

**BERNARD DE PARENTIS, *Tractatus de officio missae* (Treatise on the Office of the Mass)
In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper
Southeastern France (Annecy), dated 1447**

i + 211 folios on paper (with watermark similar to Briquet no. 13247, "Roue": Berne, 1444-1448, Thun, 1445-1448, Chateauroux, 1448), contemporary foliation in Roman numerals, upper center rectos of ff. 15-211, ij-clxlvij, modern foliation stamped in faint black ink, upper outer rectos, 1-74, 76-211, complete (collation i-xvii¹² xviii⁷ [structure uncertain]), horizontal catchwords, lower center versos, ruled in hard point with full-length horizontal and vertical bounding lines, prickings visible in upper, outer, and lower margins (justification 153-154 x 99-100 mm.), written above the top line in a Gothic cursive hand on thirty to thirty-one long lines, guide letters for initials, guide notes for rubricator in outer margins, now largely cropped, red rubrics, capitals highlighted in red, red line-fillers, one-line red paraps, two- to three-line red initials in table of contents, three- to four-line red initials in main text, eight-line initial with some pen decoration (f. 14v), marginal corrections and annotations in roughly contemporary hands, occasional small stains or smudges, none obscuring text (except on ff. 196 and 206rv where text is smeared), worming throughout, but not obscuring text, otherwise in excellent condition. CONTEMPORARY BINDING of brown calf, blind-tooled with double frame of four fillets and blind-stamped on the upper board with fleur-de-lis and four-petaled flowers and on the lower board with fleur-de-lis and eagles, all within lozenges, all over wooden boards, rebacked with spine laid down, spine with three raised double bands, traces of two fore-edge clasps on upper board, some worming of the boards and wear to the spine and hinges, otherwise in excellent condition. Dimensions 212 x 147 mm.

The liturgical duties and anxieties of medieval priests find clear expression in this popular but unedited treatise on the Mass. Preserved in a handsome contemporary binding and signed and dated by the scribe, this is an excellent example of an owner-produced book of the late Middle Ages. A priest copied this text for his own use, with a table of contents and careful foliation enabling quick reference to different parts of the text. Customized verses, likely chosen by the priest, add to the book's interest.

PROVENANCE

1. This manuscript was completed in Annecy on 2 December 1447, as attested by the manuscript's sole copyist in a colophon on f. 211: "... per manum guillelmj benedicti + et finitus die sabbati que erat secunda mensis decembris Anno domini millesimo cccc^o xlvij^o quod speculum sibi pertinet etc. + de annessiaco presbiteri" (by the hand of William Benedict, priest of Annecy, and finished on the day of Sabbath, which was the second [day] of the month of December in the year of our lord 1447, the which *speculum* [i.e. the treatise] relates to himself, etc.). This William Benedict does not appear in Benedictines of Bouveret, *Colophons de manuscrits occidentaux des origines au XVI^e siècle* (1965-1982), though several verses he copied underneath his colophon (f. 211) were in wide enough use to appear elsewhere in those volumes.
2. A slightly later (fifteenth- or sixteenth-century) inscription on the verso of the final unfoliated leaf of the manuscript identifies a subsequent user of the book, another priest residing in Annecy: "Codex iste pertinet venerabili domino Johanni bornardi de annessiaco presbitero" (This book concerns [belongs to] the venerable master John Bornard, priest of Annecy).

TEXT

ff. 1-14, incipit, "Ad euidenciam maiorem eorum que secuntur pono hic tabulam titulorum questionum ... Est sic finitur tabula huius libri ad honorem dei et domini nostri ihesu christi Amen, Clxlvij";

Table of contents keyed to original foliation.

f. 14, incipit, "Viscera munda para qui pasci queris in ara ... Qui capit indigne diro cruciabit igne";

Fourteen verses on the Eucharist. Some of these appear elsewhere (for example, the first six lines are all found in a poem on the sacrament of the Eucharist printed in Blume and Dreves, 1898, p. 114), but their combination here appears to be unique.

