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Miscellany for the Brothers of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis, with Sermons and Liturgy for Profession and Visitations from 1525-1548, and other works
In Latin and Dutch, decorated manuscript on paper
Belgium (Flanders) (Antwerp or Zepperen?), c. 1548

i (parchment, numbered f. 1) + 221 + *i* (parchment) folios on paper, watermarks, gothic letter "P" with four-petalled fleuron above, similar to Briquet 8636, widely used from Leiden, 1509-1518 to Utrecht, 1520; 8644, Amsterdam 1533, St. Omer 1534, Chalons sur Marne 1536-40; 8645, Bruges, 1538-41, and 8646, Rotterdam 1541, Antwerp, 1541-3, St Omer, 154; and a naturalistic band with cuff, similar to Briquet 11467, Woorn 1544, St-Vincent, near Metz, 1550, Bruges, 1555-58; there may also be a watermark of a vase, but it is obscured by script), foliated in red ink and pencil, top outer corner recto, 2-222, with the front endleaf foliated as f. 1, original foliation in Roman numerals top outer corner recto, i-clxxx, on ff. 35-222 (collation, i⁸ [begins on f. 2, + one leaf, f. 9bis, glued in at the end] ii-v⁸ vi⁴-ix⁴ x⁶ xi-xiii⁸ xiv⁴ xv⁸ xvi-xix⁸ xx⁸ [-6, 7, 8, following f. 136, possibly cancelled, no apparent loss of text] xxi-xxii⁸ xxiii⁸ [-4, after f. 155, possibly cancelled, no apparent loss of text] xxiv⁶ xxv¹⁰ xxvi¹² [-12, after f. 186, probably cancelled, no apparent loss of text] xxvii⁶ xxviii⁸ [-1 and 2, before f. 193, possibly cancelled, no apparent loss of text] xxix¹⁰ xxx⁴ xxxi⁸ xxxii²), very small catchword, bottom inner margin in quire 17, a few quire signatures, with a letter designating the quire and a roman numeral the leaf, although they are partial and do not appear continuous, quire 11, beginning on f. 64, is "a", quire sixteen, beginning f. 100, "c", and quire seventeen, beginning 108, "d", copied by many scribes adopting different layouts, two formal liturgical sections: ff. 10-16, ruled very lightly in lead or ink with full-length vertical bounding lines (justification, 100-97 x 68 mm.), copied in a flourished batarde script in twenty-six long lines, red rubrics, two- to one-line plain red initials, and ff. 19-34v, ruled very lightly in lead, with full-length vertical bounding lines (justification, 85 x 65 mm.), copied in a gothic bookhand in twenty long lines, f. 20, one line of musical notation with square neumes on red four-line staff, red rubrics, three- to one-line plain red initials, f. 8rv, another liturgical text, (justification, 117 x 75 mm.), copied in a cursive gothic bookhand in twenty-nine long lines, majuscules within text stroked with red, two- to one-line red initials, remainder of the manuscript is copied by two main scribes: ff. 35-40v, 58- 59v, 61-164, 164v-188v, 197-198v, 208: frame ruled very lightly in lead or ink on some folios, occasionally with all rules full length (justification, 105-102 x 75-58 mm.), written in a very small cursive gothic bookhand in thirty-three to twenty-seven long lines, with formal marginal notes, red underlining, and red paragraph marks on many folios; and ff. 42-44, 46-53, 60-61, 164v-165, 189, 193 (heading), 184-196v, 209-212, 221-222: ruling indiscernible (justification, 110-105 x 75-72 mm.), written in a very small, formal, spiky cursive gothic bookhand with a slight backward slant in thirty-six to thirty-two long lines, most of this scribe's sections are copied all in black, with occasional underlining in black, except ff. 209-212, with majuscules stroked with red, red paragraph mark, and two-line red initial, ff. 199-207v in another hand, (justification, 108 x 80-75 mm.), in a flourished cursive gothic bookhand with many loops in thirty long lines, red paragraph marks and underlining, majuscules stroked with red, two-line red initial, throughout, numerous short sections copied in less formal bands, overall in very good condition apart from some soiling and darkened edges, quire 3, beginning f. 18, loose, f. 221, partially detached, f. 131, early repair, bottom

