

Izvirni znanstveni članek/Article (1.01)

Bogoslovni vestnik/Theological Quarterly 83 (2023) 2, 449—464

Besedilo prejeto/Received:03/2022; sprejeto/Accepted:04/2023

UDK/UDC: 78: 27-523.6-789.33-055.2(497.4Radlje ob Dravi)

DOI: 10.34291/BV2023/02/Motnik

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Music in the Dominican Convent of Marenberg: in Search of Sources

Odkrivanje glasbenih virov

iz marenberškega samostana dominikank

Abstract: The Dominican monastery in Marenberg (Radlje ob Dravi), founded in 1251, was dissolved in 1782 by Emperor Joseph II. The general history of the monastic community is well researched, but there is no study of the role played by music. Information on music from the early days of the monastery is sparse, becoming more tangible only from the 17th century onwards. The convent chronicle of the early 18th century contains numerous details about nuns who devoted themselves to music. Some of them were trained singers, others played various instruments, and some even composed. The four antiphonaries of Marenberg survived the eventful history of the monastery. These manuscripts are presented to the public for the first time in the present article.

Keywords: Marenberg, Dominicans, dissolution of monasteries, liturgical music, antiphonars

Povzetek: V letu 1251 ustanovljeni samostan dominikank v Radljah ob Dravi (Marenberg) je cesar Jožef II. ukinil v letu 1782. Splošna zgodovina samostanske skupnosti je dobro raziskana, medtem ko vlogi glasbe doslej še ni bila posvečena nobena študija. Podatki o glasbi iz zgodnjega obdobja samostana so redki in bolj oprijemljivi šele od 17. stoletja dalje. Samostanska kronika iz zgodnjega 18. stoletja vsebuje številne podatke o redovnicah, ki so se posvečale glasbi. Nekatere izmed njih so bile izurjene pevke, druge so igrale različne inštrumente in nekatere so celo skladale. Razgibano zgodovino samostana vključno z ukinitvijo so preživeli štirje antifonariji, ki so v pričujočem članku prvič predstavljeni javnosti.

Ključne besede: Marenberg, dominikanke, ukinitvev samostanov, liturgična glasba, antifonar

1. Introduction

From the middle of the 13th century until their dissolution during the reforms of Emperor Joseph II in the 1780s, three monasteries of the female Dominican Order

existed on the territory that is today Slovenia.¹ In 1238, nuns from Viennese noble families settled in Velesovo (Michelstätten) in Carniola and two communities were founded in the now Slovenian part of Styria: Studenice (Studenitz) in 1245 and Marenberg (Radlje ob Dravi) a few years later, in 1251.

All three convents were founded by noble benefactors, and admission was reserved primarily for ladies from the higher echelons of society. While Velesovo enjoyed a high reputation in Carniola, Marenberg played a similar role in Styria and Carinthia. Studenice could not compete with the other two nunneries in terms of prestige (Mlinarič 2005). By all accounts, many ladies had attained a relatively high level of education before entering the convents and also had a profound knowledge of music. In the case of Marenberg, musical skills even proved to be a condition for admission.

Although the general history of Marenberg is fairly well known and researched, the scholarly literature has only briefly touched upon the significance of music within this monastery. Jože Mlinarič, in his 1997 historical overview of Marenberg Monastery, mentions music frequently, but as this is not the focus of his reflections, it is well worth taking a deeper look into the sources. This article aims to provide a comprehensive summary of the music history of the convent, while recognising that further detailed analyses of the Convent chronicles and in-depth studies on the Marenberg antiphoners are necessary. Additionally, it seeks to contribute to the study of women's orders in the territory of Slovenia.

2. The Dominican Convent of Marenberg

Marenberg is situated on a plain in the narrow Drava valley on the left bank of the river. Although it is located on an important crossroads between Styria and Carinthia, it is far removed from the larger towns, as is typical of Dominican convents. Since the Drava River was considered the northernmost border of the Patriarchate of Aquileia, the convent was no longer precisely within its sphere of influence, but in the territory of the Archdiocese of Salzburg. In fact, the bishop of Lavant had spiritual authority over the monastery.

The foundation of the Marenberg Convent in 1251 can be interpreted as an act by means of which the two founders, Gisela and her son Sigfried von Marenberg, expected to ensure their own salvation. At the same time, the foundation of the monastic communities of the new Dominican Order was justified by a revival of the general spiritual life in the region. In practical terms, however, the convent also functioned as a provisioning institution, taking in numerous noble daughters who either could not marry or could not inherit and who had little other choice in order to lead an honourable life.

