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Iconoclasm and Anti-Semitic Imagery in a Fifteenth-Century Venetian Choir Book

In the collection of the Cluny Museum in Paris, there is a now-excised historiated initial which depicts what some scholars have suggested is a 'scene of sacrilege' or a 'scene of iconoclasm.' The cutting was painted in the early fifteenth century by the so-called Master of the Murano Gradual for a set of choir books made for the Camaldolese monks of San Mattia di Murano, in the Venetian lagoon. This cutting shows a standing figure raising his lance against an altarpiece of the Crucifixion. Based on certain iconographic features, in the image, there is a strong possibility that it actually depicts the legend of the Beirut Miracle. This eight-century narrative tells of an icon of the crucified Christ that bled miraculously when struck by a group of Jews. This legend is connected to a liturgical Office known as the *Passio ymaginis*, celebrated on 9th November of the liturgical year. This religious Office was celebrated especially by monastic orders, including the Camaldolese and is depicted on the Berardenga Antependium, a thirteenth-century panel painting made for the abbey of San Salvatore near Castelnuovo Beradenga between Siena and Arezzo, which was administered by Camaldolese monks.