margin. ORIGINAL WALLET BINDING in dark brown leather over pasteboard, blindstamped with triple fillets intersecting and forming an outer border stamped with scrolls lettered "Ihesus" and "Maria," small floral stamps, and stars enclosed in a circle at each corner, and a rectangular center panel with triple fillets in a diamond pattern each enclosing a fleur-de-lis or small oval stamp, flat spine with similar stamps, back cover continues to wrap around the fore-edge, forming a flat fore edge flap, also tooled, which then extends into a rectangular flap that overlaps the front cover and fastens in the middle with a brass clasp-and-catch fastening, in fragile condition, back spine possibly repaired and reinforced with twisted metal rods (see discussion of binding below), now completely separated along the joints and glued down (?), fore edge flap cracking along edges and damaged at the top and bottom, bowed, edges worn. Dimensions, 148 x 107 mm.

This exceptional manuscript preserves what can only be called a small archive of texts reflecting the religious and spiritual life of the Brothers of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis in sixteenth-century Flanders. It includes numerous dated sermons, preached on the occasion of the profession of novices and visitations of Convents of the Third Order--almost surely unpublished--, as well as liturgical and other texts focused on the monastic life. It survives as an important, unstudied document of religious life of this period in a rare contemporary blind-stamped leather wallet binding.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in a convent of Brothers of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis around 1548 in Flanders; the manuscript includes a numerous dated sermons and other texts, ranging from 1525 (f. 80) to 1544 (f. 184), with a concentration of texts from the 1530s; the most recent date is "1548," copied on f. 222 in the upper margin. An added note in the bottom margin of f. 26, "Thema 1551 psalmista ...", suggests that it was possibly copied before 1551 when this note was added.

A note added on the blank verso of the last leaf, f. 222v, "Aenden eerwerdighen pater den generael vant capittel van zepperen per peeter <van?> antwerpen," suggests it was made in the Chapter of Zeppern (Zepperen, Belgium, near Antwerp), and this locale is also supported by the watermark evidence.

The contents of the volume, with its numerous sermons made on the occasion of the profession of novices and visitation of convents, suggest it was made for someone in a position of authority, possibly a minister of the order. Its contents are sophisticated, and it was certainly made for a well-educated man. Although this manuscript is a record of contemporary sermons, the dated texts are not found in order (f. 16v, general chapter of 1538, f. 36, sermon from 1538, f. 80, sermon from 1525, followed by sporadically dated sermons from 1529, 1535, 1532, 1535, 1536, 1539, and 1544). The majority of texts are copied in formal scripts by two scribes, which reappear throughout the volume. It is not, in other words, a personal notebook kept by a religious superior, but rather a formal copy made for his use.

2. Inside front cover, early ex libris, "Liber <domus?> fratrum min<orum> <erasure>; and "132, de visitatione < ?>" (shelfmark).

3. In pencil, f. 1, "8276" (repeated inside the flap, extending over the front cover); modern cataloguing notes in French on slips laid in throughout the manuscript.

TEXT

Inside front cover, ff. 1-2, Informal notes in a number of hands including, f. 1, list of texts from the Bible, proverbs, f. 1v, notes in Latin and Dutch; f. 2, notes from the Bible; citation from the Gloss.

f. 2v, *Attende Christi exempla*, "Nemo christianorum valeat christus ...";

f. 3, *Tabula sermonum huius libri*, incipit, "Sermo primus religio mundi quare monastica vita sit instituta <?> , folio primus; Tractatus de regimine mulierum, fo. viii; De institutione superioris, fo. xii; ... , De sororum regimine in capituli libri huius; Documenta saluberrima subditis ... , fo. iii"; followed by notes on the religious life, citing Jerome at the beginning, in another hand;

ff. 3v-5, blank;

ff. 5v-6v, *Sermo <b. t. s?> in generali capitulo a patre Gerardo ba<er?>le*, incipit, "In hoc vocati estis ut benedictionem hereditate possideatis primi pe. 3 [1 Peter 3:9], Quia iuxta veterem[?] ordinis consuetudinem ante omnem actum capitularem brevis exhortatio ad bonum penitenti solet. Ideo super verbo predicto ...";