¹ This article was written within the research project "Old traditions in new vestments: Musical and textual reworkings in the performing practices of liturgical music" (J6-1809), funded by the Slovenian Research Agency ARIS.



Figure 1: Engraving of Marenberg by Georg Matthäus Vischer, *Topographia ducatus Stiriae*, [Graz 1681], vir: (*Digitalna knjižnica Slovenije, dLib*).

Entering a convent was certainly not cheap for the girl's relatives. The community paid for living expenses, and although a dowry was not established by canon law, the women usually brought landed property or financial resources with them. After Pope Alexander IV approved the establishment of the convent in 1255, the nuns of Marenberg were allowed to own land and gradually increased their wealth through land purchases and especially through donations. Even the oldest known record of music practice in Marenberg is related to a gift. When a certain burgess of Maribor, Katarina Valpotič, donated two vineyards near Maribor to the convent around 1474, she set the condition that the nuns should celebrate a jubilee every year on the feast of St. Michael (29 September), namely a vigil and a sung mass in memory of the benefactor (Mlinarič 1997, 96).

After the general religious, moral, and spiritual crisis of the 16th century, the convent experienced a new upsurge under Prioress Susanna von Schrattenbach (1584–1621). A devastating fire in 1653 prompted the Dominican Sisters to rebuild the monastery almost in its entirety, whereupon a representative early Baroque complex with a beautifully landscaped garden was created (Curk 1991, 9–13). The renovated building complex can be seen in the well-known copperplate engraving by Georg Matthäus Vischer from 1681.

Dominican nunneries were usually wealthy, and Marenberg was no exception. In fact, at the time of its dissolution in 1782 it was among the richest in the Austrian lands (Wolf 1871, 79–80).² It was a religious community for the elite, and the convent seems to have been particularly attractive to the local aristocracy. For ad-

² The analysis of the financial situation of the Austrian monasteries published by Adam Wolf in 1871 is neither current nor reliable. However, in the absence of more recent accounts, the data can be used as a guideline.

mission, spirituality played an important role, but no less decisive was the reputation and status of the family, including its financial background (Kos 1996, 21–44).

3. References to the Musical Practice in Marenberg

The available sources pertaining to music in Marenberg are noticeably scant. Regrettably, there are no extant musical sources from the earliest centuries of its history, and only a paucity of records regarding musical practices. It is not until the middle of the 17th century that the number of records and their informational value become more tangible. Occasional references to music can be found in the correspondence of that time, as well as in visitation reports and especially in the extensive chronicle of Marenberg called *Marenbergischer Lustgarthen*. As a result of a fire that destroyed several parts of the monastery building, the library and the archives in 1780, the musical sources themselves have hardly been preserved; what survived was largely lost in the course of the dissolution after 1782. Accordingly, only a small remnant of the original documentation is still available for research. Without clear provenance notes such as ex-libris or other unambiguous indications, the identification of the books and manuscripts proves difficult. In any case, such explicit notes are not always present in the sources from Marenberg.

Music usually plays a subordinate role in the Marenberg archival records and is mentioned only in passing. In the consistory protocols and visitation reports it is noted that music was played on special occasions, such as when the bishop or his deputies visited the convent, at the election or installation of a new prioress, at the solemn ritual of receiving the habit, and at taking of vows. These sources usually note that the nuns performed solemn music, usually the “Te Deum”, with timpani and trumpets (NŠAM Protokoli 1718–1722, 15 October 1719; 1724–1727, 15 September 1725).

For the acquisition of knowledge pertaining to convent music and daily life in general, the extensive Marenberg Chronicle proves to be a rare and significant stroke of luck. The manuscript, preserved in the Episcopal Archives in Maribor,³ was written between 1686 and 1712 by an anonymous Dominican Marenberg nun and is a particularly valuable and informative primary source with extensive references to musical practice. The first part contains a chronicle of events from the founding of the convent onwards. This is followed by detailed descriptions of the lives and work of the prioresses from the 16th century, as well as biographies of sisters. The life accounts of the nuns who lived at the time of the chronicler and whom she knew personally are naturally the most detailed.

³ How and when the Episcopal Archives came into possession of this manuscript cannot be determined. The source is not mentioned in the Marenberg inventory lists of 1782. It was also not in the collection of books brought with the transfer of the Lavant bishop's seat from St. Andrä to Maribor after 1859. According to a personal communication, the director of the Episcopal Archives in Maribor, Lilijana Urlep, suspects that the manuscript could have arrived in Maribor through a private donation.

