

ROGERUS DE ERACLEA (or ROGERIUS DE PLATEA?), *Quadragesimale scolarum* (Lenten "School" Sermons)

In Latin, with added text in Italian, decorated manuscript on paper

Italy, Tuscany, c. 1400-1410

*i* (paper) + 59 + *i* (paper) folios on paper, watermark, unicorn, Briquet 9937, Fano 1407; similar to Online Piccard 124811, and 124816, Montpellier 1400; 124817, Florence, Prato 1402; 124819, Montpellier 1399; 124822, Florence 1403, modern foliation in pencil top outer corner recto, complete (collation, *i-iv*12 *v*12 [-12, cancelled with no loss of text]), flourished horizontal catchwords middle lower margin, no signatures, very lightly frame-ruled with vertical bounding lines only (usually indiscernible) (justification 217-215 x 120-108 mm.) written in a quick cursive gothic bookhand, quite abbreviated, but easily legible, in forty-seven to thirty-nine long lines, guide letters for some initials, ff. 1-29, red paragraph marks and rubrics, five- to three-line red initials, ff. 1v and 3, with pen decoration in brown (blank spaces for initials after f. 28v), f. 1, 6-line red initial with decorative void spaces within the initial and elaborate brown pen decoration (partially trimmed at the top), minor stains upper outer margins throughout, large stain from water damage, in the middle top and inner margins, extending into a broader stain in the lower margin, affecting parts of the bottom twelve or fewer lines of text through f. 37 but the text, although occasionally faded, is clearly legible throughout, small worm holes from f. 29, text remains legible, f. 1 darkened, minor foxing, overall in very good condition. Bound in yellowish matte surfaced vellum (?) over pasteboard, cut flush with the bookblock, rebacked (?), shiny vellum spine with three raised bands, head and tail bands wound with red, title on spine in ink, now illegible, boards slightly warped and stained, spine damaged along the bands and at the top, head band unwound, overall in good condition. Dimensions 275 x 195 mm.

One of only six manuscripts (one of only two with the author's prologue) of the Lenten sermons by a fourteenth-century Franciscan from Sicily. The exceptional interest of these sermons has been underlined in significant scholarly studies, but they have not yet been edited. Especially noteworthy is the author's idiosyncratic structure, his use of a wide variety of sources, both Latin and vernacular (including Dante), and the quotations of proverbs in Italian. The identity of the author is disputed; a study of all the extant manuscripts may resolve this question.

## PROVENANCE

1. Copied in Italy, probably somewhere in the region of Florence at the beginning of the fifteenth century based on the watermark and script; the watermark, which is only visible on the blank leaf, f. 59 (elsewhere totally obscured by the script), is a remarkably exact match with Briquet 9937, recorded in Fano in 1407, with similar watermarks found in Florence in 1402 and 1403. It is a workable copy of the text, presumably copied by a preacher, probably a Franciscan given the author of the text, for his own use. Although it is certainly not heavily annotated, there are brief fifteenth-century annotations throughout suggesting it was used by a number of different people (now mostly partially trimmed by the binder: including, for example, a few annotations in red, ff. 16 and 24; parts of the sermons are numbered on ff. 3-8; ff. 7, notes beginning, "pulchra," or beautiful, ff. 7 and 19v; and ff. 31, 39v, 47v).

Although this manuscript is complete, it includes only thirty of the fifty-six sermons found in other copies of this text, and it seems to preserve an early version of these sermons (see below, text).

2. Back cover, small "10," in ink.

3. European Private Collection.

## TEXT

f. 1 incipit, "In Christo sibi karissimo fratri Andree de Alcamo provincie Sicilie frater Rogerius de Eraclia eiusdem provincie ... et in quo figuretur. Et sic per totam quadragesimam fauente christi gratia predicabo";

Preface; edited in Cenci, 1995, pp. 295-297.

f. 1v, *Feria 4<sup>o</sup> cinerum etc.*, incipit, "Cum ieieunatis nolite fieri sicut ypocrite tristes. Mt. 6[:16]. Pro huius thematis introduccione nota quod inuenio tres scholas videlicet Moysi Machometi et domini nostri iesu christi ...";

f. 3, *Feria 6*, incipit, "Diligite inimicos uestros, Mt 5[:44]. Pro huius thematis introduccione nota quod inuenio tres scholas scilicet naturale scripturale et graciae ...";

f. 5, *Sabbato*, incipit, "Ego sum nolite timere Mt 6[:50]. Pro huius thematis introduccione nota quod inuenio tres scholas scilicet Epicureorum platoniorum et per ypateticorum ...";

