

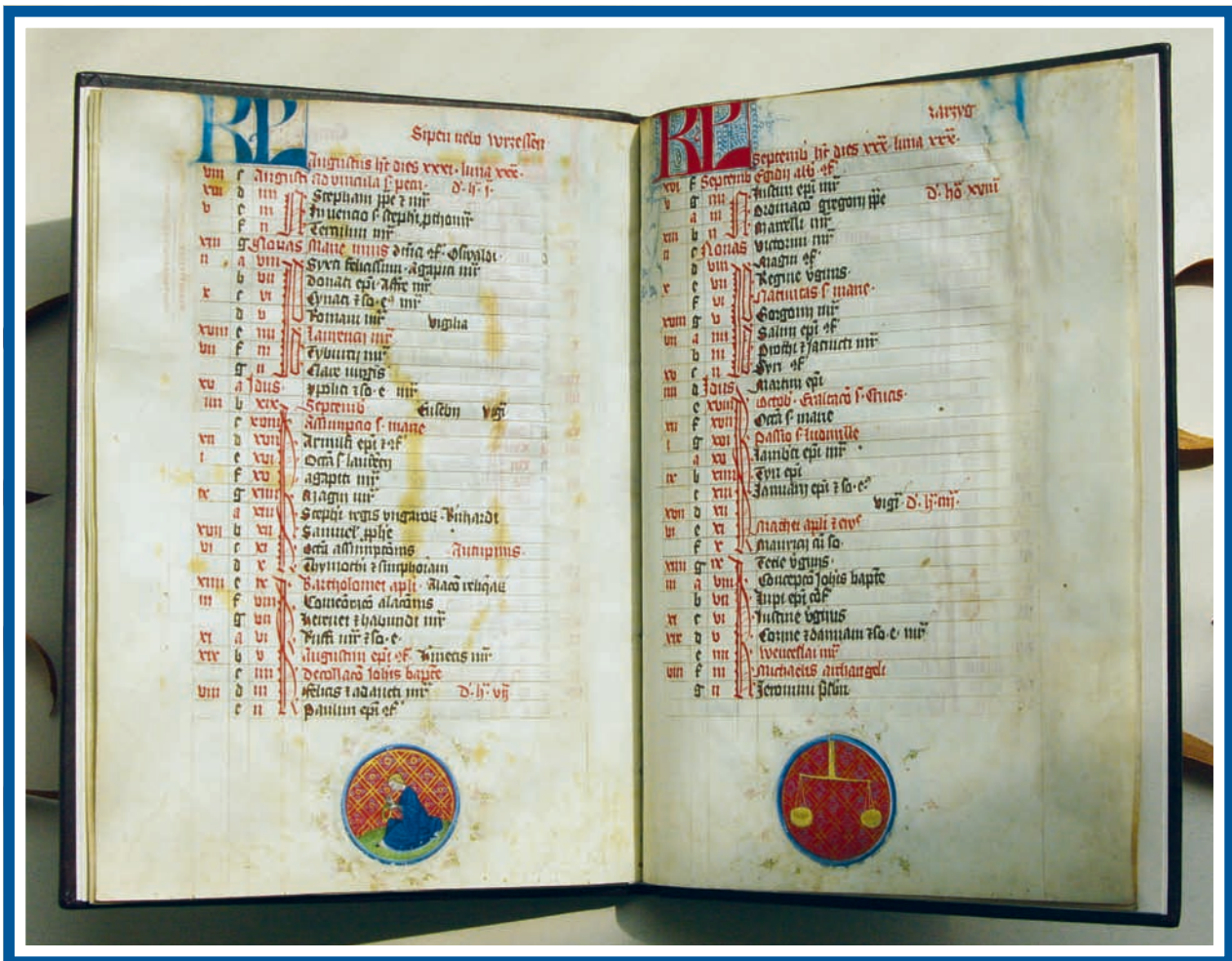
THE PRAGUE CALENDAR HAS BEEN RESTORED

– NSZL, COD. LAT. 555 –



The parchment manuscript from the 15. century, consisting of six leaves, contains a calendar with the celebrations of saints corresponding to different days. The feast days of more significant saints were written in red, thus the feast-days of Saint Wenceslaus also, as one of the most important Saint of the Czechs. Interestingly, we can find in it Saint Stephan, Hungarian King's feast-day on August 20, and Saint Elisabeth's on November 19, which was emphasized with red paint also. The list of the saints included in the calendar is usually characteristic to that region, where the calendar was made and used. Lacking other data, the names of the saints often helped determining the place of the manufacturing of the calendar.

In Medieval Ages, they used these types of calendar in liturgical exercises, as well as in private worshipping. The calendar helped in remembering the feast-days of the liturgical year. Most probably this calendar was once part of a prayer's book (perhaps breviary) or of some kind of liturgical codex. They painted the respective signs of the horoscopes beneath the months in the luxuriously executed, richly gilded manuscript. Perhaps the calendar was separated from its carrying codex, exactly because of its ambitious execution. The now independent booklet was rebound sometimes in the modern age, and they provided it with hard cover and parchment-binding. This binding, though, became heavily worn, the pages of the codex soiled. A complete



The restored Prague calendar

restoration became inevitable. Emőke Baranyai, co-worker of the NSZL, restored the codex, and equipped it with leather binding in the first months of 2014.

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Short account of the status of the codex and its restoration

Since the body of the book was several times cut around, the codex is truncated. Humidity reached its upper part previously, thus the pages got wavy; the paint blurred in some places. The parchment pages were extremely soiled and dusty.

The task was to clean the parchment pages, to iron them, to provide them with a leather binding and to make a shielding box in which the old binding can be kept as well. After the decomposition of the old binding and the disassembling of the parchment sheet, we

cleaned the pages on dry, with different kinds of erasers. Because of the solubility of the paint, the pressing of the parchment pages happened with indirect humidifying: I placed on the pages dry suction-papers, I put on the top of them lightly humid felts and I pressed them slowly. The new endpapers of the parchment booklet were made out of acid-free paper. After the assemblage of the sheet, followed the tacking with flax yarn, using the original traces of stitches, covered by parchment strips on both sides. Finally, I made a new binding from entire pieces of leather, which can be locked with two pairs of silk ribbons, to protect the parchment pages. I used wheat starch for gluing.

For the storage of the codex, we built a proportional wooden box. The external wrapping is linen and hand-painted paper, the inside is acid-free paper. The box is divided into two cases, thus the codex and the old binding both can be kept in it.

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