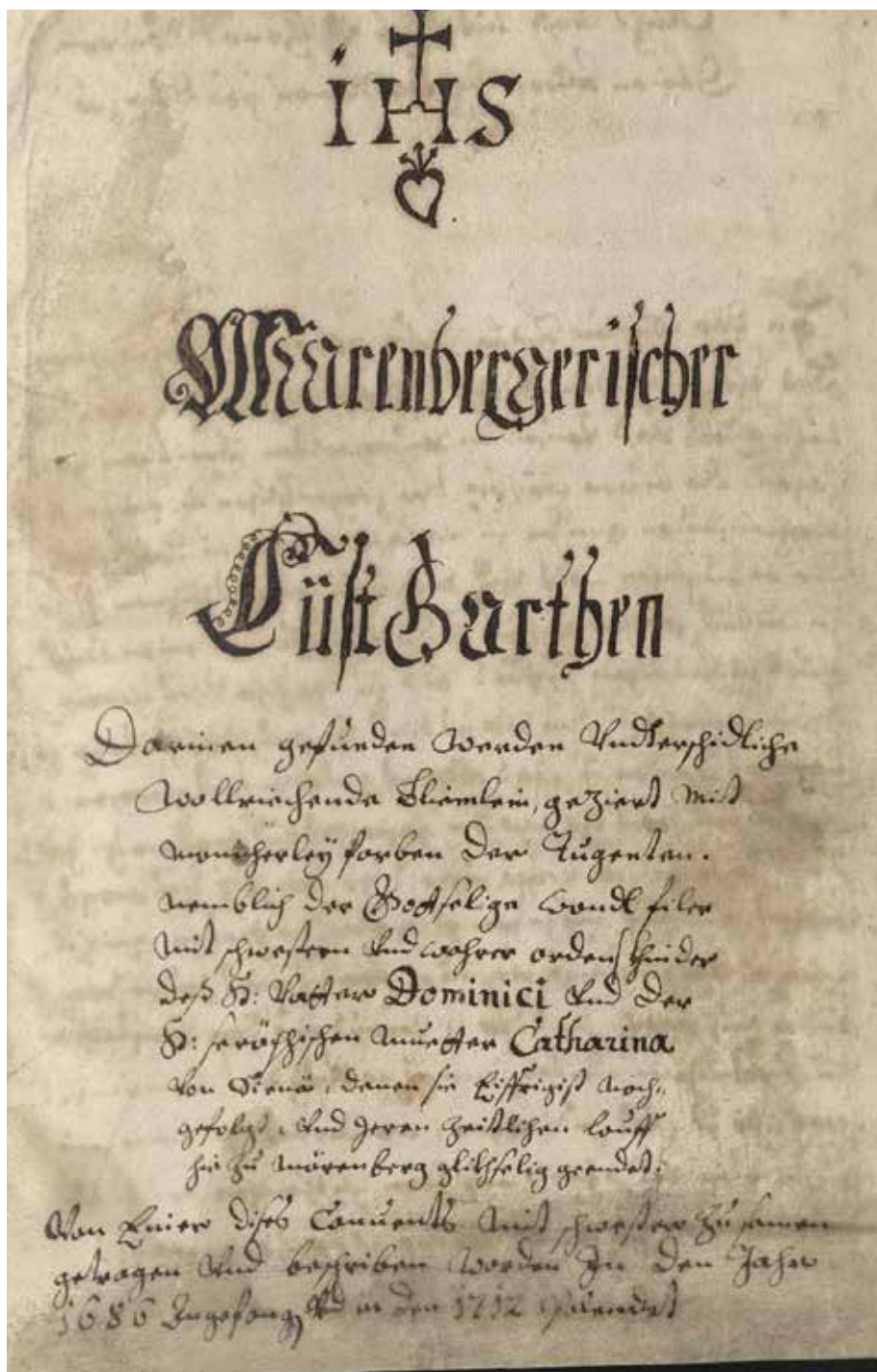


Figure 2: The Marenberg Convent Chronicle, title page (NŠAM, Marenbergischer Lustgarten).

The lengthy title of the *Marenbergischer Lustgarthen* provides a detailed description of the book as a garden of pleasure and joy that offers sensory recreation, featuring a variety of deliciously fragrant flowers symbolising virtues embodied by notable figures such as the Father of the Order, St. Dominic, the seraphic Mother St. Catherine of Siena, and other Dominican nuns who have lived or still reside in the convent.

The manuscript's main purpose was to encourage the sisters and give them consolation and moral support. For this reason, historical events are presented throughout as examples of divine providence and grace, and the biographies of the sisters as *bona exempla* to be emulated and followed. The author either omits less pleasant events altogether or glosses over them, which in turn greatly subtracts reliability from the source, from our perspective. However, the record was never intended as a historical document.