Sermon preached at the General Chapter, copied in a very tiny script; the author, "pater Gerardus" apparently not listed in Roest and Heijden, Franciscan Authors (Online Resources).

ff. 7-8, *De obedientia*, *Colligimus ex scriptura sacra ...*, incipit, "Tria sunt precipua media perueniendi ad perfectionem, Lege Gersonis De ecclesiastica potestate maxime iiii consideratione";

The reference at the end is to Jean Gerson (1363-1429), *De ecclesiastica potestate*.

ff. 8rv, *Visitatores cum venientes[?] ad conventus visitando ... omnibus congregatis fratribus flexis genibus dicant hymnorum sequentem*, incipit, "Veni creator spiritus mentes ...; [prayer], "Protege domine famulos tuos ...";

Hymns and prayers to be said when the Visitor inspected a convent.

f. 9, *Monachum non sacri habitus sed professio regularis ... et capitula[?] ex parte de regula ...*, incipit, "Appellationis remedium non <?> ductum ut alicui a religionis et ordinis obseruantia ...";

On monastic profession, life and vows.

f. 9v, incipit, "Fidelis a catholicis de mille errore suspectus, Matrimonio non legatus, Corpore sanus, Anima promptus, legitime natus ...";

Short notes (thirteen lines), seemingly listing possible errors in belief.

f. 9bis, recto, blank;

f. 9bis, verso, *Religiosus, Sanctus Bernardus*, incipit, "In suo epistolari scribit quod monachus <plangentis?> habent officium et sibi opidum ...";

ff. 10-16, *Modus vestiendi fratres 3m ordinis s. francisci*, incipit "Post probationem et receptionem frater qui inuestiendus est coram altari Et flexis genibus respondebit, Peto misericordiam dei vestram societatem et terciam regulam beati francisci de penitentia ...; f. 11v, *Modus faciendi proffessionem, Frater professionem facturus postquam a ministro et fratribus fuerit admissus ...*, Peto misericordiam dei vestram societatem et regulam beati francisci de penitentia ...; *Tunc sacerdos accedat ad cornu altaris ad recipiendum oblationes secularium si fuerint et si non fuerint accedat ad missam .. et sic vadat ad omnes fratres astentes in choro. Fratresque dicent*, incipit, "Carrissimo frater dominus det tibi gratiam."

Liturgical prayers for those entering the Third Order of St. Francis of Penance, including vesting, followed by profession, with blessing of habit, and on f. 14v, the act of Profession in front of a notary (*Forma professionis*, incipit, "Ego frater N. voveo deo omnipotenti eiusque intacte genitrici et patri nostro sancto francisco obedire ministro meo pro tempore existenti ... in tertia regula sancti francisci patris nostri..."); masculine forms used throughout; f. 16, bottom margin, added note in Dutch; on f. 10v, marginal notes indicating changes of the liturgy for the second order of St. Francis (i.e. Franciscan Nuns).

f. 16v-17 *Dit is een forme der professie mette[n] habite*, Ic brueder N. gheloue god van hemelriick ...; *Een ander forme der professien der ghe[n]ere die sonder thabyt professie doen sullen*, incipit, "Ick bruder N gheloue god ... *Ex institutione capituli generalis domino 1538 19 May*";

ff. 17-18v, *De modo psallendi loquitur Moueo inquit ...*, f. 17v, *De Concordia psallendi*; f. 18rv, notes including proverbs and biblical citations; on f. 18v, text is written around a large rectangular blank space, possibly intended for a woodcut or other illustration;

ff. 19-34v, *Incipit forma vestiendi fratres tercii ordinis sancti francisci*, incipit, "Post probationem et receptionem frater inuestiendus cora altari genua flectat ..."; f. 22v, *Modus faciendi professionem*, incipit, "Frater professionem facturus postquam a ministro et fratribus fuerit admissus ..."; f. 26, incipit, "Ick brueder N gheloue gode van hemelryck Marie ...";

