

Sermons by CAESARIUS OF ARLES, EUSEBIUS GALLICANUS, EUCHERIUS OF LYON and FAUSTUS OF RIEZ; AUGUSTINE, *Regula*; HUGH OF ST. VICTOR, *Expositio in regulam beati Augustini* (Commentary on the Rule of the Blessed Augustine); POPE BENEDICT XII, *Constitutio sive extravagans: De apostatis et vagabundis*; POPE URBAN V, *Constitutio de novicis recipiendis*  
In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment  
France, likely Avignon, 1369-c. 1400

213 folios on parchment, fifteenth-century foliation in Roman numerals and modern pencil foliation, incomplete (collation [original first quire missing] i<sup>s</sup> [-1 through 5, first five folios missing with text loss] ii<sup>s</sup> iii<sup>s</sup> [-8, final folio cancelled with no text loss], iv-xxii<sup>s</sup> xxiii<sup>7</sup> [structure uncertain, no text loss] xxiv<sup>12</sup> xxv-xxvii<sup>s</sup>), CATCHWORDS, most IN BANDEROLES IN TINY MINIATURES (lacking in quires ii, iii, xxiv, and xxviii), frame ruling in very faint graphite with bounding lines extending to edges (justification c. 85-95 mm. x 65 mm.), text written in 17-21 long lines on ff. 1-184 and 16-19 long lines on ff. 184v-213v by several contemporary scribes in a compact script, except ff. 184v-213v in a larger and freer hand, all in a skilled French cursive tending towards lettre bâtarde featuring documentary-style flourishing in bottom, outer, and occasionally upper margins, most incipits in an upright and rigid Gothic textualis, majuscules and flourishes washed in yellow throughout, blue paraphs, red rubrics, numerous two- to eight-line initials in alternating red and blue with contrasting pen decoration, six-line parted red and blue initial with pen decoration, MANY SMALL MARGINAL DRAWINGS (described below), first and last folio soiled but fully legible, water damage on ff. 15v-16 resulting in blurring of  $\pm 30\%$  of text along inner margin, minute wormhole in first line of last five folios, minor buckling in first three quires due to tight binding, minor soiling of outer and bottom margins throughout caused by use, trimmed with occasional loss of some pen-flourishing, overall in very good condition. Eighteenth-century binding of smooth tawed leather over cardboard with three sewing supports, green and white endbands, label in brown ink at head of spine reading "Semon | es Sancti | Ca'sarij," imprints and holes remaining on front and back cover from two ties, traces of which are visible through paper pastedowns, paper bookplate on inner pastedown of the Bibliothèque du Plessis-Villoutreys including escutcheon with crown above and motto "Dis peu Fais mieux" below, some concave warping of boards and discoloration/staining of cover and pastedowns, but binding is intact and in sturdy condition. Dimensions 128 mm. x 90 mm.

Created during the pinnacle of Avignon's historical importance, this small miscellany of texts of interest in this prominent papal center also includes delightful, whimsical drawings in its margins. These marginal ink drawings, all carefully colored, include decorated pointing hands (*maniculae*) with elaborate sleeves, angels, lions, a man in a boat, and more. The texts gathered here – sermons and monastic rules and their commentaries – speak to the concerns of the original owner.

## PROVENANCE

1. Written by several hands at the end of the fourteenth century or beginning of the fifteenth century in southern France, very likely in Avignon, as suggested by the style of the initials, and to a lesser extent the script, which features some elements borrowed from the Papal chancery, then in Avignon. While its initials are one of two styles characteristic of Avignon at this time, this script was less frequently found in manuscripts, which were more commonly copied in a Gothic bookhand. Datable between 1369 (it includes a papal bull by Urban V (r. 1362-70) issued on April 4, 1369) and c. 1400.

Given the inclusion of the Rule of St. Augustine and Hugh of St. Victor's commentary on the Rule, it seems likely this was made for one of the many groups of canons or monks who followed this Rule, including Augustinian Hermits (Austin Friars), Dominicans, Praemonstratensians, Trinitarians, Regular Canons, and others.