Although the book is referred to as a chronicle, the chronological part is actually subordinate. It is, rather, a so-called sister-book, whose models are to be sought in the late medieval representations of the *vitae* in the Dominican convents of southern Germany and Switzerland. The sister-books had a long tradition and served on the one hand for the self-assurance of the monastic communities and on the other hand as *memoria* (Ehrenschedntner 2004, 61–67). Although mystical experiences are rarer in Marenberg writing than in older sources, its narrative form also served the purpose of presenting concepts of religious thought and exemplary action as well as essential aspects of monastic life.

The anonymous author pays close attention to music throughout the document. Music is seen as an honourable and desirable discipline which the sisters might cultivate and refine throughout their lives. Moreover, they practised it for the glory of God and, of course, for their own pleasure. Their mastery in music was considered one of the requirements for admission into the monastic community of Marenberg, or at least a considerable asset.⁴ Using Benedicta Constantia von Raumschüssel as an example, the chronicler reports that the girl was sent home to learn music before being admitted (NŠAM, *Marenbergischer Lustgarthen*, 613). In some cases, girls from lower social classes were admitted as lay sisters if they showed ability in useful work and knowledge of music. A particularly vivid example of this is provided by the description of Maria Magdalena Khöffer, of whom the author reports as follows:

Maria Magdalena came from a poor family from Völkermarkt in Carinthia and was favoured by God's grace. God had gifted her with a beautiful high voice and the right spirit for music. After she learned to sing and play the keyboard, the prioress took her into the care at the request of the girl's mother. In the convent she sang with the other sisters for nine years, always hoping to become a lay sister. But Prioress Susanna Andrian ignored the matter, since the girl was not of noble birth. Only after constant pleading by the sisters, who appreciated Magdalena's

⁴ Similar things are reported about the conditions of admission to the Dominican convent in Graz (Neschenweng 2017, 33).

musical talent, did the prioress grant her wish in 1671. As a lay sister, but not a noblewoman, Magdalena had to dine at the second table, where the nuns were served only re-heated leftovers. Since her stomach could not bear this, she was allowed the last place at the first table. In time, Magdalena perfected her musical skills and became one of the best and most skilled musicians in the community. She played keyboard and string instruments and sang the first soprano for forty years. The writer reports that this was probably due to the fact that she never ate fresh fruit or tough meat or other hard foods. God had also endowed Magdalena with intellect and dexterity, so that she was able to perform all kinds of work to benefit the community (NŠAM, Marenbergischer Lustgarthen, 578).

According to the chronicle's reports, the quantity and quality of music seems to have increased considerably during the tenure of the prioresses Maria Susana Andrian (1668–1689) and Catharina Susanna Grotta (1689–1726). Even in the years prior to the tenure of these two prioresses, at the time of Prioress Maria Johanna Linzer (1640–1668), music was highly valued, although the convent was more focused on extensive building work. At the beginning of the 18th century, at least fifteen sisters played musical instruments and many more sang. Some of them were proficient in several instruments, so that a total of five could play the organ, six the violin, two the viola, three the bass, three the timpani, one the viola da gamba, and five the *tromba marina* (NŠAM, Marenbergischer Lustgarthen, 471–472). To all appearances, the convent maintained an orchestra in the late 17th and 18th centuries.

The last instrument mentioned, the *tromba marina*, is now largely forgotten. Sometimes called nuns' trumpet, nuns' fiddle, or Mary's trumpet, it is neither a trumpet nor a brass instrument, but a stringed instrument that was often used in nunneries. Since it was deemed inappropriate for women to play wind instruments, they played something that, while sounding similar to a trumpet, was actually a one-stringed instrument. This also explains how the nuns performed the "Te Deum" with timpani and trumpets, a fact frequently mentioned in the sources.

The enumeration of musically trained instrumentalists obviously refers to the performance of polyphonic figural music with instrumental accompaniment, although, with one exception, not a word is said about the repertoire and not a single work is mentioned in the inventories. The chronicler tells of a composer who was active among the nuns in Marenberg. Her name was Maria Josepha Waller (1652–1680) and she came from a wealthy merchant family in Klagenfurt. Orphaned as a child, the twelve-year old girl's education was entrusted to the nuns. She became an excellent chorister who, at the request of the sisters, occasionally set words to music for the liturgical feasts, four of which the chronicler specifically mentions. Maria Josepha died young at the age of 28 (NŠAM, Marenbergischer Lustgarthen, 236–237) and, regrettably, all of her compositions have been lost.

