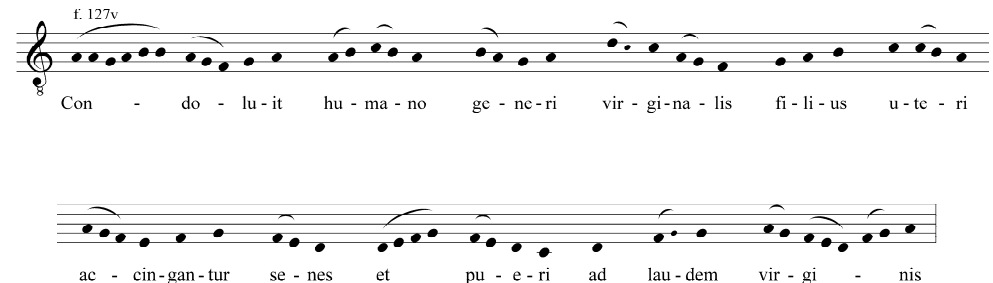
As the Mother Protectress, the Virgin is referred to as “Mother of the world, Lady; let not our crimes destroy us, bring your help” in *Ave mater gratiae/Speculum ecclesiae* (Dreves et al., AH 34, No. 113, p. 95; Peláez Bilbao 2021, II No. 69, p. 890):



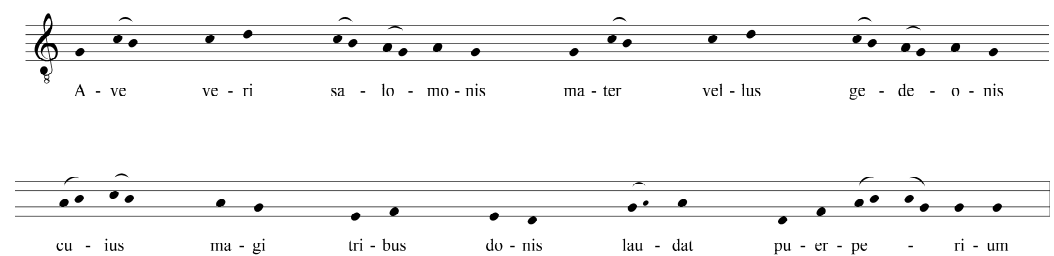
As a holy womb deserving of praise, the Virgin is hailed with the words “Thy, who close God in your womb, will deserve the highest praises, songs and announcements” in *Promeris summae laudis* (Dreves et al., AH 34, No. 79, p. 71; Peláez Bilbao 2021, II No. 75, p. 930):



Referring to the girdle that encircled her waist, which is accessible to all, the sequence *Nativitas Mariae virginis* (Dreves et al., AH 54, No. 188, p. 288; Peláez Bilbao 2021, II No. 62, p. 799) proclaims, “The virginal Son of the womb condoled with humankind. Infants and the elderly are girded for the praise of the Virgin”:



Or finally, for the sake of brevity, she is also portrayed as the emblematic figure of all women in labor, with the words “Hail, Mother of the true Solomon, the fleece of Gideon, to whom the magi with three gifts praise the childbirth” in *Verbum bonum et suave/Personemus* (Dreves et al., AH 54, No. 218, p. 343; Peláez Bilbao 2021, II No. 66, p. 847):



In this simple thematic sampling of the appendix, at least two highly interesting aspects of our hypothesis are evident. The first is that the connections of each of the themes with the veneration of the Virgin of the Girdle develop independently of whether a sequence has wide or limited diffusion. This corroborates our basic idea that there is no positive or negative balance between the assumption of pre-existing repertoire and the composition of a new one to meet a local need. Simply put, all sequences are viewed as “proper”.

