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PETRUS DE ROSENHEIM, *Roseum Memoriale*

In Latin, manuscript on paper

[southern Netherlands, probably Monastery of Saint Paul [the Roodlooster], near Brussels, c. 1450-75]

79 leaves, including 2 blanks, paper (fragment of watermark similar to Briquet 8527, Quiéverain, 1463-66) complete (i-xiv4, xv5 [of 6, blank vi canceled], xvi12, xvii6), foliated in ink, written in black ink in a neat Gothic bookhand, on mostly 18 long lines, vertical rules in pale red ink, horizontals in plummet (justification c. 130 x 95 mm.), capitals touched in red, underlining and punctuation in red, 1-, 2-, and 3-line painted red initials throughout, some staining of upper edges and slight thumbing of opening pages, else in excellent condition with clean margins. Bound in a nineteenth-century half binding of blue goatskin, spine sewn on 5 raised thongs, title gilt "PETRUS DE ROSENHAYM, MEMORIALE," gilt floral motifs in compartments, boards covered in marbled moucheté paper, pastedowns in marbled peigné paper, good sound condition. Dimensions c. 250 x 133 mm.

Unusual and still-unedited mnemonic text on the Bible by the reformer, Petrus of Rosenheim, in a clean and beautifully written copy from the famous medieval abbey, Roodlooster (home of the Flemish painter Hugo van der Goes), which housed an exceptional library on late medieval devotion.

PROVENANCE

1. On f. 10r, owner inscription "Biblioteca Rubei Vallis," the great Augustinian house of Roodlooster, confirmed by fabrication of the paper which bears the watermark of nearby Quiéverain. Founded in 1374, the monastery was suppressed by Joseph II in 1784 (see Derolez and Klein, 2001, pp. 178-209). The manuscript cannot be readily identified in the catalogue of Roodlooster of c. 1520, although it could certainly be identical with titles such as "abcedarium super bibliam" or "ars memorativa" (Derolez and Klein, 2001, pp. 207-08, nos. 356 and 359). About the time the present manuscript was written the great Flemish painter Hugo van der Goes became a lay brother at Roodlooster, where his half-brother Nicolas was also a monk. Gaspar Offhuys, who joined the monastery in 1475, maintained that he and Hugo were novices together. He discussed Hugo van der Goes at length in his sixteenth-century chronicle of the monastery, not so much for his fame as for the moral lessons to be drawn from his lapse into insanity during a trip to Cologne, possibly brought on by alcoholism, from which he died at Roodlooster in 1482. According to

Ofhuys, van der Goes continued to practice as a painter after entering the monastery, and was given special privileges to entertain guests, including the then Archduke Maximilian, who came to see his paintings. After his illness, however, van der Goes seems to have renounced any special favors and lived as the others, "continually reading in a Flemish book." The Österreichische Nationalbibliothek in Vienna owns eighty late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century manuscripts from the library of Rooclooster (see Pacht, Jenni, and Thoss 1983, vol. 1, pp. 109-30, figs. 7-12 and, vol. 2, pls. 179-88). Three illuminated Breviaries for use at Rooclooster survive (Kren and McKendrick, 2003, nos. 24, pp. 152-53, and 39, p. 187).

2. Nineteenth-century signature, Maria de Candia, in violet ink on f. 1r.

3. J. R. Ritman, Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam, MS 98, bought from Tenschert in 1988, according to a note on the rear flyleaf.

TEXT

ff. 1-3, Dedication to Cardinal Giulio Branda, incipit "Miraris lector dicens" with prologue "*Duo canones*";

ff. 3v-5v, *Versus epylogi*, a versified list of the chapters of the Bible arranged with the initials in alphabetical order and accompanied by an alphabetical key (e.g., "a" = Genesis; "b" = Exodus, etc.);

ff. 7-9r, blank;

f. 9v-76v, rubric, *Incipit roseum memoriale petri de rosenbaym monachi monasterii [melle]censis*, incipit, f. 10, ng on f. 10r "Astripotens celum terram" and ending, f. 76v, "angelus ondit se nec adoret ait. Explicit novum testamentum";

ff. 77-79v, rubric, *Concordantia eorum evangelistarum*, incipit, "A generat. B. magos," explicit, "Et sic finiture reliquo dominus sepelitur."

The *Roseum* of Petrus de Rosenheim (1380-1433) was one of the most successful medieval mnemonics of the Bible. Rosenheim played an important role in the reform of the monasteries in Germany; he was present at the Council of Constance in 1416, was prior of the reformed monastery of Melk (1418) and of St. Peter in Salzburg (1431), and was representative of the southern Benedictine monasteries at the Council of Basle in 1431.

Written c. 1423-26 at the behest of Cardinal Giulio Branda (died 1443), the *Roseum* is his best-known work and is essentially a summary of each of the books of the Bible (except Psalms), written in 1194 distichs, of which each contains a book of the Bible while the epilogue in hexameters gives the key.

In the fifteenth century, it was first printed in 1470 (Cologne; Goff R-336) and again in 1489 (Bologna: Bazalerius de Bazaleriis for Benedictus Hectoris, 29 October 1489, Goff-R-337), and in 1493 (Nuremberg: Friedrich Creussner, Goff R-338). It was reprinted in 1505, 1510, 1524,

1532, 1544, and 1570 as *Rosarium memoriale*. Other mnemonic books of the Bible were adapted from or influenced by the *Roseum*. Especially similar are the three editions of the famous and exceptionally rare blockbook *Ars memorandi per figuras evangelistarum*, c. 1470, with full-page woodcuts of the symbols of the Evangelists with small letters referring to the distichs on their figures. The 15 woodcuts from the blockbook appear in the Pforzheim edition and many others (*Rationarium evangelistarum*, Pforzheim, T. Anshelm, 1502, then in 1504, 1505, 1507, 1508, 1510, and 1532)

The *Roseum* is not a common manuscript. Only one copy is listed by Faye and Bond, *Supplement*, p. 408 (present location unknown), and the last copy on the market was sold at Sotheby's, 30 November 1976, lot 876. Thoma lists 30 manuscripts, mostly in German public institutions.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Biography and works of Petrus von Rosenheim
<http://www.bautz.de/>