

EVARDUS DE VALLE SCHOLARUM (ÉVRARD DE VOULAINES), *Sermones de festis et sanctis*; fragment of RICHARD ROLLE, *Emendatio vitae*

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment

Northern France (Paris), c. 1280-1300; England, c.1400-30

219 + ii (paper) + iii (added parchment leaves) + iii (paper) folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, top outer corner recto, complete except for final blank leaves and part of the final added quire (collation, i-xviii¹² xix⁶ [-4 through 6, cancelled] xx² [blank paper leaves, probably former flyleaves] xxi⁶ [foliated i-iii, 5, f. iii, partial leaf; -1, -2, -6), horizontal catchwords, inside lower margin, written within the extra bounding lines, leaf and quire signatures visible in a few quires, bottom outer corner recto with a letter representing the quire, and vertical lines the leaves (cf. ff. 112, 157-162, 169-174), ruled in lead with full-length single vertical bounding lines inside, outside and between the columns with an extra set of double horizontal rules in the upper margin for the running titles and in the lower margin for the catchwords, prickings bottom margin (justification, 195-180 x 128-127 mm.), written under the top line in an upright gothic bookhand by several scribes in two columns of forty-eight to forty-three lines, guide letters for the initials in the margins alongside the initials and a few notes for the rubricator of the running titles in the very bottom margin, majuscules in text touched with red, red underlining, rubrics and running titles (in brown ink, ff. 78-126), alternately red and blue paragraph marks, two-line alternately red and blue initials with contrasting pen decoration, four-line parted red and blue initial, f. 1, decorated with a full-column red and blue cascade, some original holes and other imperfections in the parchment, for example, ff. 3, 89, and 183, leaves are cockled throughout, f. 1, darkened, top outer corner, ff. 1-38, and 184-219, with rodent damage but with no loss of text, some minor stains and dirt throughout especially in the bottom margin, the leaves at the end generally more stained, text lost at the top and outer margins of the added parchment leaves, but overall in very good condition. Bound in nineteenth-century pasteboard, c.1830 (final paper endleaves with watermark, Hall 1830) covered with blue silk leaving spine, preserving MEDIEVAL SEWING on seven double or split thongs, now severed at the joints, spine partially covered with brown silk leaving thongs exposed, covers worn at corners and edges, covering at the top of the spine detached from upper board, but in good condition. Leaves added at the end from another manuscript copied in England in the opening decades of the fifteenth century, ff. i-ii: (justification 195 x 125 mm.), written below the top line in an anglicana formata script in thirty-four long lines, majuscules touched with red, two-line blue initials with red pen decoration, f. i, damaged at the top, some loss of text in lines one-three, and at the top and bottom corner of f. ii, with some loss of text in line one and in the last eighteen lines. Dimensions 251 x 170 mm.

Theologians in the medieval Universities were committed to studying and teaching the Bible through commentaries and exegesis and through the complementary actions of writing sermons and preaching. The author of this comprehensive, thoughtful model sermon collection, Evrardus de Valle Scholarum, was a renowned preacher, and the manuscript is typical of the books produced in the late thirteenth century Paris University circles. Eighteen copies of the text have been identified in European libraries, but this is the only copy listed in Schoenberg Database. There is no modern edition.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in Paris, c. 1280-1300, as indicated by the style of the script and the decoration, not long after the death of the author. Manuscripts with similar pen initials include Paris,

BnF, MS lat. 14596, *Themata sermonum*, copied in Paris in 1282, and Paris, BnF, MS fr. 1633, Girard d'Amiens, *Li contes de Meliacin*, copied in Paris and datable c. 1285-1288 (Stirnemann, 1990, cat. 43 and 44, pp. 71 and 73). The parchment, which is thin and generally well-prepared, but which includes a number of holes and original imperfections, the script, the decoration, and the careful layout, are all typical of good quality professional copies of University texts produced in Paris in the late thirteenth century.