To illustrate this, let us take two of the examples presented here as extreme cases: *Promereri summae laudis* and *Nativitas Mariae virginis*. The former, cited as a reference to the deserving praises and songs of the womb that housed the Son of God, has a very restricted diffusion, with only four other sources besides E-TO 135. Of these, the oldest is E-Mbhm v 98 (from the end of the 12th century and the beginning of the 13th century), from the monastery of San Vicente de la Sierra (Toledo), also belonging to the regular canons of Saint Ruf of Avignon. Then we have E-TO 133 (from the end of the 13th century), from the cathedral of Tortosa, and finally, the two-voice version given by the Cistercian Las Huelgas Codex E-BUlh 11 (c. 1320), which also includes I-Rvat vat 4743 (c. 1400–1410), a Franciscan missal from Gubbio. Therefore, the diffusion of *Promereri summae laudis* seems to stem from the charisma of the Rufinians, to spread, probably through Toledo, to Las Huelgas and from there to some Franciscans in the heart of Italy. But beyond now delving into the fascinating question of the transfer of this chant between different centers (Tello Ruiz-Pérez 2006), we would like to point out the fact that, in each and every one of them, its presence could have different nuances and yet, in all of them, it would be felt as a proper chant by each community, regardless of the origin of the chant (Rufinian, Cistercian or Franciscan). At the opposite end, we have the second example, *Nativitas Mariae virginis*, with more than 80 agreeing sources from all the most important traditions of Europe, and in which E-TO 135 is the earliest peninsular testimony. Yet, we can reasonably assert the same governing



principle. This sequence, cited here as a paradigm of reference to the girdle that girds (an expression found only in five other sequences out of a corpus of over 4700), would equally enjoy the same proper status during its life in each of the monasteries and convents, churches, and cathedrals in which it was employed over time. The important thing in both cases is to adequately meet a repertoire need that may respond to different conditions but certainly not to our modern concept of originality.

The second aspect of interest in our sample is the style of the sequences, all from the second period, which emerges as a push towards poetic and musical regularity in the midst of the 12th century. At this point, the Marian appendix of E-TO 135 attests to a common and pan-European taste, regardless of the fact that the style originated in a very specific context, the Abbey of Saint Victor in Paris. Once again, the fact that it is widespread does not hinder its use in Tortosa with a sense of local response to singing to the honored Virgin Mary, who delivered her girdle in the cathedral.

#### 4. Conclusions

Given that the devotion that arose after the apparition of the Virgin of the Girdle in the cathedral of Tortosa (1178) does not seem to have reached its splendor until centuries later, as criticism has pointed out, this article has demonstrated that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that there was early veneration both in the popular and liturgical context shortly after the miracle. In fact, both dimensions have a relationship of dependency with respect to the miracle itself but of interdependence between them. The peculiarities of the Marian appendix in E-TO 135 meet all the conditions to be the product of a specific veneration towards the Virgin within the walls of the cathedral, exactly as in the popular realm, the protection and shelter of the Virgin of the Girdle and her relic were sought, particularly in difficult childbirths.

In addition to the fact that it is a purely Marian appendix and the promotion of fidelity and praise to Saint Mary by the people of Tortosa, the most interesting aspects of all these peculiarities in both interdependent contexts can be summarized in six points:

1. An exclusive, self-consistent, and autonomous corpus of sequences is gathered in order to honor the figure of the Virgin Mary. This is something uncommon and even more so in such an early period (c. 1228–1264).
2. Within this Marian corpus, the high rate of *unica* or compositions with very little diffusion denotes a localized observance, that is, the veneration of the Virgin of the Girdle sparked by her apparition. However, stating this is not the same as saying that only through these compositions made *ex profeso*, so to speak, can the needs of such veneration be fulfilled. In fact, widely disseminated compositions, through a process of exchange and adaptation from other traditions, may be just as or even more suitable for the specific need. *Traditio obligat*.
3. Comprised primarily of 22 sequences, accompanied by nine Alleluias for them, and predominantly consisting of the “classical sequences” dating back to the 12th century onwards, this repertoire can be considered to be in tune with the most fashionable liturgical genre of its time in terms of composition.
4. There is a palpable interaction and continuous dialogue between the images portrayed in the sequences and the characteristic devotional themes that arise from the narration of the miracle of the delivery of the Girdle by the Virgin.
5. Although the repertoire is entirely dedicated to customary Marian themes in the liturgy (it is worth remembering that there was no specific Office for the Virgin of the Girdle until 1508), its versatility is noteworthy. It can be used in liturgical, votive, or even extraliturgical and purely devotional contexts, as the items are not specifically tied to a particular feast of the Virgin.
6. Both sprouting from the same impact that the miracle of the apparition caused, the Girdle, as an object of popular devotion to assisting women in labor and the Marian appendix of liturgical sequences, added to E-TO 135, are autonomous but

interdependent realities, which embody an early impulse of faith and dedication of the entire city of Tortosa to the Virgin Mary.