Despite the destruction caused by the fire on 30 June 1780, the convent still had a collection of musical instruments at the time of its dissolution. The inventory of

1782 lists a pair of hunting horns, four violins, a viola, timpani, a piano in the nuns' choir, and another keyboard instrument in a nun's cell (Mlinarič 1997, 206; 208).

4. Musical Sources from Marenberg

After the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1780s, the inventories of the settlements were meticulously recorded and, in the case of the Styrian monasteries, sent to the provincial capital in Graz. At least three inventories from Marenberg exist, although these are not congruous with each other, at least as far as the book and manuscript holdings are concerned. The inventory of 26 March 1782 summarily lists 59 religious books in the convent room as well as six large antiphoners and graduals and an undetermined number of prayer and contemplation books in the nuns' choir. Due to the fire, there was nothing left in the library (Mlinarič 1997, 207–208).

After the collection of books had been brought from Marenberg to Graz, on 30 January 1783 the scribe of the Viennese Court Library, Patritius Dengg, prepared an alphabetical index according to author names or titles. These books were most likely stored in the sacristy, in the nuns' choir, in individual cells and rooms, or elsewhere in the convent. One can only speculate how extensive the collection must have been before the fire of 1780 but, surprisingly, Dengg's catalogue is still thirteen pages long, containing approximately 185 book titles, mainly of printed religious literature (StLA, R.u.K. Sach. 204, A.III, 1782, K662. *Catalogus Der Von dem aufgelösten Frauen Stift Mährenberg an die hierortig K. K. Bibliothec übergebenen Bücher. Nro. 1*). As far as music in the convent is concerned, the handwritten chant books seem to be most important:

Title	Format	Volumes
1. chant book on parchment	large folio	2
2. ditto	small folio	3
3. ditto	ordinary folio	1
4. ditto	folio	5
5. ditto	quarto	4
6. ditto	octavo	6

Table 1: *Marenberger chant books mentioned in the directory of books of 1782.*

A copy of Dengg's catalogue was sent to the Vienna Court Library, which had the right to select books and manuscripts from the holdings of the dissolved monasteries (Stummvoll 1968, 272–283). The Marenberg collection does not seem to have been of much interest to the Court Library, as it consisted mainly of religious devotional literature for prayer and contemplation. The majority of the books remained in Graz, but neither the University Library nor any other Graz institution seems to have acquired a single printed book from Marenberg. For Vienna, however, the librarian Gottfried van Swieten, requested the following units:⁵

⁵ The catalogue is accompanied by a paper sheet entitled: "Verzeichniß Derjenigen Bücher welche aus dem Frauen Stift Mährenburg für die K. K. Hof Bibliothec in Wien anverlanget werden."

Psalterium latinum, a manuscript in octavo format

Psalterium germanicum in octavo format, printed in Munich

Manuscriptum in membrana [i.e. parchment] in octavo format

Chant books on parchment, 11 volumes, folio format (see table 1, nos. 1–4)

Regrettably, the description of the titles is minimal. The successor institution to the Court Library, now the Austrian National Library, owns a large number of Latin psalteries, and it is almost impossible to determine exactly which one might be the *Psalterium latinum*. It is even more difficult to identify the manuscript on parchment (*Manuscriptum in membrana*), which is very poorly described in the catalogue. However, the mention of the printed *Psalterium germanicum* proves that the books were indeed sent to Vienna. The latter is undoubtedly the printed book entitled *Der gantze Psalter des Königlichen Propheten Davids*, published in Munich in 1629. The title page of the copy in the Austrian National Library contains a handwritten bookplate and reads: “Ex lib. bib. monast. Marenbergensis.” Furthermore, a handwritten dedication is enclosed, which reveals that Sister Maria Strobl from the Dominican convent of St. Leonhard in Graz gave the book to Sister Sibilla Jacobpauitsch in 1643 (ÖNB, 2.Z.15 alt prunk). Sister Sibilla was indeed a member of the Marenberg convent at that time. Although this is not relevant for the study of music history, it does show that the books mentioned in the inventory did indeed reach Vienna and could, at least theoretically, still be contained in the Austrian National Library today.

What attracts particular attention with regard to the musical practice in Marenberg is undoubtedly the presence of eleven large chant books on parchment. It is unlikely that such manuscripts might be lost, even in a large library, but it is difficult to identify them as the recording of provenance was simply deemed unimportant in the 18th century. The question arises whether the chant books were ever kept in Vienna or were perhaps later sold, exchanged with another library, or otherwise lost. It is also conceivable that their provenance was incorrectly recorded.