Psalms, prayers, and hymns for the liturgy included in full; ff. 31v-32v, litany, including Francis (twice), Clare, Ursula, Odila, Gertrude, Juliana, Anne and Elizabeth; notes added in Dutch, f. 25v, 26, 34

[ff. 35-222, original foliation in Roman numerals, i-clxxx]

ff. 35-36, *Sermo quare monasteria sunt ad statuta*, incipit, "Religio munda et immaculata apud deum ... Ja. Primo [James 1:26], Cristo in euangelio protestante vnum est necessarium ..."

f. 36rv, *1 Petri 2, 1538 3 maii*, incipit, "Cristus passus est pro nobis ...";

f. 37, *Saluberrima documenta ... ex apostolis pauli petri Iohannis inde collecta*, incipit, "Abiicamus opera ...";

ff. 37v, *1 petri 2*; incipit, "Octavas <?> in omne estote [cf. 1 Peter 2:13], princeps apostolorum ...";

ff. 38-40v, *Sermo de virtute et fructibus obedientie*, incipit, "Obedite prepositis vestris et subiacete illis, Ad he. 13 [Hebrews 13:7]. Legitur in euangelio luce 2 Christus totus sancte obedire plenissimum ...";

[f. 41rv, blank];

ff. 42-44, *Notanda aliqua pro regimine mulierum*, incipit, In primis c<?> querulum genus et fragile pro earum pars quarta possibiliter et sit salue domino ..."; [five-lines of verse] incipit, "Ffemina fax sathanae festens rosa dulce venenum/ Prebens sub mellis dulcedine pocula fellus/ Semper prona rei que prohibetur ei/ [E]rit enim vultu visu risu cute cultu/ Huius ab insultu quartum petes esse procul<tu?>";

The misogynistic verse at the end circulated in many versions (cf. Walther, *Proverbia* 9007, 9048, 9213, 9041, 9210, 9309, 8751, 19476a, 24657), "Woman, the flame of satan, fetid rose, sweet poison, offering the fell cup with honeyed sweetness, Always prone to do the things that are forbidden her,"

ff. 44v-45, *Tria sunt < >libet religios proficere ...*, incipit, "Primum est diligentissima silentii obseruatio ...";

Texts on preserving monastic discipline.

f. 45v, *De absolutione*, incipit, "Forma absolutionis sufficiatis est, Ego absoluto te ...

ff. 46rv, *In institutione superioris de cuius officio officialium*, incipit, "Secundum sanctum bonaventuram ... Necessesse esse ordinem in congregatione propter pulcritudine ..." [Ends mid f. 46v, remainder blank];

ff. 47-49v, comments and extracts on various topics, including, f. 47rv, *Prelatiua non appetenda sed fomidanda. Et negligentes superiores arguendi*, incipit, "Nota prelatius habet timere de officiis ..."; f. 47v, *Contra indiscrete zelantes ...*; f. 48, *Item Gerson de Censo theologicæ ...*; *Correctio non omittenda ...* [citing Hugo and Benedict, *In regula*]; f. 49, *Contra obedientiam malorum et de irreuerencia ad prelatos, ...*;

ff. 50-53, *Sequitur aliqua circa actum visitationis <scribi?> dignissima collecta ex dictis doctorum*, incipit, "In primis notandum quod visitatio est charitativa fratris...";

Includes practical advice on problems encountered when conducting a visitation; for example, f. 51, "Si frater habet crimine occultum de quo prelatos ..."

f. 53v-54v, *De mala <societate?>*;

Note on f. 54v, directs the reader to another sermon, "de hac materia vide sermonum in primo folio huius liber."

ff. 55-57v, *Collatio r. p. Matt* <?> *n ante publicationem ... visitorum*, incipit, "In nomine patre ..., Dicit beatus paulus apostolus ...";