2. The manuscript includes a few original corrections, and numerous *nota* marks, marginal symbols and a few comments added in the in fifteenth century. There is a note in English in the margin on f. 125 (sermon 85 for the feast of St. John the Evangelist), "an herbe crowefoote," and a general note of affirmation on f. 145v, sermon 99, "Homelia praeclara."
3. The manuscript was in England by the fifteenth century, when it was owned by John Newton, "Johannes Neuton," added in lead in the lower margin on f. 173 (there is also a note in English on f. 125; see above). Bound at the end of the manuscript are two folios from a manuscript of Richard Rolle's *Emendatio vitae*, copied in England in the early decades of the fifteenth century, and it is tempting to suggest that these leaves were bound with the sermons since the fifteenth century, especially since a copy of the *Emendatio vitae* was bequeathed by "dominus Johannes Newton," Master of Sherborn hospital (1409-1427) (see Allen, 1927, p. 243). Nonetheless, the manuscript is now in a nineteenth-century binding, and it is impossible to determine how long the two texts were bound together. Another fifteenth-century note, alongside a caricature of a man with a large nose in profile is found in the lower margin of f. 176, and the name "Henricus de <?>."
4. f. 1, top margin "R" (partial shelfmark?).
5. Belonged to Thomas Vowler Short (1790-1872), inside front cover: "Thomas Vowler Short student of Christ Church Oxford, 1831"; Short may have purchased this manuscript for £3.13.6, since this price is written in the upper margin, f. 1; paper slip, laid in, "The Reverend Thomas Vowler Short, Kings Worthey, 4." Thomas Vowler Short had a distinguished teaching career at Christ Church Oxford, followed by a series of incumbencies, including one at Kings Worthy, Hampshire, before becoming Bishop of Sodor and Man, and finally, Bishop of St. Asaph.
6. Front pastedown, "King William's College Library 184."

TEXT

ff. 1-219v, [Prologue], Incipit, "Letabor ego super eloquia tua, ps. [Ps. 118:162], Super eloquia divina letandum est triplici ratione ..."; f. 1, *In commemoratione omnium sanctorum* [rubric lacking; supplied from running title], incipit, "Sicut letantium omnium habitatio est in te, ps. [Ps. 86:7], Ad honorem sanctorum omnium. In uerbo proposito notantur duo, primo enim notatur sanctorum omnium mansio segura ..."; f. 218, *De eodem* [*In festo apostolorum symonis et iude*], incipit, "Ecce Simon frater uester ... i macc. ii [1 Macc. 2:65], In uerbo proposito isti gloriosi commendantur a duobus primo ab eminentia cognitionis ... intra in gaudium domini tui quod nobis concedat Ihesus Christus qui uivit et regnat per omnia secula seculorum amen";

Evrardus de Valle Scholarum, or Évrard de Voulaines, *Sermones de festis et sanctis*, includes the one hundred and fifty sermons described in Schneyer, *Repertorium*, volume 2, pp. 2-13, in the following order: 1-40, 43-44, 41-42, 45-58, 60, 59, 61-150; Schneyer lists eighteen manuscripts, not including this one, all in French and German libraries. There is no modern edition, but the text was printed twice in the fifteenth century as the work of the Dominican author, Hugo de Prato Florido: Heidelberg, Printer of Lindelbach (Heinrich Knoblochtzer), 1485, GW 94890, and Ulm, Conrad Dinckmut, 1486, GW 948925.

[Two leaves added from another manuscript:]

ff. i-ii verso, incipit, "//purgari aut post hanc uitam igne <several words lost> ... quam ipsi te docent in scriptis suis//" [f. iii, partial leaf, blank].

Two-leaves from a fifteenth-century English manuscript of Richard Rolle's *Emendatio vitae*, edited by Rüdiger Spahl. *De emendatione vitae: eine kritische Ausgabe ...*, Göttingen, and Bonn, Bonn University Press, 2009; here beginning imperfectly p. 194, line 14 to p. 206, line 232 (chapters 6-8). Spahl describes 108 manuscripts, pp. 26-85, not including this fragment. The text also circulated in seven Middle English translations, and in numerous printed editions; also edited by Nicolas Watson, 1991; earlier list of manuscripts in Hope Emily Allen, 1927, pp. 230-243.

Évrard de Voulaines (or Villaines), or Evrardus du Valle Scholarum, was most likely born at Villaines-en-Duesmois or Voulaines-les-Tempiers, both located in Burgundy, Côte-d'Or, arr. Montbard, or possibly at Villaines-sous-Bois, Val d'Oise, arr. Pontoise, near Paris. He studied theology in Paris, and joined the Canons Regular of Val-des-Écoliers. By 1259, he was his Order's first master in theology in Paris, making him a contemporary of St. Thomas Aquinas (who taught 1252-72) and St. Bonaventure (taught 1253-1273). He was a renowned preacher, and served as the prior of the order's house in Paris, St. Catherine's, from 1260. He probably died c. 1280, certainly after 1272 (see Guyon, 1998, pp. 228-229 and Glorieux, 1933, no. 380).

