

DAVID OF AUGSBURG, *Formula novitiorum* (Book 1 of *De exterioris et interioris hominis compositione*); GIROLAMO SAVONAROLA, *Meditatio in psalmum Miserere mei deus*
In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Flanders, c. 1490-1510 and c. 1520-1530

vi (medieval parchment) + 141 + viii (medieval parchment) folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, lower inner recto, 1-48 and 1-94, with 94 marking the first surviving leaf in the final quire of blank flyleaves (collation I. ff. 1-48v, i-viii⁶; II. ff. 1-93v, ix⁸ x⁸ [-6; cancelled with no loss of text, stub remains between ff. 13 and 14] xi-xviii⁸ xix⁸ [-7; cancelled with no loss of text, stub remains between ff. 85 and 86] xx⁸ [-7; cancelled with no loss of text, stub remains between ff. 92 and 93]), two sets of quire and leaf signatures: partially visible in quire ii (quire signatures begin with 'a' with leaf signatures in Arabic numerals), and in quires ix-xi, xiii-xv, xvii-xx, where the quire signatures begin again with 'a' with leaf signatures in Roman numerals, layout varies, I. ff. 1-48v, ruled in brown ink with two full-length vertical bounding lines and lower horizontal bounding line, prickings visible in the outer and lower margins (justification 72 x 44 mm.), written in dark brown ink in a compact and elegant bâtarde script in sixteen long lines, red rubrics, red paraph, two-line plain initials in red or blue, one four-line blue initial on a pink ground, all adorned in gold pen decoration with a red pen-decorated border extending vertically above and below (f. 1), slight staining (ff. 19v-20) and rubbing; II. ff. 1-93v, ruled in pale red ink with two full-length vertical bounding lines and lower horizontal bounding line (justification 67-69 x 42-43 mm.), written in black ink in a compact bâtarde script with decorative hairlines in fifteen long lines, first rubric written in red in the scribe's bâtarde script (f. 1), text of the Psalm written in red in a large widely spaced humanist script, capitals highlighted in red, one one-line red paraph, one- to two-line pale blue paraps, one three-line white initial superimposed with a suspended coat of arms, all on a two-tone pink ground outlined in black and gold (f. 1). CONTEMPORARY BINDING of brown morocco blind-tooled with a double-fillet rectangular frame, with flowers gilt-stamped at its four corners, and gilt-stamped with a large double-fillet lozenge interlaced on the sides with a double-fillet rectangular frame enclosed within a single rectangular frame, with banners and rosettes stamped within the outer frame and foliate and floral designs stamped between lozenge and inner frame and double-headed eagle within the lozenge surmounting, on the upper board, "D / IACOBVS / DE ME, / RA" and, on the lower board, "ABBAS / SANCTI / BERNA, / RDI," over pasteboards, spine with four raised bands and gilt-stamped with rosettes, edges gilt and gauffered, some splitting in the leather where the spine connects to the boards, two clusters of three holes along the fore-edges of the upper and lower boards where fore-edge clasps have been lost.
Dimensions 108 x 69 mm.

A meditation on the Penitential Psalms, recording the last thoughts of Savonarola, the great Florentine martyr, before he was burned at the stake, follows an important thirteenth-century manual of religious education. Both texts are quite rare and exist in few manuscript copies. They were bound together in the sixteenth century by the Cistercian abbot whose name is recorded in gilt on the front cover, perhaps reflecting his own spiritual journey. This beautiful little manuscript once belonged to bibliophiles Justin MacCarthy-Reagh, Charles Chardin, and Sir Thomas Phillipps.

PROVENANCE

1. This diminutive volume contains two texts each copied in a distinct booklet. The evidence of script and decoration suggest that both were copied in Flanders, in present-day Belgium, but differences in script, ruling, and decoration suggest that these booklets were not necessarily copied at the same time for inclusion in the same volume. Evidence

of the script and decoration suggest that first booklet, the *Formula novitiorum* of David of Augsburg, was copied in the late fifteenth or very early sixteenth century, c. 1490-1510. The date of the second text, Girolamo Savonarola's meditation on the Psalm *Miserere mei deus*, composed in 1498 in Florence, and its decoration support a dating of the second booklet firmly within the first half of the sixteenth century, probably c. 1520-1530.

