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Prayers, Masses, and Sermon
In Latin and Italian, decorated manuscript on parchment
Northern Italy, Veneto (?), c. 1375-1425

i (parchment) + 152 + *i* folios on parchment, (collation: *i*⁸ *ii*⁶ [-1, cancelled, with no loss of text] *iii*¹⁰ *iv*¹² *v*¹⁴ *vi-xiii*¹⁰ *xiv*⁸ *xv*¹⁰ *xvi*⁶), horizontal catchwords, elaborately decorated in red and blue, written below the top line in a rounded southern gothic bookhand, ruled very lightly in ink (?) usually with full-length single vertical bounding lines, and with the top two rules full across on some folios, layout varies, with most of the manuscript copied in one column of eleven lines (justification 48 x 40-38 mm.), but with ff. 22-60 copied in one column of eighteen to thirteen lines (justification 72-58 x 48-46 mm.) Occasional majuscules in text stroked with red, red rubrics, one-line alternating red and blue initials, some with simple pen decoration in the other color, two-line initials, red or blue, with red and blue pen decoration, some forming a box around the initials, and others extending the length of the column, catchwords exuberantly decorated in red and blue. Ink has flaked away, leaving traces of script only, on f. 1; roughly twenty-five other folios exhibit some flaking with damage to the text, top and bottom margins water-stained, and the folios at the beginning and end of the volume are darkened. Bound in nineteenth-century dark brown morocco with simple geometric tooling, front and back covers, spine with three raised bands and simple tooling; in fair condition, with some rubbing at the edges of the covers and spine. Dimensions 93 x 66 mm.

This manuscript includes prayers in both Latin and Italian, texts for the Mass, and a long sermon mostly in Italian. In contrast with the majority of sermon manuscripts, which record the text in Latin, this is likely to be a closer witness to the actual spoken sermon, delivered in Italian. The small format of the manuscript suggests it was made for personal, rather than institutional use, although it is copied on parchment, in a formal bookhand, and finely decorated.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in Italy, probably at the end of the fourteenth century or the beginning of the fifteenth century, judging by the script; the rubric to the prayer, the "Anima Christi," mentions the indulgence granted by Pope John XXII (pope 1316-1334), granted in 1330. The orthography suggests the manuscript was copied in the Veneto.

TEXT

f. 1-3v, [Prayers in Latin and Italian] D[text of remainder of folio damaged] ... Custodi domine oculos meos da carnal concuscentia ...; f. 4rv, *Questa oration sequente fe papa Iobanni XXII e poxe dono grande indulgentia a chi la dira con deuotione*, incipit, "Anima christi sanctifica me, corpus christi salua me ..."; ff. 4v-7v, *Ista sequens oratio dicatur post missam. Oratio deuota.*, incipit, "Domine yhesu christe saluator

mundi ..."; ff. 7v-12, *Questa oration sequente fec papa gouanni e dixe che chi la dira ongne di mentre . . .*, incipit, "D[two illegible lines] che sopra de la croce stando con gran pene. Septe parole dicesti. . . Signor mio yhesu christo si come tu dicesti patre mio ...";

ff. 12-22, Masses for the Trinity and the Holy Spirit, in Latin, including introits, readings, post-communion prayers, and other proper texts; not noted.

ff. 22-23v, [Prayer to the Holy Spirit in Italian] *Oratio a spirito sancto*. Sanctissima compagnia e forza . . .

ff. 24-152v, *In nostro principio spirito sancto sua inuocato. Che de conduca a fine beato. Amen. Amen*, incipit, "Pregato da noi honesta in christo . . . E secundo el uangelio dominicale che occorre in questi octava del corpo de yhesu christo preporro el thema del nostro sermone"; *In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti. Amen.*; f. 24v, *Homo quidam fecit cenam magnam et uocauit multos [Luke 14:16]. Lanima nosra posta in gran paupertate de libeni spirituali . . . [f. 25v,] Homo quidam et cetera. Vno homo fe una gran cena e chiam dia molta persone . . . [f. 152v, folio darkened, and text is illegible, except for final rubric, De la speranza ca[?] che de braue re[?] alto dio].*

The sermon text is interrupted by three prayers said during the Mass, on ff. 42v-43: *Quando se leva el corpo del nostro signore, dice questa oratione. Ave corpus yhesu . . . Quando se leva el calcice. Or. O uere christi sanguis . . .*; *Quando el sacerdote dice orate per me sorores et fratres. Respondete. Suspiciat dominus . . .*; the sermon then continues on f. 43v.

It is hard to reconstruct from our modern perspective the importance and popularity of the sermon in the High Middle Ages. Preaching was an integral part of the mission of the Franciscans and Dominicans, the two new orders who revolutionized the face of the medieval church in the thirteenth century. Scholars generally agree that sermons, and certainly sermons to the laity, were preached in the vernacular, rather than in Latin. In Italy, most sermons from the thirteenth century and later were delivered in Italian. Most of the sermons preserved in written form, in contrast, are in Latin, which was the universal language of the Western Church. A sermon in Italian by a Franciscan or Dominican Friar, for example, was likely to be recorded in Latin, so that it could be adapted for use by another Friar in France, or indeed, delivered in another dialect in Italy. Manuscripts that preserve sermons in Italian are thus noteworthy, and can be found starting in the fourteenth century. Examples include the sermons by the illustrious preachers, Giordano da Pisa (c. 1260-1311), a Dominican, and the Franciscan, Bernardino da Siena (1380-1444).

This manuscript is thus of special interest to scholars, because it includes texts in both Italian and Latin. The prayers at the beginning of the manuscript include examples in both languages. The Mass texts, as one would expect, are in Latin. The sermon is an example of a macaronic sermon, written mostly in Italian, but with occasional Latin words and phrases. Note for example the use of Latin at the end of the introductory paragraph, "in nomine patri et filii et spiritu sancto" ("In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit"), which of course, all the listeners would understand. Latin is also used for the theme, from Luke 14:16, "Homo quidam fecit cenam magnam," ("There was a man who gave a great banquet") repeated at numerous points throughout

the discourse. Latin is also used, more intriguingly, to summarize the main points of his argument at the end of each section.

The contents of this lengthy sermon are also of interest. The preacher manages to link his theme, Luke 14:16 ("Homo quidem fecit cenam magnam"), to topics including: Christ has two natures, and one substance; on the beginning of the world (f. 39); how the world is governed, including a discussion of the influence of the heavens and the planets (f. 53); Purgatory (f. 72); the punishment of Hell (f. 84v); the Glory of Paradise (f. 96v); and eternal life (f. 132).

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