The first monastery of the Canons Regular of Val-des-Écoliers was founded in 1201 when four masters from the University of Paris in 1201 left the schools behind for the "true school of the Lord." They adopted the Rule of St. Augustine and modeled their life on the customs observed by the Canons of St. Victor in Paris. The Order was approved by Pope Honorius III in 1215 and grew to include twenty-eight priories. Their monastery of St. Catherine in Paris was founded in 1229. In 1250 the House moved to the left bank, and in 1254 the Order established a College at the University where Évrard became the first master of theology.

Évrard's *Sermones de festis et sanctis* is a well thought-out model sermon collection including 150 sermons for saints days and other important feasts of the liturgical year -- Christmas, and its Vigil, the Circumcision, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost, and the Assumption. The collection begins with a prologue, followed by sermons for the Feast of All Saints (November 1), and then continuing through the year, concluding with sermons for the Feast of the Apostles Simon and Jude (October 28). Two sermons are included for most feasts, with a few marked by three or four sermons, including the Vigil of Christmas, the Feast of Peter and Paul, the Assumption and St. Francis. These three sermons for St. Francis are among

the earliest preached for his feast at the University of Paris (Guyon, 1997). The collection includes many of the feasts and saints venerated in Paris including Genevieve, Victor, Denis, and the Crown of Thorns, a relic of which was found at the Ste.-Chapelle. A modern edition of these sermons, written by a contemporary of St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas Aquinas, would certainly be an important contribution to our knowledge of preaching at the University of Paris at one of the most important periods in its history. This manuscript, copied not long after the Évrard's death, could be an important witness to the text.

The purpose of a collection of sermons such as this one was to provide materials to be used by other preachers in compiling their sermons. This collection was thus a formal, written text. *Reportationes* (i.e. written versions of the oral sermons transcribed by someone who heard the sermon) of some of Évrard's sermons survive, however, and we can thus be confident that his collection originated in sermons he actually preached, which he later edited and used in this formal collection (Bataillon, 1986, pp. 109, 118). These sermons include comments that reflect the life of the students and teachers at the University, as well as comments (and criticisms) of the wealthy Prelates of the Church. As a master of theology, Évrard's preaching was fundamental to his role as a teacher. Although his biblical commentaries and other lectures do not, to my knowledge, survive, his role as a preacher was one aspect of his broader activities as an exegete and theologian.

Richard Rolle (d. 1349), a prolific writer, was born in Thornton in North Yorkshire around 1305-10. After abandoning his studies at Oxford to live as a hermit, he lived in various places in northeastern England. His life and the sources of his writings were inspired by the ancient eremitical tradition, going back to the Desert Fathers of third-century Egypt. He wrote in both Latin and English, and his audience was probably originally pious nuns and anchoresses, monks and secular priests. Nonetheless, many of his works were destined to be read by a much wider audience and were valued in the later fourteenth and fifteenth century, when they fit in well with the increasing focus on lay piety and devotion. His English Psalter circulated widely and was especially esteemed in Lollard circles (although Richard's writings were always considered completely orthodox).

He was the author of numerous Latin works including biblical commentaries on the Psalms, Lamentations, the Apocalypse, parts of Job, and a text from Proverbs, commentaries on the Lord's Prayer, and the Creeds, a number of treatises, the most well-known was the *Incendium amoris* ("The Fire of Love") and instructional texts, including the *Emendatio vitae*. In addition to his translation of the Psalms, his English works include a commentary on the Psalms, the *Ego Dormio*, *The Commandment*, *The Form of Living*, and meditations on the Passion of Christ.

The *Emendatio vitae*, or "The Mending of Life," was a later work by Rolle that adapts his earlier writing about spiritual transformation to the needs of general readers; most of the last third of the work consists of passages from his earlier writings. The text includes twelve chapters corresponding to the twelve stages in the spiritual life from conversion to contemplation.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Electronic Edition of Hugo de Prato Florido, *Sermones de Sanctis* (=Evrardus <de Valle Scholarium>), Heidelberg, 1485 (shelfmark: inkunabeln/500-1-theol-2f):

<http://diglib.hab.de/inkunabeln/500-1-theol-2f/start.htm>

Sermones.net: Édition électronique d'un corpus de sermons latins médiévaux:

<http://www.sermones.net/>

Medieval Sermons and Homilies; Bibliography, by Professor Charles Wright, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign:

<https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/cdwright/www/sermons.html>

John M. Howe, Texas Tech University, Sermons; Bibliography:

<http://www2.tlrc.ttu.edu/howe/sermons.htm>

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