As a whole, these peculiarities shape an incipient piety towards the girdle and the new Marian advocacy in the 13th century, at least among the members of the cathedral chapter, that is, the regular canons of Saint Ruf of Avignon, in whose charism Mary was already deeply rooted. However, the veneration of the relic for the protection of difficult childbirths, documented as early as 1357, also denotes a popular devotion that culminated in the 17th century. The current state of this fervor was recently described by the bishop of Tortosa, H.E. Msgr. Enrique Benavent Vidal, during his audience with Pope Francis in the company of the Archconfraternity of the Virgin of the Girdle of Tortosa, as follows:

This girdle, which in material terms is that of a poor girl, is the most precious treasure our Cathedral conserves (*lo mostre tesor*). For centuries it has been the bond that binds the hearts of the people of Tortosa to that of the Virgin, uniting them in heaven and on earth, in life and in death. Thanks to this, devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the faith have been transmitted in our city from generation to generation. [ . . . ] It is a dedication that, from its origin (the feast of the Incarnation of the Lord), leads to the protection and care for the life of the unborn human being. During these years I have heard the testimony of pregnant women in difficulty who have protected the lives of their children entrusting them to the Virgin, and have experienced her protection over their unborn children. ([Holy See Press Office 2019](#)).

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## Appendix A

**Table A1.** Complete inventory of E-TO 135 \*.

Folio	Rubrics	Incipit	Category	Base Chant
—				(Kirrieleyson)
1r		Kirrie Fons bonitatis	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
1v		Tibi promit cohors	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
2r		Kyrie Rex genitor	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
2v		Ihesu redemptor	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
		Clemens rector	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
3r		Summe deus qui	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
3v		Cunctipotens genitor	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
4r		Summe pater voces	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
4v		Kyrie deus sempiternus	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
5r		Deus solus et inmensus	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
5v		Theoricam practicamque	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
6r		Kirrie Rex seclorum	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
6v		Rector Cosmi pie	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
7r		Pater cuncta qui	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
		Ihesu redemptor	Kyrie trope	Kirrieleyson
7v		Kirrieleyson	Kyrie	Kirrieleyson
		Kirrieleyson	Kyrie	Kirrieleyson

Table A1. Cont.

Folio	Rubrics	Incipit	Category	Base Chant
8r		Kirrieleyson	Kyrie	Kirrieleyson
		Kirrieleyson	Kyrie	Kirrieleyson
		Kirrieleyson	Kyrie	Kirrieleyson
8v		Kirrieleyson	Kyrie	Kirrieleyson
		Kirrieleyson	Kyrie	Kirrieleyson
9r		Kirrieleyson	Kyrie	Kirrieleyson
		Kirrieleyson	Kyrie	Kirrieleyson
		Kirrieleyson	Kyrie	Kirrieleyson
9v		Kirrieleyson	Kyrie	Kirrieleyson
		Spiritus et al.me	Gloria trope	Domine deus
10v			Gloria	Gloria
11v			Gloria	Gloria
12r			Gloria	Gloria
13r			Gloria	Gloria
13v			Gloria	Gloria
14v			Gloria	Gloria
15r			Gloria	Gloria
15v			Sanctus	Sanctus
16r			Sanctus	Sanctus
			Sanctus	Sanctus
16v			Sanctus	Sanctus
	In honore sancte Marie virginis	Celeste preconium	Osanna prosula	Osanna
17v		Maria mater egregia	Osanna prosula	Osanna
18r		Clemens et benigna	Osanna prosula	Osanna
18v		Clangat cetus iste	Osanna prosula	Osanna
20r		Fidelium turma	Osanna prosula	Osanna
20v		Patris sapientia	Osanna prosula	Osanna
21v		Perpetuo numine	Sanctus trope	Sanctus
22r		Sancte ingenite	Sanctus trope	Sanctus
22v		Nunc tuum plasma	Osanna prosula	Osanna
23r		Cuncta creans genitor	Sanctus trope	Sanctus
24r		Osanna salvifica tuum	Osanna prosula	Osanna
24v		Carmina plebs	Osanna prosula	Osanna
25r		Clemens verbi sator	Sanctus trope	Sanctus
25v		Sanctorum exultatio	Sanctus trope	Sanctus
26r		Genitor omnium	Osanna prosula	Osanna
	In pentecosten	Veni redemptor	Osanna prosula	Osanna
27r	In die sanctum pasche	Hostia promiseri	Osanna prosula	Osanna
27v		Sanctorum motus	Sanctus trope	Sanctus
28r		Summe pater virgo	Osanna prosula	Osanna
28v		Splendor Christe	Sanctus trope	Sanctus
29r		Tu super omnia	Sanctus trope	Sanctus
30r		Divinum misterium	Sanctus trope	Sanctus
31r		Tempora disponens	Sanctus trope	Sanctus
31v		Fons vivus vite	Sanctus trope	Sanctus
		Deus pater cuius	Sanctus trope	Sanctus
32v		Pastor amande gregi	Versus	
		Princeps celeste pastor	Versus	
		Indignos meritisque	Versus	
33r		Sume sacerdotum	Versus	
		Cum mansuetudine	Versus	
			Agnus Dei	Agnus Dei
33v			Agnus Dei	Agnus Dei
			Agnus Dei	Agnus Dei
			Agnus Dei	Agnus Dei
34r			Agnus Dei	Agnus Dei
			Agnus Dei	Agnus Dei