In addition to the eleven large chant books selected for Vienna, the catalogue also mentions four handwritten chant books in quarto format and six in octavo format and, if the information is correct, on parchment. However, no trace remains of these smaller volumes, either. The Graz University Library owns four antiphoners whose Marenberg provenance is obvious, but these are also in folio format, albeit written on paper (Kern 1942, 2–3; 12). Interestingly, they are not clearly identifiable in Degg's catalogue. Another valuable manuscript from the 15th century is also a source of confusion. This German Psalter, which, according to several owners' notes was certainly located in Marenberg from the 16th century, is today identified as Ms. 1593 and contained in the Graz University Library (1956, 369). It cannot, however, be clearly assigned to any entry in Degg's inventory of 1782.

Of the eleven manuscripts that might have come to Vienna, research to date suggests a Marenberg provenance for the chant manuscript Cod. 1779 of the Austrian National Library. This is an antiphoner for the winter season and has several

layers of origin. The oldest parts were probably written around 1360, whereas the most recent stem from the 17th century. It is undoubtedly a manuscript from a Dominican convent (Klugseder 2014, 68–70). Several features show strong similarities with the much later manuscripts from Marenberg: the book is bound in light brown leather (like Ms. 4–6), probably dating from the 17th century, and the scroll stamps are remarkably similar to the Graz manuscripts. The first ten and the last twelve leaves are made of 17th century paper and were also written on at that time. A watermark (a sickle contained in a coat of arms) is visible, as well as in Ms. 4, but the watermark motif varies slightly. The inserted paper plates with cross-references are also comparable, although the typeface differs from that of the Graz manuscripts. Taken together, the Marenberg provenance of Cod. 1779 can thus far neither be rejected nor confirmed.

5. Four Marenberg Antiphoners from the Graz University Library

Three manuscripts in possession of the Graz University Library (Ms. 4, 5 and 6) are designed in the same style and probably written by the same hand(s). The external design of Ms. 31 is far less precise, contains other features, and was written by a different Dominican sister, probably at a different time. None of the four books has a title page, index, or commentary. Only in Ms. 5 is there a dedication to the prioress Catharina Susanna von Grotta at the supposed end of the book bearing the date 1704, but this is followed by about 30 written leaves. The scribe, who humbly thanked God for allowing her to complete this work, without the hope of any worldly reward and entirely devoted to the glory of God, simply signed her name as “Ordensschwester N”.

The Marenberg Chronicle describes two meticulously compiled antiphoners that were created by an unnamed nun between 1700 and 1704. The Chronicle also notes that the paper used in the manuscripts was purchased in Venice and that the cost of binding the books was 20 florins (NŠAM, *Marenbergischer Lustgarten*, 547). While the Chronicle reports the existence of two manuscripts, it's possible that there were actually more.

Illuminations are not present in any of the manuscripts, but the initials are decorated with pretty ornaments, always in red ink (in Ms. 31 also in blue). The intensity and complexity of the ornamentation varies and is especially elaborate in the chants for feasts that were of particular importance to the convent.

Source	Contents	No. of folios	Size in cm
A-Gu Ms. 4	<i>Antiphonarium ad Triduum sacrum</i> <i>Missae ad Triduum sacrum</i> <i>Benedictio cinerum, incomplete</i>	60	59 x 61
A-Gu Ms. 5	<i>Partes Antiphonarii de Sanctis</i> , 39 Feasts of Saints from April to the end of the liturgical year <i>Commune Sanctorum</i> Appendix, 12 Feasts of Saints, in random order	160	57 x 40
A-Gu Ms. 6	<i>Partes Antiphonarii de Tempore</i> , complete <i>Partes Antiphonarii de Sanctis</i> , 19 Feasts of Saints from the beginning of the liturgical year to the end of March <i>Commune Sanctorum</i> Feast of S. Agnes	143	58 x 41
A-Gu Ms. 31	5 <i>Officia</i> , in random order; 3 <i>de tempore</i> , 2 <i>de sanctis</i> ; 1st incomplete <i>Partes Antiphonarii de Tempore</i> , complete <i>Partes Antiphonarii de Sanctis</i> , 47 Feasts of Saints <i>Commune Sanctorum</i> Appendix, 9 Feasts of Saints, in random order	183	56 x 29

Table 2: *Contents of the Marenberger Antiphoners.*

Examining the contents of the four antiphoners more closely, one cannot fail to notice unfinished sections, repetitions, a jumbled order, and other signs of faulty binding of the leaves of the three books. Ms. 4 is the shortest and contains only the chants for the Holy Week masses and offices, whereas the office for Ash Wednesday is incomplete and placed at the end, certainly not in keeping with the chronology of the liturgical year. Numerous leaves remained blank.

