From Many to One: Liturgical and Codicological Clues to Reconstructing a Medieval Missal

Prof. Emer. Richard Gyug (Fordham University)

The Compactiones fond of Montecassino contains fragments of medieval manuscripts formerly used as guard-leaves and binding material in the codices of Montecassino. Among the approximately two-thousand fragments in the fond, over two hundred indicate from their liturgical contents and their codicological features that they came from a single twelfth-century missal written in Beneventan script. This conclusion is complicated, however, by duplications in the feasts copied in the fragments and by the variety of hands evident in them, even if all are Beneventan. Nonetheless, there are liturgical reasons, and signs relating to the production of the original book, that account for these seeming inconsistencies. Indeed, such complications are expected, not exceptional, among medieval liturgical books, signs of their practical nature and continued use.

Supplementary reading:
• Richard Gyug, “Reconstructing a Beneventan Missal,” in Sodalitas: Miscellanea di Studi in Memoria di Don Faustino Avagliano, ed. Mariano Dell’Omo et al. (Montecassino, 2016).