Table A1. Cont.

Folio	Rubrics	Incipit	Category	Base Chant
34v	In honore sancte Marie		Agnus Dei	Agnus Dei
			Agnus Dei	Agnus Dei
		Congaudentes in hac	Agnus trope	Agnus Dei
35v		Ave Maria celi	Agnus trope	Agnus Dei
		Mortis dira ferens	Agnus trope	Agnus Dei
36r		Mittis agnus	Agnus trope	Agnus Dei
36v		Fons immense pietatis	Agnus trope	Agnus Dei
37r		Splendor patris	Agnus trope	Agnus Dei
37v		Verus adest agnus	Agnus trope	Agnus Dei
		Rex immense pietatis	Agnus trope	Agnus Dei
38r		Eructavit cor meum	Agnus trope	Agnus Dei
38v		Rex eterne glorie	Agnus trope	Agnus Dei
39r	Prosa in natale domini ad primam missam	Celeste organum	Sequence (Prose)	
40r	In luce	Christi hodierna	Sequence (Prose)	
41v	Ad missam maiorem	Hec dies est sancta	Sequence (Prose)	
42v	Alia in die vel in octabas	Potestate non natura	Sequence (Prose)	
44v	Ad vespervas	Replet nova dies	Sequence (Prose)	
45r	Sancti stephani	In armonia voce sonora	Sequence (Prose)	
—	(Pascua)			
46r	(Feria II)	(Fulgens preclara)	Sequence (Prose)	
47r	Feria III	Zima vetus expurgetur	Sequence (Prose)	
49r	Feria IIII	Splendent ecce novi	Sequence (Prose)	
50r	Feria V	Sabbato namque	Sequence (Prose)	
51r	Inventio sancte crucis	Laudes crucis attollamus	Sequence (Prose)	
53r	In die ascensionis domini	Rex omnipotens	Sequence (Prose)	
54v	Ad vespervas	Adest nobis summa	Sequence (Prose)	
55r	In die pentecosten	Alleluia. Dicamus preclara	Sequence (Prose)	
56r	Ad vespervas	Sancti spiritus assit	Sequence (Prose)	
57v	Ad vespervas	Veni sancte spiritus	Sequence (Prose)	
58v	Alia ad vespervas	Laudes deo devotas	Sequence (Prose)	
59r	Feria II	Orbis conditor	Sequence (Prose)	
60r	Feria III	Cantantibus hodie cunctis	Sequence (Prose)	
62r	Feria IIII	Alleluia Laudiflua cantica	Sequence (Prose)	
63r	Feria V	Alme corus domini	Sequence (Prose)	
63v	De trinitate	Benedicta semper sancta	Sequence (Prose)	
65r	Alia [Hic ponatur de corpore xpisti (add)]	Quicumque vult salvus	Sequence (Prose)	
66r	Alia	Profitentes unitatem	Sequence (Prose)	
67v	Sancti iohannis baptiste	Hodierna dies veneranda	Sequence (Prose)	
68v	Alia	Gaude caterva diei	Sequence (Prose)	
70v	Alia	Vox clamantis in deserto	Sequence (Prose)	
72v		Helisabet Zacharie	Sequence (Prose)	
74v	In natalis sancti petri apostoli	Pulcra prepollent	Sequence (Prose)	
75v	Alia	Gaudet chorus electorum	Sequence (Prose)	
78r	Alia	Gaude Roma capud	Sequence (Prose)	
80r	Sancta Maria Magdalene	Mane prima sabbati	Sequence (Prose)	
81v	Sancti iacobi	Gratulemur et letemur	Sequence (Prose)	
84r	Sancti laurencii martiris	Alme martir domini	Sequence (Prose)	
85v	In assumptione sancte Marie virginis	Aurea virga iesse	Sequence (Prose)	
86 <sup>bis</sup>	Alia	Laudes claras canticorum	Sequence (Prose)	
88r	Sancti bartolomei	Psallat concinat plebs	Sequence (Prose)	
90r	Sancti augustini	Gaude preclara reboat	Sequence (Prose)	
92r	In nativitate beate Marie	Virgo es sacra	Sequence (Prose)	
93r	Sancti Michaelis	Ad celebres rex	Sequence (Prose)	
95r	Alia	Laus erumpat	Sequence (Prose)	
96v	Sancti francisci	Salve fratrum dux	Sequence (Prose)	
99r	In die omnium sanctorum	Sancta ac digna	Sequence (Prose)	
100v	Sancti Martini	Hec est dies veneranda	Sequence (Prose)	