Ms. 5 and Ms. 6 clearly belong together. Ms. 6 contains the chants for the entire *Temporale*, part of the *Sanctorale* and the *Commune Sanctorum*. Ms. 5 contains the chants for various feasts of the saints, though not complete, and for the *Commune Sanctorum*. The *Sanctorale* in Ms. 5 consists of chants for the feasts of saints between April and December, while Ms. 6 contains the feasts from the beginning of the liturgical year to the end of March. Ms. 5 is thus clearly a continuation of Ms. 6, although the *Commune Sanctorum* is included in both.

The antiphoner Ms. 31 is an independent manuscript containing the entire *Temporale*, *Sanctorale*, and *Commune Sanctorum*. It is hardly a cursory work, but compared to the other three antiphoners, it was compiled less scrupulously in terms of the regularity of the writing and especially the design of the ornaments. At the very end, chants for the feast of the Blessed Seven Founders of the Servite Order were inserted. Although the question arises as to why this feast should be celebrated by Dominican nuns, it is of greater significance that the founders of the Servite Order were not beatified until 1725, which indicates the manuscript's possible date of origin.

The Marenberg Chronicle describes the daily routine in the convent (NŠAM, *Marenbergischer Lustgarten*, 472–473). At 4:15 or 4:30 the first bell rang for Matins, followed half an hour later by the second bell. After Matins there was an *Officium defunctorum* and time for silent prayer. Morning mass was celebrated at

7:30, followed by an *officium* at 8:00 and a convent mass, after which the silence ended. With the exception of the break for communal meal at 11:00, the nuns did their manual labour during the day. Between 1:00 and 2:00 silence was ordered, after which the nuns continued working or spent some time in the garden. A bell summoned the nuns for Vespers, which were always sung, as early as 3:00 in the afternoon. Immediately after Vespers there was Compline and silent prayer in the nuns' choir. The nuns continued to work until evening, but spent the rest of the time thereafter in contemplation. After the evening meal at 5:45, which was usually accompanied by readings, there was night prayer and confession. The nuns prayed a special form of the rosary for the deceased as well as the Litany of Mary on Saturdays, and on Fridays they always sang a *Mater dolorosa*. At 9:00 the silence bell rang and candles had to be extinguished. Depending on the liturgical year and the day of the week, there were small variations in the daily schedule, but otherwise its regularity remained unchanged.

The emphasis on Vespers, which was always sung, is also reflected in the antiphoners. Other hourly prayers are much less consistently represented, and the repertoire of services is far from complete in the Marenberg manuscripts. Their number, as well as the completeness of the chants, varies according to the value of the feast. The Vespers are regularly contained in the manuscripts, but alongside them, surprisingly, are almost always the chants for Terce. Lauds are reserved for higher feasts. For Christmas, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost, a liturgy for the Matins is included, consisting of one and, in the case of Christmas, three Nocturns.

In most cases, the chants are incomplete. As a rule, the antiphons for the canticle (*Magnificat*, *Benedictus*, or *Nunc dimittis*) have been entered, but not the antiphons sung to the psalms. Typically, only an incipit of the antiphons is given. Only brief incipits of the canticles and the psalms are given, if these are indicated at all. The responsories, if included, usually lack the first part (a respond), and only a psalm verse appears in writing. All hymns and references to the readings are omitted, as are the chants for the days of the week (*feria*), whether or not they are prescribed in the liturgical calendar.

Some of these missing elements are dispensable, since they are intended to be repeated in the same form and can easily be sung from memory. However, the antiphons in particular, as part of the proper, vary from day to day, and it is less clear why only incipits are present. The contents of the manuscripts therefore give the impression of a rather peculiar mixture of a directory⁶ and an antiphoner.

In summary, the reconstruction of the liturgy in the Dominican convent of Marenberg at the beginning of the 18th century proves to be a difficult undertaking. Although there are some survey studies of Dominican liturgy (Bonniwell 1945;

⁶ Over the centuries many different types of Directory existed. In general, it is a guide for praying the Divine Office and the Holy Mass. What is meant here, however, is not only a calendar of feasts, but a listing of the incipits of each chant with a short text and the beginning of the music. As an example of a handwritten Office Directory from a convent of Dominican nuns, the manuscript of the Germanic National Museum in Nuremberg, Hs. 41458, can be mentioned, although it is considerably older than the Marenberg manuscripts.

Sölch 1950), the male and female monastic communities cannot be equated. Apart from local traditions, liturgical rules were constantly changing. However, based on the description of the daily schedule in the chronicle, it can be said that apparently not all eight canonical hours were celebrated in Marenberg. Surprisingly, next to Vespers, the Terce was most frequently included in the antiphoners, where it is clearly recognisable with the help of the characteristic incipit *Legem pone* (Ps. 119). This probably refers to the Divine Office at 8:00 in the Chronicle account, since the Terce was traditionally celebrated before the Conventual Mass.