ff. 14v-211, incipit, "QUoniam clamitat sapiens quod perscrutator maiestatis opprimetur a gloria ... non ambulat in tenebris sed habebit perpetuum lumen uite. Quod nobis concedat dei filius benedictus Amen," *Explicit tertia pars huius operis principalis et per consequens totum opus gratias agamus deo completo labore meo. Explicit speculum ecclesie scriptus per manum guillelmj benedicti + et finitus die sabbati que erat secunda mensis decembris Anno domini millesimo cccc° xlvij° quod speculum sibi pertinet etc. + de amnessiaco presbiteri. Qui scripsit scribat semper cum domino uiuat / Dextram scriptoris seruet deus omnibus horis / Istum scriptorem faciat deus meliorem / Detur pro pena scriptoris Aue maria. Deo gracias Amen. Idem guillelmus benedictus presbiter.*

The *Tractatio de officio missae* (Treatise on the Office of the Mass), also known as the *Lilium missae* (Lily of the Mass), was written in Albi, France, between 1340 and 1342 by Bernard de Parentis (fl. 1325-1343), a Dominican friar from Orthez, in Southwestern France, and a master of theology at the University of Toulouse. Bernard dedicated this text to Peytavin de Montesquieu, bishop of Albi (1339-1350).

A secular priest produced this complete copy of the *Treatise* in its entirety for his own use. The priest identified himself in a lengthy colophon at the end of the volume, incorporating multiple verses common to medieval colophons on the spiritual value of scribal labor. His apparent interest in verse also surfaces earlier in the volume where he copied a set of customized verses on the Eucharist.

Though very popular in the Middle Ages and beyond, Bernard's *Treatise* has never been edited critically. The text survives in over eighty manuscript copies; Kaeppli lists 81 manuscripts (1970, no. 643, pp. 230-232), all in European institutional repositories, and Kaeppli's list includes neither the present manuscript nor former Les Enluminures, TM 205, which contains a nearly complete copy of the *Treatise*. The *Treatise* was first printed in 1478 in Zaragoza (GW no. M29439), and at least four subsequent fifteenth-century editions attest to an ongoing late medieval interest in the text (GW nos. M29413, M29429-M29430, M29432). Even so, manuscript copies of the *Treatise* are relatively rare on the market (the Schoenberg Database lists only three other copies for sale in the last century), so the present manuscript, complete and carefully copied, affords a valuable opportunity to undertake a critical edition of the text.

In his *Treatise* Bernard laid out an organized overview of the liturgy of the Mass and of the rituals and practices it comprises. Divided into three parts, the *Treatise* begins by defining terms and discussing conditions for the ordination of priests, as well as the vestments worn and

instruments used in the Mass. The second and longest part builds on this discussion to address the materials of the Eucharist – that is, bread and wine – and the form that the liturgy takes. Finally, the *Treatise* addresses what should be done in the face of *pericula* (dangers) that might arise within the Mass, that is, contingencies such as the death or grave illness of the priest saying Mass or the dropping of the Eucharistic host or wine or even – on a more speculative level – the transformation of the host into material flesh. In this work Bernard drew from the writings of the eminent Dominican priest and scholastic theologian, Thomas Aquinas, and the *Treatise* was particularly widespread in Dominican circles. As this present manuscript attests, however, the text circulated as well among secular priests, to whom it would have furnished a very useful understanding of the Mass and their role within it.

Medieval owner-produced manuscripts like this one tend to preserve more accurate copies of texts (Rouse, 1996), reflecting their makers' investment in their correctness and utility. The priest who was this manuscript's sole copyist made careful corrections throughout, and also appears to have taken great care in producing a copy of the *Treatise* that he could easily use as a reference. Taking advantage of his foliation of the entire text, he always used folio numbers in his detailed table of contents to refer to sections within the text. A consistent and carefully maintained layout throughout the volume would also have made it accessible to this initial owner of the book and – as a later inscription in the manuscript suggests – to subsequent owners.

LITERATURE

Blume, Clemens and Guido M. Dreves, eds. *Pia Dictamina: Reimgebete und Leselieder des Mittelalters*, vol. 4, *Analecta Hymnica Medii Aevi* 31, Leipzig, 1898.

Douais, C. *Les frères prêcheurs en Gascogne au XIII^{me} et au XIV^{me} siècle: Chapitres, couvents et notices*, Paris, 1885.

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TM 853