Table A1. Cont.

Folio	Rubrics	Incipit	Category	Base Chant
102r	[Hic ponatur de dedicatione ecclesie prosa (add)]	Adest precelsa	Sequence (Prose)	
102v	Prosa Sancti andree			
102v	Sancti Nicholai	Congaudentes exultemus	Sequence (Prose)	
104r	De apostolis vel de martiribus	O alma trinitas deus	Sequence (Prose)	
105v	De apostolis vel evangelistis	Celi solem immitantes	Sequence (Prose)	
106v	De evangelistis	Iocundare plebs fidelis	Sequence (Prose)	
108v	De martiribus vel de confessoribus	Voci sono dulce tono	Sequence (Prose)	
110v	De plurimorum virginum	Virgines egregie	Sequence (Prose)	
111v	In dedicatione templi	Quam dilecta tabernacula	Sequence (Prose)	
113v	Alia	Rex Salomón fecit	Sequence (Prose)	
115r	Alia	Ad templi huius lumina	Sequence (Prose)	
116v	Alia	Clara chorus voce	Sequence (Prose)	
118v		Alleluia Virga iesse	Alleluia	Alleluia Virga iesse
		Alleluia Dulcis virgo	Alleluia	Alleluia Dulcis virgo
		Alleluia Salve virgo mater	Alleluia	Alleluia Salve virgo mater
119r		Alleluia ora pro nobis	Alleluia	Alleluia ora pro nobis
		Alleluia Virgo sacra	Alleluia	Alleluia Virgo sacra
119v		Alleluia Mater xpisti	Alleluia	Alleluia Mater Christi
		Alleluia Es rosa vernalis	Alleluia	Alleluia Eia rosa vernalis
		Alleluia Que est ista	Alleluia	Alleluia Que est ista
120r		Ave maria gracia plena	Sequence (Prose)	
121r		Missus gabriel de celis	Sequence (Prose)	
122v		Maria virgo virginum	Sequence (Prose)	
123r		Hodierne lux diei	Sequence (Prose)	
124r		Virga iesse generosa	Sequence (Prose)	
125v		Iesse virga humidavit	Sequence (Prose)	
126v		Sollemnitas marie	Sequence (Prose)	
128r		Sancti spiritus adsit	Sequence (Prose)	
129v		Virginis marie laudes	Sequence (Prose)	
130r		Ave mater domini	Sequence (Prose)	
130v		Verbum bonum et suave	Sequence (Prose)	
131v		Mittit ad virginem	Sequence (Prose)	
132v		Salve sancta xpisti	Sequence (Prose)	
134r		Ave mater graciae	Sequence (Prose)	
135r		Salve mater salvatoris	Sequence (Prose)	
135v		Ave porta graciae	Sequence (Prose)	
136v		Ave mundi spes	Sequence (Prose)	
137v		Ave virgo virginum	Sequence (Prose)	
139v		Ave gloriosa virginum	Sequence (Prose)	
141v		Promereri sume	Sequence (Prose)	
142r		Dolens auctor omnium	Sequence (Prose)	
144r		Alleluia Felix mater	Alleluia	Alleluia Felix mater
		Sanctus	Sanctus	Sanctus
144v	Sancta Maria	Uterus virgineus	Sequence (Prose)	
—				