The chronicler reports that a new breviary was printed around 1690 and that it contained numerous changes regarding the feasts. She is probably referring to the liturgical revisions made after the election of Antonin Cloche as head of the General Chapter. It is noteworthy that the Marenberg sisters, with the permission of the bishop, did not accept these changes and continued to pray the breviary according to their “old” order, whereupon Sister Dominica Theresia von Dietrichstein was commissioned to correct the Directory of the new breviary (NŠAM, *Marenbergischer Lustgarten*, 575). According to the 1783 catalogue, a handwritten *Directorium chori* existed in Marenberg. The same catalogue also indicates that the monastery had a breviary published in Rome in 1668, as well as the new Paris edition of 1688 (whose publication was arranged by Cloche); later, a Roman edition of 1723 was acquired. The changes in question could refer to the revisions of the *Calendarium* and thus to the feasts of the saints.

The selection of saints is certainly a curious aspect of the Marenberg antiphoners. It reflects the embedding of the manuscripts in the Dominican Order but at the same time a certain local tradition. It is not surprising that numerous feasts of Dominican saints were celebrated. Some of them are included twice in the antiphoners, others three times, but most remarkable are the feasts of Dominican saints and the blessed who were canonised only in the course of the 17th century. It is striking that the antiphoners contain only feasts of saints canonised by Pope Clement X in 1671 (Raymond, Rosa of Lima, Louis Bertrand, Gundislaus, Pius V); but they do not contain a single feast of Dominicans canonised in other years of the same century (Ambrose Sansedoni, Albertus Magnus, Margaret of Savoy, John of Bevania, Margaret of Castello, Joan of Portugal and others). At the same time, feasts were celebrated in Marenberg long before they were officially confirmed by the Holy See, such as the feast of Agnes of Montepulciano (canonised in 1727) or the feast of Catharina de’ Ricci (beatified in 1732, canonised in 1746).

The number of canonisations of Dominicans in the 17th and early 18th centuries was remarkably high (Bonniwell 1945, 342–354), and perhaps the instructions of the Bishop of Lavant, Joseph Oswald von Attems, for the Marenberg nuns are to be understood in this context. In October 1726 he issued a decree that the sisters should sing diligently and not add any new feasts: “Das starkhe gesang in Chor sole durch neüe Fest nit uermehret undt dadurch die Closterfrouen geschwähēt werden.” (NŠAM, Protokoli 1724–1727, 5 October 1726)

XVI

IN FESTO S. CATHARINÆ
SENENSIS VIRGINIS ORDI.
PRÆDICAT. AD VES. SVP. PS. A.

Immorta li. LAUDATE

Curavit agro

tos vitā mortuis restitu

it & al terius generis signa

multa fe cit.

Figure 3: The Beginning of the Divine Office for the Feast of St. Catherine of Siena (UBG, Ms. 5, fol. 9r).

6. Conclusion

The Marenberg antiphoners undoubtedly attest to the obvious and persistent presence of chant singing in the monastic liturgy of the hours well into the 18th century. Future studies must address the question of the chants themselves, for even a cursory comparison suggests that they have certain distinctive features, such as the Office for St. Catherine of Siena, where the melodies are different from those otherwise known. Since the chants are often only sketched and hinted at, and the manuscripts in particular show little sign of use, the question arises as to their use in daily practise. With these four manuscripts alone, it is certainly not possible to sing complete services. Nevertheless, given their enormous size and weight (the largest manuscript, Ms. 5, measures 59 x 41 cm), it is only conceivable that the manuscripts were placed on a pulpit in the nuns' choir for an extended period of the year and served partly as a directory and partly as an antiphoner for singing. However, there is no doubt that smaller and more convenient chant manuscripts or printed books were used. This does not preclude evaluating the manuscripts as products of a spiritual retreat. It is imaginable that a nun immersed herself for years in the completion of these manuscripts, considered copying a spiritual exercise, practised calligraphy, and created beautiful antiphoners that would represent the monastery and, above all, praise, honour, and glorify God.

Abbreviations

NŠAM – Nadškofijski arhiv Maribor, zbirka inkunabel in raritet.

ÖNB – Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Wien,
Sammlung von Handschriften und alten Drucken.

StLA – Steiermärkischer Landesarchiv, Graz.

UBG – Universitätsbibliothek Graz, Sondersammlungen (A-Gu).

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