2. Bound for Jacques van der Meeren (d. 1559), abbot of the Cistercian abbey of Saint Bernard-sur-l'Escaut, in Hemiksem, near Antwerp; his name, "JACOBVS / DE ME, / RA," is stamped in gold on the upper board of the binding and his title, "ABBAS / SANCTI / BERNA, / RDI," was gilt-stamped on the lower board. Jacques van der Meeren became abbot in 1536, fixing the date of this book's assembly and binding between 1536 and 1559.

The question of how these two booklets came to be bound together for the use of this Cistercian abbot is an interesting one. It seems possibly that the first text had been in his hands for some time before it was bound alongside the second. This text contains the *punctus flexus* (see I. f. 1), a special punctuation mark used widely in Cistercian manuscripts. Given the nature of the text as a manual for novices, Jacques van der Meeren might have owned this copy of the *Formula* during the period of his own novitiate or had it copied from an exemplar in the abbey's library.

Jacques van der Meeren may have had the second booklet copied to be bound alongside the first – certainly, the two booklet's dimensions and appearance are complementary – but one notable detail in the second booklet suggests he may have acquired it from someone else. The arms depicted in the opening initial of the Savonarola text (II. f. 1; per fess, paly of seven argent and gules, and azure) correspond to arms connected with St. George ten Distelle (Sint-Joris-ten-Distel), in western Flanders (see no. 352 in Bergmans, 1919, f. 55v, where the arms are also connected to the name Haeyn. Further study might yield more information regarding the place or family associated with these arms and their connection, if any, to Jacques van der Meeren.

3. Belonged to Justin MacCarthy-Reagh (1744-1811), Count MacCarthy in the French nobility, who was a lifelong book collector. Though born in Ireland, he became a French subject and settled in Toulouse, where he amassed an impressive book collection. The present manuscript was included in the 1815 catalogue of his collection published after his death; no. 822 in *Catalogue des livres rares et précieux de la bibliothèque de feu M. le comte de MacCarthy Reagh*, Paris, 1815 (vol. 1, p. 132 in this catalogue).
4. Belonged to Charles Chardin (1742-1826), French bookseller and bibliophile. The English bibliographer and bibliophile Thomas Frognall Dibdin (1776-1847) wrote of him in the second volume of his *Bibliographical, Antiquarian and Picturesque Tour of France and Germany* (London, 1829) that "M. Chardin is the last surviving remains of the OLD SCHOOL of booksellers in Paris" whose "taste consists principally in a love of ornamented MSS. and printed books UPON VELLUM" (pp. 400-401). Chardin sold the book (along with more than 120 others; for a full list see Phillipps's *Catalogus librorum*, 1837, pp. 9-10, 32*) to Sir Thomas Phillipps in his sale on 9 February 1824; lot 263 in

Catalogue des livres rares et précieux, de manuscrits, de livres imprimés sur vélin, etc. de la bibliothèque de M. Chardin, Paris, 1823 (p. 26 in this catalogue).

5. Belonged to Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872); his lion rampant inkstamp surmounting "Sir T. P / Middle Hill" and his number "779" appears on the recto of the first front flyleaf and his paper label "779" appears on the spine. Phillipps was an English antiquary and book collector renowned for having amassed the largest nineteenth-century collection of manuscripts. Fittingly self-described as a "vello-maniac," he collected over 100,000 manuscripts and in doing so nearly bankrupted himself and his family. The present manuscript was sold in H. P. Kraus's catalogue of Phillipps's manuscripts in 1979, no. 91 in *Bibliotheca Phillipica: Manuscripts on Vellum and Paper from the 9th to the 18th Centuries from the Celebrated Collection Formed by Sir Thomas Phillipps: The Final Selection*, New York, 1979.
6. Additional owners's and bookseller's notes: "963," "C/IV/20," and "822" written in pencil on the front pastedown, with "822" crossed out; "2522" written in black ink on the recto of the first flyleaf; and pencil inscription on the verso of the final flyleaf (mis)identifying the name and author of the first of the manuscript's contents.

TEXT

I. ff. 1-48v: ff. 1-43v, *Incipit speculum monachorum*, incipit, "PRimo considerare debes quare veneris ad quid veneris et propter quid veneris ... Et quicumque hanc regulam secutus fuerit pax ihesu christi viuet in eo. AMEN"; [ff. 44-48v, blank but ruled].