\*— Lacuna/( ) Texts or rubrics that were omitted or lost in the codex/(add.) Added later.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> All manuscripts are cited following the RISM Library Sigla: <https://rism.info/community/sigla.html> (accessed on 7 January 2023).
- <sup>2</sup> The Office can be found not only in the edition made by Martorel ([Martorel y de Luna 1626](#), pp. 453–65), but also in the 16th-century manuscript codex E-TO 274bis and the printed codex E-TO 274ter (Lyon 1547) from the Chapter Library ([Bayerri Bertomeu 1962](#), pp. 448–55; [1968](#), p. 105).
- <sup>3</sup> “Deus, qui Ecclesiam Dertusensem Beatissimae Virginis Mariae Visitatione et Cingulo decorasti; eius nobis intercesione concede, ut cingulo fidei et puritatis accinti, a cunctis peccatorum nexibus eruamur. Per Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum. Amen” [O God, who adorned the Church of Tortosa with the Visitation of the Most Holy Virgin Mary and the Girdle; grant us through her intercession that, girded with the belt of faith and purity, we may be liberated from all bonds of sin. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.]. A second prayer, this time from a 16th century hand, is collected in the orational E-TO 77, f. 26v (14th century), in the following terms: “Omnipotens sempiternus Deus, qui gloriosae Virginis Matris Mariae corpus et animam, ut dignum Filii tui habitaculum effici maeretur, Spiritu Sancto cooperante praeparasti; da, ut cuius Visitatione et Cinguli traditione hanc Ecclesiam decorasti, eius pia intercesione ab instantibus malis et a morte perpetua liberemur. Per Dominum nostrum Iesum Christum. Amen” (Almighty and eternal God, who with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit prepared the body and soul of the glorious Virgin Mother Mary to be a worthy dwelling place for your Son, grant us that, through the visitation and tradition of the Girdle with which you have adorned this Church, and through her pious intercession, we may be delivered from immediate evils and from eternal death. Through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.).
- <sup>4</sup> “Diaconatus qui vocatur monachus maior” [The diaconate is called major monk] and “Diaconus qui est monachus maior” [Deacon who is major monk]. Tortosa, *Llibre de Constitucions Episcopals*, núm. 2 (10 October 1325). E-TO 187, f. 32r-32v ([Bayerri Bertomeu 1962](#), pp. 344–45; [Almuni Balada 2007](#), pp. 649–50).
- <sup>5</sup> “[Lectio tertia]: Dertusae fuit quidam presbyter probus, et timoratus; et quis is fuerit ignoramus: qualis tamen fuit sequentia luculenter ostendunt. Hic curans Christum sectari abiecto mundo mentem ad coelestia vertit Mariae Virgini Dei matri sedulo obsequia praestans. Cotigit semel, cum nocte quiesceret: ut surgens in noctis dimidio in Ecclesia Dertusana matutinis (prout erat solitus) interesset (res mira) a domino ad ianuas dictae Ecclesiae, contiguas coemeterio ductus in ea. Te Deum laudamus audiens cantari illuc quomodo venisset curans, tunc minime perscrutari caepit contristari, et intra se dicere. Heu quia fauens somno ad Ecclesiam serus accessi. Sed cum hodie officium de feria debeat sieri: quid est quod solemne officium intra Ecclesiam sentio celebrari?  
[Lectio quarta]: Haec dum secum tacitus cogitaret: Ecclesiae ianuas cernens apertas, stans ad limen, ingentem intuitus est luminis claritatem: conspexit a capite Ecclesiae, usque ad ipsum limen sanctos Dei Angelos investibus albis per choros hinc inde stantes, accensos cereos albos habentes: quos tremens cum cerneret: illum nutu Angeli vocauerunt, sibi cereum accensum tradentes: et ut Altare ad maius accederet innuentes. Quibus assensit. Perrexit igitur ad Altare, cuius ad latus vidit mulierem speciosam valde, ornatam, sedentem in solio coronatam. Cui aderant stantes ad latera duo viri, quae illum intuens: eum accersiuit, et dixit illi. Tu Presbyter nosis me? Cui perterritus respondens Presbyter ait. Ego quamquam suspicer: plene tamen, domina te non noui. Tunc illa inquit Presbytero. Ego sum mater Dei: cui tu summe obsequia praestas. Hi duo viri hinc inde stantes praecipui sunt Christi Apostoli: a dextris Petrus Christi Vicarius, et Paulus doctor gentium a finistris.