Quickly written in a less formal script, suggesting these are notes for a sermon.

ff. 58v-59v, *Collatio in ministri electione facienda*, incipit, "Videte quid faciatis. Nota enim hominis ex actis modicum sed dicti. Et quod nunquam indicaveritis de vos ...";

f. 60rv, *Collatio in electione alicuius superioris habenda*, incipit, "Qui elegerit que ego voluis et semerit fedus meum dabo eis in domo mea locum. Ys. lvi [Isaiah 56:5], In isto verba tria in similia f<?> scilicet timeratio electu, electi subiecito, subiunctionis";

f. 61, incipit "Deutero xvi, Non accipietis munera ..., Regule principium in scandalium magnum et ...";

f. 61v, *Dominica secunda post trinitatis*, incipit, "Luc. 14[:16]. Homo quidam fecit cenam magnam ..., Homo est deus quarum nobis facimus ...";

f. 62, *De dei misericordia ...*, incipit, "Qui dei misericordiam consequi desiderat ...";

ff. 62v-63, *De dei misericordia, 1537 quam magna sit ...*, incipit, "Quantam sit deus misericors tota proclamat ...";

f. 63v, *De obedientia*, incipit, "Ad Heb. 13, Obedite prepositis vestris ... [Hebrews 13:17], Ipsi enim per vigilavit quasi rationem ...";

[ff. 64-124v, Thirteen sermons, including four sermons with a theme from Luke 9:32, on ff. 80-122, copied formally with wide outer margins allowing for numerous annotations]

ff. 64-69, *Discipulus sermone c. xxi. Obedientia religiosorum qualis esse debet. Sermo dominica <xix?>*, incipit, "Ascendit ihesus in nauiculam ... Mt. xv [Mt. 15:39]. Sciendum est quod quod per hanc navem religio intelligitur ..., " *Hec predicta et sequentia definiunt predicatoribus in visitatione et professione novitiorum*";

ff. 69-71, [margin: *Alius sermo*], incipit, "Egreditur de terra tua ..., Abraham fuit figura religiosorum ...";

ff. 71-73, incipit, *Alius sermo de eodem*, incipit, "Religio sancta et immaculata apud deum. Hec est Iacob. 7, [James 1:27], Qui religionem et claustrum intrant dicuntur exire mundum ...";

ff. 73-74v, *Alius sermo de eodem*, incipit, "Renovamini spiritu mentis vestrae ... Ad Ephe 4[:23], ... Anima hominis non sunt intrare ...";

f. 74v, *De dei misericordiae*, incipit, "Misericordia dei nos misericors ...";

ff. 75-76v, *De dei misericordia*, incipit, Deus ostendit nobis suam misericordiam multis modis et precipue in 10, primo in redemptionis pietate ...";

ff. 76v-77, *Ex sermonibus <quintum?>*, Misericordia dei patet ...";

f. 77v-78, *De gratia baptismali*, incipit, "Anima baptismata recipit qui triplicem gratiam a christo ...";

f. 78v, *De intentione recta*; f. 79rv, *De recta intentione*;

[ff. 80-122, Four Sermons on Luke 9:23]

ff. 80-90, *Sermo primus ad religiosos 1525*, incipit, "Si quis vult venire post me ..., Luc ix [Luke 9:23], Circa que quidem verba tria sunt nobis notanda ...";

ff. 90-99, *Sermo secundus ad religiosos*, incipit, "Quis vult venire post me ... luc ix capitulo, Circa que quidem verba tria super nobis ...";

ff. 99-110, *Sermo tertius ad religiosos*, incipit, "Si quis vult venire post me, etc. Luc ix capitulo, Circa que quidem verba tria super nobis. Requirenda sermone predicta ...";

ff. 110v-122, *Quartus sermo ad religiosos*, incipit, "Si quis vult venire post me, etc., Circa que quidem verba tria super nobis notanda. Require in sermone primo usque Ave maria ...";

ff. 122-124v, *Alius sermo*, incipit, "Ascende in montem istud ... Num 27[:12], Ista que dicta sunt ad moysen spiritualiter dici possunt ad religiosos qui debent ascendere ad montem ..." [Ends mid f. 124v; remainder blank];

f. 125rv, *De voto solemnii*;

