

HUGH OF ST. CHER, *Speculum Ecclesiae* (The Church's Mirror); [ANONYMOUS], Text on Confession (incomplete)

In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper

Southern Netherlands or Northern France, c. 1380-1400

*12 folios on paper, rather thick with obvious laid lines (watermark, letter 'P' with two lines ending in a cross, very close to Briquet no. 8465: Troyes 1385; and no. 8470: Southern Holland, 1388), eighteenth-century(?) foliation in ink middle bottom margins, main text complete, second text beginning on verso of the last leaf is incomplete (collation, one quire of twelve leaves), no signatures or catchwords, frame ruled in lead with simple full-length vertical bounding lines (justification 160-155 x 120-110 mm.), written in a cursive gothic book hand in two columns of thirty-one lines, opening rubric copied in a larger gothic book hand, red paragraph marks, one-line red initials, larger red initial f. 1, spots, stains, and damage to initial f. 1, paper and binding are fragile, first leaf unattached and many very loose. Modern card binding with parchment spine, separated from text at front and back. Dimensions 217 x 143 mm.*

Hugh of St. Cher was an important thirteenth-century Dominican theologian. His commentary on the Mass is one of his less studied yet most influential works – a veritable bestseller of the later Middle Ages. This manuscript is of special interest as a physical object, since it is an early example of a text copied on paper in a cursive gothic book hand, a harbinger of the cheaper books of the fifteenth century that revolutionized the book trade and the availability of the written word.

## PROVENANCE

1. Evidence of the script and watermark support an origin in the Southern Netherlands or Northern France, c. 1380-1400. The watermark, a letter 'P' surmounted by a cross, is a close match in size and shape to examples published in Briquet from Troyes in 1385 and Southern Holland in 1388 (Briquet 8462, Brunswick, 1379, is also similar in size; Online Piccard, no. 106553, Arnhem 1428, and no. 106554, Nijmegen 1425, are similar in shape, but are smaller).

This evidence suggests that our manuscript may be an important witness to the earliest production of paper in northern Europe. The earliest European paper mills were in Italy; a mill at Fabriano dates from c.1276 (an even earlier mill produced paper at Jativa near Valencia in Spain, then still under Arab rule). By c. 1340, paper production had proliferated in northern Italian towns, and the process then spread north of the Alps. An early mill is recorded at Mainz, and there were mills at Troyes by 1348, and in Holland in the 1340s and 1350s. In the fifteenth century paper was a common material for many types of books, although it never replaced parchment entirely. The use of paper (less expensive than parchment) and cursive book hands, which allowed scribes to work more quickly, made it possible to produce more affordable manuscript books for an ever-growing literate public (Kwakkel, 2003).

2. An attentive early reader added verses in the upper and lower margins of f. 1, and in the lower margins of ff. 2 and 3; on 3v, he cites comparative passage in works by Hilary of Poitiers and Jerome.

3. Eighteenth-century "No 174" in the upper margin, f. 1; this same hand probably added the foliation in the lower margins.
4. Belonged to Harold Marshall of Harlesden: his early twentieth-century illustrated printed bookplate pasted inside the front cover, above a contemporary cutting from a catalogue with this as item "33."
5. Cataloguing notes, inside front cover, in pencil, on the watermark; owners's and dealers's notes, "33/884" and "A.2591"; typed label on the front cover, with "A.2591" in pencil, identifies this as Hugo de S. Caro, circa. 1<4?>50 (with the "4" expunged), also in pencil; and inside back cover, "516/61," "637," and "200."