[Lectio quinta]: Tunc Presbyter flexis genibus dixit illi. O sacratissima Virgo Maria mater domini nostri Iesu Christi, et domina mea: unde hoc mihi, quod ego indignus Presbyter, et peccator merear te Reginam caeli viuens adhuc corpore intueri: Virgo autem Maria sacratissima dixit ei. Surge, ne timeas, tu quidem assidue mihi seruis infessus: propterea viuens in hoc seculo me videre: chorisque his interesse Angelicis meruisti. Et quoniam in honorem filij mei, et meum haec Ecclesia est constructa, et vobis Dertusensibus curae est me plurimum venerari, ideo quia diligo vos, pro quibus meum ad filium intercedo, soluens Cingulum, quo praecingor, a me fabricatum, super Altare illud pono, et vobis trado: ut hoc in pignus amoris mei memoriam habeatis. Et tu haec omnia Urbis Episcopo, Clero, et Populo reserabis. Et haec dicens soluit, et posuit super Altare Cingulum: tradens illud, dixit illi Presbyter. Cum sim solus, mihi si dixeris haec, non credent, Virgo Maria pientissima dixit illi. Ecce Monachum maiorem habes contestem, qui est in choro: et haec omnia cernit ideo illis vos duo haec omnia, et singula referetis. Et visio his dictis euauit. [ . . . ]” ([Martorel y de Luna 1626](#), pp. 453–60).
- <sup>6</sup> A similar and highly representative case would be that of the Benedictine monk Gautier de Coinci (1177–1236) and his *Les Miracles de Notre Dame* (for a summary, see [Tello Ruiz-Pérez 2010](#)).
- <sup>7</sup> The numbering and translation follow ([Cunningham 2008](#)). For a comprehensive analysis of the entire homily, refer to ([Arentzen 2019](#)).
- <sup>8</sup> “Tunc beatissimus Thomas subito ductus est ad montem Oliveti et vidit beatissimum corpus petere caelum, coepitque clamare et dicere: ‘O mater sancta, mater benedicta, mater immaculata; si inveni gratiam modo, quia video te, laetifica servum tuum per tuam misericordiam, quia ad caelum pergis’. Tunc zona qua apostoli corpus sanctissimum praecinxerant, beato Thomae de caelo iactata est. Quam accipiens et osculans eam ac Deo gratias referens venit iterum in valle Iosaphat.” ([Santos Otero 2006](#), pp. 649–50) (Then the most blessed Thomas was suddenly brought to the Mount of Olivet, and saw the most blessed body going up to heaven, and began to cry out and say: O holy mother, blessed mother, spotless mother, if I have now found grace because I see thee, make thy servant joyful through thy compassion, because thou art going to heaven. Then the girdle with which the apostles had encircled the most holy body was thrown down from heaven to the blessed Thomas. And taking it, and kissing it,

and giving thanks to God, he came again into the Valley of Jehoshaphat.) (trans. Roberts and Donaldson 1951, pp. 593–94). See the discussion of the scene depicted in the main altarpiece of the cathedral in (Alanyà i Roig 2004, p. 61).

For other analogous customs of childbirth assistance in the medieval world, see (Rieder 2006, pp. 105–21).

Specifically, the manuscripts are: Las Huelgas Codex E-BULh 11 (c. 1320), from Las Huelgas monastery (Burgos, Spain); F-Pn 5247 (14th century), from the Benedictine Priuré St. Robert-de-Cornillon (Chaise-Dieu) at Saint-Égrève (Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, France); F-Pn 10513 (14th century), from Cathédrale St. Cyr-et-Ste. Julitte of Nevers (Bourgogne-Franche-Comté, France); and D-Rtt 7/II (c. 1500) and D-Rtt 42/II, from the Benediktinerabtei Salvator, BMV, St. Ulrich und Afra at Neresheim (Baden-Württemberg, Germany).

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