2. Evidence links this manuscript not only to Avignon, but more specifically, to the Celestine priory established there by Clement VII in 1392 and built in 1396-1402. The first sixteen sermons (ff. 1-80) in our manuscript are also found in Avignon, BM, MS 612, a fifteenth-century paper manuscript containing only these sermons, which includes notes by the scribe, brother Guillelmus Roberti, recording that one part of his book was completed in Avignon, and the other in Gentilly, a Celestine priory in nearby Sorgues (on these priories, see Comte, 1996). He names himself again on the final folio, stating that the manuscript was completed in 1485 (Labande, 1894, pp. 345-46). Given the close relationship between these two manuscripts, which contain the same sermons, arranged identically, it seems probable that Guillelmus Roberti used our manuscript as his exemplar; alternatively, the two manuscripts may have been copied from a shared exemplar. In either case, it is likely that our manuscript was also made in Avignon. The Celestines lived according to the Rule of St. Benedict; our manuscript therefore probably did not originate with the Celestines but may have entered their library before 1485.
3. A bookplate of the *Bibliothèque du Plessis-Villoutreys* on the front pastedown indicates ownership by the Marquis de Villoutreys, probably in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, although the manuscript could have been obtained by the family at an earlier date. The Villoutreys occupied the castle of Bas-Plessis in Chaudron-en-Mauges (Maine-et-Loire) from 1666. Formerly a fiefdom of Montrevault, it was inherited by the Villoutreys through marriage into the Chenu family, who had occupied the land since the fifteenth century. Although mostly destroyed by fire in 1794 during the French Revolution, the castle's two medieval towers remain. Its central neoclassical section was built by the Villoutreys in 1845, and a wing added in 1875 to house the Marquis's library.

When restoration began in 1982, the castle's library was transferred to the Université Catholique de l'Ouest (Port 1989, pp. 212-13), then to the Bibliothèque des Archives Départementales du Maine-et-Loire. Our manuscript left the Villoutreys library for an unknown private collection at some time prior to this transfer.

4. Private European Collection.

## TEXT

ff. 1-17v, incipit, "//putamus nos precibus nostris mundi ipsi succurrere ... [f. 4v] *Sermo tercius*, incipit, "Ad locum hunc carissimi non ad quietem ..."; [f. 9] *Quartus sermo*, incipit, "Scimus quidem spirituali militiae ..."; [f. 15v] *Sermo quintus*, incipit, "Ad hoc in istum convenimus locum ... qui cum eterno patre et spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum. Amen";

Caesarius of Arles, "Homilia VI- Homilia IX" *Patrologia Latina* vol. 67, cols 1057B-1067C; lacking five folios, and now beginning mid-way through what would be labeled *Sermo secundus*; Avignon, BM, MS 612 (discussed above) contains the original first sermon, also by Caesarius, that is lacking here (Labande, 1894, p. 345). Furthermore, the manuscript's medieval foliation,

beginning at VI, was added after the loss of its original first quire (which, if MS 612 is indeed copied from the present manuscript, occurred after 1485), but before the five folios of the present first quire were lost.

ff. 17v-18, Partial table of contents in a minute Gothic script, corresponding to the Roman numeral foliation and with short descriptions of chapters and texts in this volume from f. 120v to f. 213v; [f. 18v blank];

ff. 19-56, *Sextus sermo*, incipit, "Videte vocacionem vestram fratres carissimimi ..."; [f. 22v] *Septimus sermo*, incipit, "Sanctus ac venerabilis pater vester ..."; [f. 30] *Octavus sermo*, incipit, "Quod supplicante et quodam modo cum caritate ..."; [f. 35] *Nonus sermo*, incipit, "Minor fratres dilectissimi ..."; [f. 37v] *Decimus sermo*, incipit, "Sanctus ac venerabilis pater vester ..."; [f. 41v] *Undecimus sermo*, "Licet multis rebus fratres carissimi ... [f. 47] Timendum est enim valde quod scriptum est ..."; [f. 51] *Duodecimus sermo*, incipit, "Diligenter atenditis [sic] dilectissimi ac venerabilis filii ... vel peccatorum indulgentia concedatur. Praestante etc.";

Caesarius of Arles, "Homilia X," *PL*, vol. 67, cols 1067C-1069C; Caesarius of Arles, "Sermo 233," *CC*, vol. 104, pp. 925-31; "Sermo 235," *CC*, 104, pp. 936-39; "Sermo 236," *CC*, 104, pp. 940-44; "Sermo 234," *CC*, 104, pp. 932-35; "Sermo 72/76," *CC*, 103, pp. 303-306/319-23; "Sermo 237," *CC*, 104, pp. 944-49. Most of these sermons by Caesarius of Arles are presented alongside one another in the cited edition, although in a slightly different order. Sermons 72 and 76 are combined but are both complete: Sermon 72 finishes at the end of line 2 on f. 47, followed by Sermon 76 (with some variation of the opening lines) on line 3 without a rubric and ends on the last line of f. 50v.

ff. 56v-65v, *Tertiusdecimus sermo*, incipit, "Instruit nos sermo divinus ... Cui est honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum amen";

Eucherius of Lyon, "Homilia III," *PL*, vol. 50, cols 836C-841B.