Extracts from legal decretals on solemn vows; includes verses, "Ordo sacer vestis profession religionis ...," and "Votum solemnne demonstrant quatuor istae ..."

ff. 126-130, *De voto*, incipit, "Trangressores voti faciunt ...";

Authors cited include Thomas Aquinas, Hugo, Master of the Sentences [i.e. Peter Lombard], and Nicholas de Lyra.

ff. 130v-137v, *Sermo in fratrum professione sive sororum tertius ordine*;

Includes sections on abstinence (f. 134v), on the renouncing of your own will (f. 136), and on poverty (f. 137).

ff. 138-146, 1529, *Sermo de 5 generibus renovationum quo debeamus spiritualiter renovari ...*, incipit, "In istis verbis hortatur nobis apostolus ...";

- ff. 146v-147, Extract from Jerome;
- ff. 147v-148v, *Sermo in professione sive vestitione fratrum*;
- f. 148v, *Introductio in professionibus et vestimentibus fratrum ...; 1535, altera sancta toma cantuarensis ...;*
- ff. 149-153v, *Sermo in fratrum professione 1532 18 Aprilis*, incipit, "Si quis uult venire ...";
- ff. 156-157, *Sermo 1534*;
- ff. 157v-158, Sermon, dated 1535;
- ff. 158v-163, *Sermo*;
- ff. 163-166, *Sermo ad religiosos*;
- f. 166, *De correptione prelatorum ...;*
- ff. 166v-172v, *In actu visitationis sermo 1536*;
- ff. 173-176v, *Sermo pro actu visitationis 1538*;
- ff. 177-179v, *Sermo pro religiosis ...;*
- ff. 180-182, *Ammonito fructuosa ad animarum pastores*, incipit, "Labia sacerdotes custodiant ...";
- ff. 182v-183, *De proprie carnis abnegatione*;
- ff. 183v-184,, *Ex sermonibus rosarii, sermo xxvii in secundus partes, ...* (citing St. Bernardinus);
- f. 184, *Thema, 1544, in actu visitationis*;
- ff. 184v-186, *De Iubileo*;
- f. 186v, *Ad faciendum sermonem in anno iubilee*;
- ff. 187-188v, *De duplice amore ex sermonibus dionysii ...;*
- ff. 189-193v, *Sequitur aliqua pro informationem visitantium multum necessaria ex doctorum dictis collecta*, incipit, "In primus prelatus loci presente visitationis ...";
- ff. 194-196v, *Sequitur ordinationes et declarationes a patribus tradit pro discipline conservatio ...*, incipit, "Ut uniformitas conservetur ...";
- ff. 197-198, *De dedicatione ecclesie*; f. 198v, *De dilectione ...;*

199-207v, <Fructuosa?> *admodum pro oratio de curialis pastoralis a Reverendo frater deuotissime abate domino Johannes trithemii dicta, Incipit feliciter, incipit, "Accedenti mihi hoc stadium dicendi prestantissimi patres nichil tam oportivum et vestro senatui ...," Finis orationis de curialis pastoralis";*

Johannes Trithemus (1462-1511), *Oratio de cura pastoralis* (printed, Seligenstadt 1496), the learned German Abbot, historian and lexicographer; also in Würzburg, UB M.p.th.f.64b, f. 52v.

ff. 209-212, *Collatio notabilis pro tempore uel loco dissensionis alicuius collegii uel congregationis, incipit, "Obsecro vobis ut digne ambuletis solliciti <?> unitatem spiritus in ... Ephe. 4 capitulo [cf. Ephesians 4:1]. Postquam amplius ammonet spiritualis ut digne ambulant viam ... Quod nobis prestat dominus ihesus rex paacificus. Amen." Ex sermonibus Petri de al<ni?>ce";*

