

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Laurier acquires 500-year old medieval manuscript

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WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University is adding a rare 500-year-old hymnal to its University Archives and Special Collections. The 15th-century manuscript, originally from northern Italy, will be unveiled at a reception on April 3, where members of Laurier’s Chapel Choir will bring some of the hymnal’s songs to life.

“This is our first medieval manuscript, and it provides great potential both for teaching and research at Laurier,” said Chris Nighman, professor of medieval history and coordinator of Laurier’s Medieval Studies Program. “Unlike printed books, manuscripts are unique, completely different from each other. To acquire a manuscript in this condition is a remarkable achievement.”

The manuscript will offer students in Laurier’s new fourth-year medieval studies seminar, *The History of the Book*, a rare opportunity to see first hand what a manuscript looks like and understand how it was put together and used.

Alma Santosuosso, a professor in Laurier’s Faculty of Music and a renowned expert in medieval music manuscripts, has begun to study the manuscript and has already identified several significant features.

“This acquisition highlights the growth of Laurier’s medieval studies program and the research of several faculty members who work with manuscripts while also strengthening the

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connections between the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Music and the university library,” said Nighman.

The manuscript was purchased from a vendor in Paris through library acquisition funds from the Medieval Studies program, the Faculty of Music and the Laurier library. It will be stored in the University Archives and Special Collections under appropriate environmental conditions.

The unveiling will take place on April 3 at 4 p.m. on the first floor of the Wilfrid Laurier University Library. Media are welcome to attend. For further information about the manuscript or the unveiling, please contact Dr. Chris Nighman at 519-884-0710 ext. 3134.