ff. 65v-69v, *Quartus decimus sermo*, incipit, "Fidelium exortatores animarum ... Eodem praestante domino nostro iesu christo cui cum patre et spiritu sancto equalis gloria et honor est in saecula saeculorum. Amen";

Eusebius Gallicanus, "Sermo castigationis," *CC*, vol. 101A, pp. 697-702.

ff. 69v-78, *Quintus decimus sermo*, incipit, "Quod vere vobis caritatis bonum ..."; [f. 74] *Sextus decimus sermo*, incipit, "Admonet nos per prophetam ... Cui est honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum. amen";

Caesarius of Arles, "Sermo 23," *CC*, vol. 104, pp. 103-107; "Sermo 135," *CC*, vol. 104, pp. 555-60.

ff. 78-80, *Decimus septimus sermo*, incipit, "Ecce quam bonum et quam jocudum habitare ... vivat et regnat deus per omnia saecula saeculorum. Amen"; [f. 80v blank];

Barrali, 1613, Part 1, pp. 315-16. Attributed to Caesarius of Arles in a collection edited by Barrali, this sermon is instead probably by Faustus of Riez (see CC, vol. 104, p. 984). It also appears as the final of the same seventeen sermons in Avignon, BM, MS 612 (Labande, 1894, p. 346), where it is likewise attributed to Caesarius.

ff. 81-92v, *Incipit regula beati augustini episcopi*, incipit, "Hec sunt que ut observetis precipimus in monasterio constituti ut simil habitent ... debitum dimittatur, et in temptationem non inducatur, *Explicit Regula sancti Augustini episcopi Qui scripsit scribat : semper cum domino vivat. Amen*";

St. Augustine of Hippo, "Regula Sancti Augustini," *The Latin Library* (Online Resources).

ff. 92v-176v, *Incipit expositio [bugonis de sancto victore: added in a sixteenth-century hand] in regula eiusdem sancti augustini Episcopi. Prologus.*, incipit, "Hec precepta que subscripta sunt ... orans ut sibi et debitum dimittatur et in tentationibus non inducatur. *Explicit.*";

Hugh of St. Victor, "Expositio in Regulam Beati Augustini," *PL*, vol. 176, cols 881A-924D.

ff. 177-181v, *Constitutio sive extravagans domini Benedicti papae xii de apostasis et vagabundis ordinis cuiuscumque ...*, incipit, "Pastor bonus diligens operosus et pervigil oves suas errabundas et devias ... Datum avignon xv kalendis Julii Pontificatus nostri Anno primo. *Explicit*";

Pope Benedict XII, *Bullarum Romanum* 4, ed. by Gaude, 1859, pp. 326-28; see also Meyer, "Benedikt XII," 43-49 (Online Resources). This papal bull outlines the treatment of apostates, or those who have left a monastic vocation. It outlines that, wherever possible, apostates be sought out and returned to the fold, that those who wish to leave one order for another should first seek permission from the Papal See, that if they are not accepted to a new order they should be returned to the first, and that all apostates returning to monasticism be spared punishment and absolved.

ff. 182-184v, *Constitutio domini urbani papae quinti de novicis recipiendis*, incipit, "Ad perpetuam rei memoriam ne in vinea domini ... Datum romae apud sanctum Petrum ii nones aprilis. Pontificatus nostri Anno vij. *Explicit*";

Pope Urban V, *Corpus iuris canonici*, Vol. 2, ed. by Friedberg, rpt.1959, cols 1287-1288. The cited edition dates this papal bull to 1363, while the present manuscript dates it to 1369 (that is, the seventh year of Urban V's papacy). The reason for this discrepancy is unclear, but also occurs between manuscripts used in a 2016 online edition published by Meyer ("Urban V," pp. 112-115, Online Resources). This bull specifies that simony is expressly forbidden by all members of the Church, of all ranks, both male and female. Moreover, they are not to individually benefit from gifts of any kind; all gifts are owned communally, and not for the special treatment of some over their brethren, nor influence over Church matters.

ff. 184v-213v, *Sermo i, Quatuor alii Sermones Caesarii Arelatensis* [added in a sixteenth-century hand], incipit, "Quid salubritatis karissimi etiam in praesenti conferant ..."; [f. 187v] *Sermo ii*, incipit, "Exhoritatur nos sermo divinus ..."; [f. 194v] *Sermo iii*, incipit, "Si quando terre operarius ..."; [f. 207v] *iiii Sermo*, incipit, "Ait quodam loco sermo divinus ... honorum vero et praemiorum gaudia sine sive durarent amen";

Eusebius Gallicanus, "Homilia II," *PL* 50, cols 835.C-836.C; "Homilia I", *PL*, vol. 50, cols 833A-835C; "Homilia VIII", *PL*, vol. 50, cols 850C-855A; "Homilia X", *PL*, vol. 50, cols 837A-859C.

f. 213v, [perhaps medieval shelfmarks] "a" [in blue but erased], "h" [in red], and "I" [?, also erased, in black]; [pen trials] "Deo gratia", "Amen", "Jesus."