Possibly Petrus de Aliaco (Pierre d'Ailly) (1350-1420), French cardinal and theologian.

f. 212v, *De correptione*; f. 213, *Ad novicios, tempore visitationes vel professiones*;

f. 213v, *Sermo fratris bernardini in professione*;

ff. 214-215, *Regule quas qui <?> observaverit apud moniales constitutus impossibile erit ut possint proficere[?] aut perseverare, incipit, "In primis necessarium in ominibus verba ... observant sigillam confessionis extra vel intra ... , Secundo ut melius conservent predicta erit eis pro secunda regula ...";*

Rules for priests serving as confessors for Nuns; for example, f. 214v, the fifth rule states that no confessor should have a singular love for, or be loved with singularity by, any of the sisters.

ff. 215v-216, *Pro actu visitationis*; f. 216v-217, *De forma huius precepti*;

ff. 217-219v, *Sermo 1538, incipit, "Estote imitatores dei ... Ad Ephe. quinto [Ephesians 5:1], Ad tertia nos hortatur primo ad divine pietatis invitationem ...";*

ff. 219v-220v, *Secunda dominica quadragesime, de virtutibus ...*; ending with notes on visitations;

ff. 221-222, *De inclusione sororum 3m regule sancti francisci, incipit, "Queritur utrum iura sequentia de monialibus concernant sorores de 3us regula sancti francisci atque obligentur viribus pro monialibus editis ... Quod probo primo quia Bonifatius papa octauus de sancta reg lib. 6 capitulo vnico mulieribus quas primo moniales vocat ...";*

f. 222 ["1548," upper margin], incipit, "Has sequentes virtutes docuit pater mathias in quedam visitatione, Prima virtus est benignitas ...";

f. 222, incipit, "Monasterium pace et concordia repletum ...";

BINDING

Although now in fragile condition, the binding of this manuscript is a rare and fascinating example of a lavishly tooled leather wallet binding. Most extant example of wallet bindings (bindings in which the back cover continues around to protect the fore-edge, and fastens on the front cover) from Western Europe are utilitarian bindings made from limp vellum; an excellent example is the Dutch vernacular prayer book from the Convent of St. Cecelia in Hoorn, bound in a sixteenth-century limp vellum wallet binding described on this site, with its original brass clasp in the middle of the front cover (reference number, TM 418; see Hindman and Bergeron-Foote, no. 6, p. 21; additional examples, TM 447, no. 1, p. 11, Italy, fifteenth century; and TM 444, no. 30, p. 77, Germany, sixteenth century). Examples of wallet bindings constructed from blind-stamped leather over pasteboard, such as the one described here, are much less common. This writer knows of two examples, both sixteenth century: British Library, IA8010, printed in Nuremberg, c. 1499, bound in Germany or France (see British Library, Database of Bookbindings: <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/bookbindings/LargeImage.aspx?RecordId=020-000007604&ImageId=ImageId=43407&Copyright=BL>), and a less formal example, described on this site (reference number, TM 53), a fifteenth-century copy of the Brut Chronicle, presumably bound in England.

The structure of the binding described here is of interest and warrants careful study. The boards are thin and quite flexible, and now wrap slightly around the book block on all sides. It appears that the thongs are sewn through a thick strip of leather that lines the spine. The outer spine is now attached to this strip by short lengths of twisted brass (two at the top and bottom, three still extant). These metal fastenings may be a later repair, but they appear to be original, and the structure of this binding echoes the structure of Islamic bindings, where the covers were cases made off the book block and attached to the spine lining. Islamic bindings customarily include fore edge flaps that extended into envelope-shaped flaps on the upper cover (see diagram of Islamic binding structure, Greenfield, 1998, pp. 88-89).

This manuscript begins with the form of clothing ("vesting") and the profession of brothers of the third order of St. Francis of Penance, as the opening words make clear, the liturgical direction ("After probation and reception, the brother is clothed in front of the altar . . . the minister turns to him and says, What do you ask? The brother replies, "I ask for the mercy of God, your society, and the third rule of Blessed Francis of Penance").