Though identified in this manuscript as the *Speculum monachorum*, this text is better known as the *Formula novitiorum*, the first book of the *De exterioris et interioris hominis compositione*, written around 1240 by the Franciscan David of Augsburg. The only modern edition of the work is the Quaracchi edition of 1899 (see pp. 3-36 for the corresponding text). It has also been printed in the *Patrologia latina* vol. 184, col. 1189-1198, where the text shows considerable variation from this one and has been attributed tentatively to Bernard of Clairvaux. A brief collation of this manuscript's text with that of the Quaracchi edition reveals some notable differences in textual subdivision – the Quaracchi text is divided into twenty-six chapters, while that in the present manuscript has been divided into forty – and variable wording.

Widely read in the late Middle Ages, *De exterioris et interioris* circulated across Europe in about four hundred manuscripts (Pezzini, 2008, p. 95); the Quaracchi edition lists 370, pp. XX-XXXIV. It was printed in 1495 with an attribution to Bonaventure (GW 4649). This work was also widely translated into various European vernaculars in the late Middle Ages and beyond. The *Formula novitiorum* circulated on its own as well, both in late medieval manuscripts (Heijden and Roest, 2012 in Online Resources) and in print (GW 8162).

A Franciscan theologian, preacher, and writer, David of Augsburg was born in Augsburg at the beginning of the thirteenth century and, having joined the Franciscan Order, he appears to have studied at the *studium* of Magdeburg. During the 1240s, he served as Master of Novices at the Franciscan house in Regensburg, and during this time he wrote his best known work, three manuals of instruction collectively known as *De exterioris et interioris hominis compositione*. He also traveled, first as a preacher and confessor and later as a papal inspector and inquisitor against the

Waldensians. He died at Augsburg in 1272. A prolific writer in Latin and German, he disseminated his teachings in a number of treatises still surviving. He was also famous during the late Middle Ages for his sermons, which do not survive.

David's best-known and most influential works were the writings making up *De exterioris et interioris*, which was widely translated and adapted as a manual for religious instruction, notably by female communities associated with the Franciscan Order and the *devotia moderna* movement. Actually comprising three treatises, *De exterioris et interioris* offers in its first part (included in the present manuscript) rules for the external conduct and discipline of novices, while its second part cultivates correspondingly correct internal conduct in respect to the faculties of reason, memory, and will, and the third part directs a more mature audience in a seven-step path of spiritual ascent. Writing to his disciple and companion, Berthold of Regensburg, David indicates that the work originated in his allocutions to novices and friars, collected both for them and for his own use. He further identifies the practical utility of the text's subdivision into short chapters, which offered him and other readers a ready means of finding what they sought within its contents. It is interesting to note in this context that this present manuscript includes a version of the text with numerous subdivisions (many more than that of the Quaracchi edition) with rubrics identifying the content of its many chapters.

II. ff. 1-93v:

ff. 1-92v, *Meditatio in psalmum Miserere mei deus fratris Hieronimi sauanarole de ferraria ordinis predicatorum*, incipit, "INfelix ego omnium auxilio destitutus qui celum terramque offendi ... ad gloriam illam et beatitudinem quam preparasti ac promisisti vere diligentibus te. AMen"; [f. 93r-v, blank but ruled].

Girolamo Savonarola composed this meditation on *Miserere mei deus*, Psalm 51 (Psalm 50, by Septuagint numbering), also known by its opening words as *Infelix ego*, in 1498 while in prison awaiting his execution. There are two modern editions. The most recent edition by Ferrara (1976) draws on four early manuscripts and three early editions of the meditation with the aim of reconstructing an authorial text. An earlier edition (see Perowne, 1900) is based on the text of Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 237 (dated to around 1500) and published with an English translation. Donnelly (1994) offers a more recent English translation alongside an edition of the Latin text based on Ferrara (1976).

Such was the immediate popularity of the work that it was printed within the year by Laurentius de Rubeis in Savonarola's home city of Ferrara (GW M40523), as well as in Reutlingen (GW M40513; see Online Resources) and Nuremberg (GW M40508). Within approximately three years of its composition it had been printed in over fifteen editions (GW M40501-7, M40510-11, M40515-16, M40521, M40524-26) across Europe and had been printed in German, Italian, and Spanish translations as well (GW M40527-28, M40530, M40532-34, M40536, M40538, M40540-43). During the sixteenth century, it was translated into most European languages.

It nonetheless survives in relatively few known manuscripts; Ferrara lists seven copies, four in Italian repositories, used for his edition, and he three additional copies, one of which is the Corpus Christi manuscript (see Ferrara, 1976, pp. 342-343, 370-71). In addition to these, we have located two copies of the Latin text in European repositories: Madrid, Biblioteca de la Fundación Lázaro, MS 125 (early sixteenth century) and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS lat.