## DECORATION

Carefully executed penwork initials and marginal miniatures serve a practical function as reading aids, but also charm and entertain the reader. The intricately curled patterns within the penwork initials, their borders of closely-knitted 'pearls' and long, delicate vines with twisting terminals are characteristic of fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Avignon penwork. One initial in brown holds the face of a young monk (f. 28).

The figurative decoration in contrast is without obvious parallels. Many exquisite *maniculae* are found in the margins, extending from sleeves of red, blue, and yellow, often reaching from twinkling clouds and holding flowers, vines, or banderoles containing *notae* or catchwords (ex. on ff. 50v, 52, 63v, 66v, 77, 82v, 90, 102, 106, 189v). Other miniatures, some also holding *notae* and catchwords, are of rosy-cheeked angels (ff. 53v, 58v, 108v, 114v, 122v, 130v, 146v, 205v) with yellow hair and their garments, halos, and wings highlighted in red, blue, orange, and yellow. Further drawings, some also bearing banderoles, include crosses and columns (ff. 42v, 44v, 47v, 106v, 177v), a man in a miniature boat (f. 55), lions (ff. 98v and 162v), a bird (f. 154v), a tiny empty tunic (f. 119v), and a monk (f. 138v).

This small manuscript is a miscellany: a compilation of different, usually short, texts gathered together. Because their texts were often carefully curated, miscellanies provide fascinating insights into the tastes and interests of medieval readers. (For an overview of the different characteristics and production methods of medieval miscellanies, see the Introduction to Pratt et al., 2017.) Miscellanies were produced well into the era of print and may be considered the forerunner to modern magazines.

The texts in this manuscript share an obvious connection: all were of interest to monks or canons in the late fourteenth century, apparently near the Avignon papal court: sermons intended for a monastic audience, a monastic rule and commentary on that rule, and two near-contemporary papal bulls governing monastic practice (or rather, forbidding certain illicit practices). We can be sure that its unique drawings engaged and delighted its reader. Some drawings relate to the text – such as the tiny empty tunic (f. 119v) added in the margin of Hugh of St. Victor's discussion of clothing in chapter 17 of the Rule of St. Augustine – while others serve only to decorate and entertain. Their presence, and the numerous *maniculae* calling the reader to take note of important sections, indicates that this manuscript was to be read, and reflected on, by a solitary reader.

The sermons in this manuscript are randomly arranged; they are selected and ordered according to the reader's preferences, and not according to the cycle of specific liturgical events or feast days (Wenzel, 1996, pp. 7-8). Most were composed by, or were in the Middle Ages attributed to, Caesarius of Arles (c. 470-542). Caesarius was born in what is now Chalon-sur-Saône in Burgundy and became Bishop of Arles in 502. In a region torn between Visigothic, Ostrogothic,

and Frankish powers, he emphasized the value and importance of community, both monastic and lay. Among monks, he strongly encouraged asceticism, and strived to live a particularly austere life himself. These values are highlighted in many of his sermons, including those found in this volume. Among Caesarius's sermons are a few attributed to Eusebius Gallicanus and Eucherius of Lyon (c. 380-c. 449). However, it is generally accepted that Eusebius is a fictional author; sermons attributed to him were written in the mid to late fifth century and have sometimes been associated with Faustus of Riez (see Bailey 2010).

Caesarius's sermons were often transmitted in collections such as these, and other manuscripts of these sermons also contain the Rule of St. Augustine and sermons attributed to Eusebius. As all houses following the Rule of St. Augustine were obliged to have a copy of the Rule, extant copies of this work alone or in compilations with other short texts are abundant. Hugh of St. Victor's commentary returns only six Schoenberg records and approximately twenty in *Manuscripta Mediaevalia*, but there are probably more extant copies presently unaccounted in these databases. The combination, however, of this manuscript's contents – the sermons, Rule, and papal bulls together – offers opportunities for an interesting case study on the needs and values of its makers and users. Moreover, its exceptionally charming decoration, elegant script, and handheld format make it somewhat unusual among contemporary Avignon manuscripts, and an appealing addition to any collection.

## LITERATURE

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

Château du Bas-Plessis  
[https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Château\\_du\\_Bas-Plessis](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Château_du_Bas-Plessis)

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"Regula Sancti Augustini," *The Latin Library*  
<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/augustine/reg.shtml>

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