The following ceremony, for the brother's profession, asks the same question, and then directs that the minister may preach on the three vows, namely obedience, poverty and chastity. The profession is made in the presence of a notary and witness, "I brother N vow to God Almighty and to his virgin mother and to our father saint Francis to obey his minister "pro tempore existenti," to keep my body chaste and to live in common without property" (see f. 14v, and ff. 16v and 26, in Dutch).

By the fifteenth century, monastic communities identifying themselves as brothers or sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis of Penance, or simply, as the Brothers and Sisters of Penance, were an important presence in countries throughout Europe, including Spain, Italy, Southern France, Germany, and the Netherlands. They were particularly numerous in the Northern Netherlands,

where many followers of the Modern Devotion – most often groups of women, but also including male groups – became religious houses of the Third Franciscan Order. The Chapter of Utrecht, founded in 1401, granted convents within the diocese their own organization, distinct from the First Franciscan Order; this Chapter, which included a remarkably large number of Convents, has been the Chapter most carefully studied so far by modern scholars (Hilda van Engen, 2006, and Online Resources). Similar movements of unification were seen in Flanders, Spain and Italy during the fifteenth century. Throughout its history, the Third Order Regular struggled to define itself within the structure of the medieval church; in 1521, Pope Leo X, proposed a new Rule, which defined them as monastic communities, with superiors, living under the customary monastic vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. He also aimed to place all the convents of the Third Order under the supervision of Franciscans of the first order, although this provision does not seem to have been followed everywhere.

The manuscript includes more than fifty anonymous sermons, presumably reflecting sermons preached by the superior for whom this manuscript was made, or by his contemporaries, which are almost certainly unpublished. Many of these sermons are dated, as noted above, and include a note on their occasion, most often the profession of novices, and the visitation of convents. Other texts included focus on topics of interest to someone in authority in the Order, and include the reception of Novices and Profession, the monastic virtues, rules in canon law and in the teaching of the Fathers for the visitation of convents (i.e. disciplinary “visits” made at regular intervals to ensure the religious life was properly followed), as well as sections on the meaning of vows in the religious life, and on the virtues required of a prelate. Throughout, the sermons and other texts include numerous citations to the Bible, St. Bonaventure, Thomas Aquinas, Peter Lombard, and Nicholas de Lyra. Many of the sermons are copied with broad margins, allowing for copious notes, including clear notations on the structure of the sermons (“thema” “division”, etc) and identification of the frequent biblical citations – see for example the four sermons on Luke 9:23, ff. 80-122. The few texts attributed to other authors include: f. 5v, Pater Gerardus Ha<er?>le; f. 8, Jean Gerson; ff. 55-57v (copied in less formal script), “ r. p. Ma<tt//> ante publicationem,” suggesting these may be notes for a sermon; f. 212, possibly Petrus de Aliaco (Pierre d’Ailly) (1350-1420); and ff. 199-207v, Johannes Trithemius (1462-1511).

The texts are almost all for brothers of the order, but there are a few indications that this superior may have also supervised female houses: f. 10v, (form of Profession), includes annotations about the liturgy used for second order of Francis; f. 130v, a sermon for the profession of brothers or sisters of the third order, ff. 214-215, rules for priests hearing confessions of Nuns, and f. 221, “de inclusione sororum tertius regule sancti francisci” (“On the Enclosure of sisters of the third order of St. Francis”).

The Third Order of St. Francis has roots in the Penitential movements of the twelfth and thirteenth century – Christians who voluntarily adopted the life prescribed by the Church for public sinners, including penitence, chastity, simple dress, abstinence and fasting, prayer and works of charity. St. Francis probably did not create the Third Order, but he was himself influenced by the Penitent movements, and encouraged those who adopted it as a way of life, thus recognizing the desire of the laity to embrace some form of the religious life, without entering a monastic or mendicant order. These lay, or secular Franciscan Tertiaries, are distinct from followers of the Third Order

Regular, who withdrew from the world and adopted a religious, cloistered life, although initially without the traditional three monastic vows.

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