607 (dated to the fifteenth century). There are at least two manuscripts in North America containing early vernacular translations of the text: a mid-sixteenth-century manuscript copy of a French translation (Wellesley, Wellesley College Library, Plimpton MS 768) and an almost contemporary copy of an Italian translation (Cambridge, Houghton Library, MS Ital. 102). Copies of this text are rare on the market; according to the Schoenberg Database, only two other Latin copies were sold in the last century.

Given the limited manuscript circulation of this text and the probability that it was copied within decades of its composition, it is possible that this text was copied from an early printed edition of Savonarola's meditation. The beginning of the sixteenth century saw the printing of at least three editions of the meditation in present-day Belgium, one in Antwerp (GW M40502, printed after 1500) and two in Leuven (GW M40501 and M40505, both printed by Thierry Martens around 1501, one in octavo and one in quarto). It would be worthwhile to examine this manuscript alongside one or more of these early editions.

Famous for his ardent zeal for Christian renewal and for the apocalyptic sermons and prophecies with which he urged reform, Girolamo Savonarola was a Dominican friar and preacher active in late fifteenth-century Florence. He was born in Ferrara in 1452 and was inspired by a sermon he heard in 1474 in Faenza to join the Dominican Order. He was appointed lector at the Convent of San Marco, in Florence, in 1481 or 1482. Though Savonarola's initial preaching efforts in Florence met with little success, after traveling and preaching in northern Italy for several years he returned to Florence in 1489. He rapidly became an influential and popular voice (and personality) in the city, where he denounced corruption in the Church and prophesied its impending renewal. For a time, Florentines enthusiastically embraced Savonarola's determination to rid the city of vice: Savonarola famously presided over a so-called bonfire of the vanities in 1497, in which his supporters publicly burned 'vanities' including cosmetics, fine clothes, playing cards, and secular books and works of art. However, Savonarola's increasingly zealous attacks on the Church aroused the ire of Pope Alexander VI (*sedit* 1492-1503), who first forbade him from preaching in 1495 and, when Savonarola preached with even more vitriol, finally excommunicated him in 1497. In 1498, when an ordeal by fire, proposed by Savonarola's supporters to vindicate his cause, failed to take place, public opinion turned violently against Savonarola, and a mob attacked San Marco, forcing him to surrender himself to city authorities. After a brief imprisonment, Savonarola was executed on 23 May 1498 as a heretic. A prolific writer, Savonarola composed sermons, treatises, and poems, as well as the *Compendium revelationum* (1495), a immediately popular account of his revelations. Ultimately, however, his prison meditations, on *Miserere mei deus* (Psalm 51 [50]) and *In te domine speravi* (Psalm 31 [30]), endured as his most popular works in the sixteenth century and beyond.

Savonarola composed his meditation on *Miserere mei deus* while in prison awaiting execution; it was completed on 8 May, just weeks before his death, and smuggled out of prison to be published. By the permission of the pope, Savonarola had been tortured while in prison to compel a confession of the falsity of his beliefs and prophecies, a confession he retracted and then was forced to make again. His meditation on this Psalm, one of the seven Penitential Psalms, adopts an inwardly-directed focus, a devout and highly personal response to the trials he faced. His opening prologue expresses this crisis in evocative language: "I am unhappy and stripped of all help, for I have sinned against heaven and earth! Where shall I go? Where shall I turn? To whom shall I flee? Who will take pity on me?" (Donnelly, tr., 1994, p. 31). Savonarola goes on to offer

meditations on each of the Psalm's nineteen verses, acknowledging his sinfulness and the bleakness of the human condition without the intervention of God. His meditation concludes on a more hopeful note, having acknowledged God's acts of love for humanity, with a prayer for God's pity.

This text offers a curious counterpart to the *Formula novitiorum*, with which it has been bound since the sixteenth century, and we might wonder why the manuscript's early owner, Jacques van der Meeren, chose to have these two texts bound together. Both texts were popular at the time and they share mendicant origins – the first was written by a Franciscan, while the second was written by a Dominican – but their tone and subject matter are radically different. While the didactic *Formula* addresses matters of external behavior, offering guidelines for behavior that might strengthen virtue and enable the avoidance of vice, Savonarola's prison meditation is intensely inward in its focus and it reflects upon the condition of one who has sinned. It is tempting to suppose that van der Meeren might have owned the *Formula* for several decades before he had it bound with the Savonarola meditation in its present configuration (see above, in Provenance) and that we see in this volume a hint of his own spiritual trajectory.

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