## TEXT

ff. 1-12, *Incipit tractatus supra missam qui vocatur speculum ecclesie . . .*, incipit, "Induite vos armaturam dei ut possitis stare adversus insidias dyaboli. Hec armatura est vestis sacerdotalis . . . hominem in bonis operibus etc.," *Est finis istius libri. Nota bene.*

Hugh of St. Cher, *Tractatus super missam qui vocatur speculum ecclesie* (Treatise on the Mass that is called the Church's Mirror); Bloomfield, 1979, no. 1589, listing approximately 33 manuscripts; Kaeppli, 1970-1974, vol. 1, pp. 276-280, no. 1990, listing over 240 manuscripts; first printed in 1475-1476 (in Rome and Louvain), and many times thereafter in the fifteenth century; GW 13581-13592, 13594-13624; 47 editions listed in the Incunable Short Title Catalogue. Modern edition, Sölch, 1940, using five manuscripts; new edition (and translation), forthcoming by Anthony Lappin and Donald Prudlo, Rome, Arcane Press.

Sölch (1940) suggests the text was transmitted in two main versions; the text in this manuscript seems generally to agree with his second version, but study of selected passages reveals differences (cf. for example the verses underlined in red on f. 3, which are different than those printed by Sölch, p. 16).

f. 12v, incipit, "Confiteri volentes tam clerici quam layci debet esse . . . et super hiis et aliis//"

Unidentified text on confession that proceeds through the senses, using concrete examples, such as sinning through the sense of hearing by preferring to listen to fables rather than sermons or other divine services, or through touch, by touching a woman's breasts.

The main text here is that of the *Speculum Ecclesiae* or *Tractatus supra missam* by Hugh of Saint-Cher (c. 1200-1263). Hugh was born in Saint-Chef near Vienne. He studied canon law and theology at the university of Paris, and entered the Dominican Order in Paris in 1225. He was the provincial prior for France, c. 1227-1230, read the Sentences and became a master of theology at the University of Paris c. 1230, and became the conventual prior of St. Jacques, the Dominican convent in Paris, c. 1233. He was elevated to the Cardinalate in 1244, and served the papacy for the remainder of his life. His output as a scholar was prodigious, including commentaries on the *Historia scholastica* and the *Sentences*. His name is associated with three of the most important thirteenth-century works on the Bible, almost certainly prepared by teams of friars working under his supervision while he was prior of St. Jacques, the biblical concordance,

commentaries on the whole Bible, and a biblical correctorium (listing variant textual readings). His work changed the nature of biblical exegesis for the remainder of the Middle Ages.

The *Speculum ecclesie*, or *Treatise on the Mass*, was one of the bestsellers of the later Middle Ages, surviving in over 240 manuscripts (many from the fifteenth century), and numerous printed editions. It begins with a discussion of the liturgical vestments worn by the priest, and then proceeds through the Mass, section by section. Although Hugh includes practical information on how the Mass is said (for example, noting that the Gloria is not said during Advent), he is most concerned to explain to his audience of priests what the words and actions mean, frequently linking them to biblical passages.

This work belongs to a long tradition of liturgical commentaries by medieval theologians who were interested in exploring the true meaning of the words and actions of the liturgy. Alcuin (d. 804), Remigius of Auxerre (d. 908), Pope Innocent III (d. 1216), William Durandus (d. 1296), and Bernard de Parentis (d. 1343) (TM 853, available on this site, is a copy of his commentary on the Mass), to name a few among many, all wrote commentaries of this sort. Liturgical commentaries shed essential light on how people experienced the liturgy; there are liturgical practices that are known today only from their descriptions in liturgical commentaries. Reading a treatise such as Hugh's brings the liturgy to life. Important as a source for scholars of the liturgy, it also holds interest for historians investigating Dominican education and exegesis.

## LITERATURE

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#### ONLINE RESOURCES

Watermarks, Briquet Online:

[http://www.ksbm.oeaw.ac.at/\\_scripts/php/BR.php](http://www.ksbm.oeaw.ac.at/_scripts/php/BR.php)

Watermarks, Piccard Online

<http://www.piccard-online.de/ergebnis1.php>

Incunable Short Title Catalogue, British Library

<http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/istc/>

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