f. 7, *Dominica prima quadragesime, de epistolis*, incipit, "Ecce nunc tempore acceptabile ecce nunc dies salutis, rom. 6 [2 Cor 6:2] incipit, "Pro huius thematis introduccione notandum quod inuenio 3 scholas scilicet n<atur>e fortune et rationalis creature ...";

f. 8v, *Dominica prima quadragesime de euangelio*, incipit, "Illi soli seruiet etc. Mt 4 capitulo [Mt 4:10], Pro huius thematis introduccione notandum quod inuenio 3 scholas scilicet heremitarum predicatorum et minorum ...";

f. 10, *Feria 2<sup>a</sup>*, incipit, Cum uenerit filius in magestate [sic] sua, Mt 25 capitulo [Mt 25:31]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scholas videlicet hebraycam grecam et latinam ...";

f. 12v, *Tercia*, incipit, "Domus mea domus orationis uocabitur Mt 21[:13]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scholas scilicet belzebug in niniue, Iani in roma et phariseorum in ierusalem ...";

f. 14, *Feria quarta*, incipit, "Signum non dabitur ei, Mt 12[:39]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scholas scilicet mechanicas trepidas et incredulas ...";

f. 15, *Feria 5*, incipit, Miserere mei fili davit [sic] Mt 15[:22]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scholas scilicet illustrium et magnificorum eloquencium et scientificorum decipiencium et pro ditorum ...";

f. 16v, *6<sup>a</sup>*, incipit, "Sanus fiebat a quacumque detinebatur infirmitate, Joh. 5[:4]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scholas scilicet scolam philosophicam auicene scolam circugici galena et scolam euangelicam iesu christi ...";

- f. 18v, *Sabbato*, incipit, "Miserere nostri omnipotens deus et respice nos, Sophonie 16 [Ecclesiasticus 36:1]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet
- f. 20v, *Dominica 2<sup>a</sup> de epistolis*, incipit, "Sicut ambulatis ut habundetis magis ad Thes. 4[1 Th 4:1]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas videlicet agriculturalum ...;"
- f. 22v [*Dominica secunda*] *de euangelio*, incipit, "Transfiguratus est ante eos, Mt 17[:2]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet archimistarum ...;"
- f. 25, *Feria secunda*, incipit, "In peccato vestro moriemini, Io[8:21]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet celeste[?] paradisi ...;"
- f. 27, *Feria 3<sup>a</sup>*, incipit, "Hui [sic, for Qui] se humiliaverit exaltabitur, Mt 23[:12]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet scola elegancie ...;"
- f. 28v, [*Feria quarta*], incipit, Nescitis quid petatis, Mt 20[:22]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet carnis ...;"
- f. 30v, *Feria 5<sup>a</sup>*, incipit, "Mortuus est dives, Lc 16[:22]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio tres scolas scilicet sardanapoli in siria, chatelline rome et attile in Ungaria ...;"
- Ed. in Cenci, 1995, pp. 297-318.
- f. 33, [*Sabbato*], Dissipavit omnem substantiam suam vivendo luxuriose, Lc 15[:13]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet medee ...;"
- f. 35v [*Dominica iii, epistolis*], incipit, "Estote imitatores Dei sicut filii karissimi, ad Eph. 5[:1]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet dominorum generatorum et magistrorum ...;"
- f. 37, [*Feria iii*], incipit, "Quodcumque solveritis super terram erunt soluta et in celo, Mt 15[:11]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet scolam nuptiarum dictatorum et scientiarum ...;"
- f. 39v, [*Feria v*], incipit, "Imperavit febre et dimisit illam, Lc 4[:39]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas quarum prima est scola orig[enis] scola augustini et scola ieronimi ...;"
- f. 41, [*Dominica iv, epistolis*], incipit, "Nos sumus ancille filli sed libere, Gal 4[:31]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas videlicet pontenciarum naturarum et graciaram ...;"
- f. 43v, [*Dominica iv, de euangelio*], incipit, "Distribuit discumbentibus, Io 6[:11]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet ...;"
- f. 45v, [*Feria ii*], incipit, "Solvite tempulum hoc et in tribus diebus illud exitabo illud, Io 2[:19]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet externiam[?] intimam ...;"
- f. 47v, [*Dominica in ramis palmarum, euangelico*], incipit, "Acceperunt ramos palmarum et processerunt obviam ei, Mt. 21 [Io 12[:13]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet scolam olive ...;"

- f. 49, [*Dominica in ramis palmarum, in epistolis*], Non rapinam arbitratus est esse se equalem, Phil. 2[:6]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet scolam angelice nature humane ...";
- f. 50v, [*Feria sexta, after Dominca secunda*], incipit, "Heres est uenite occidamus eum, Mt 21[:38]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet polinestoris zezabelis et pigma leonis ...";
- f. 53, [*Dominica tertia, de euangelis*], incipit, "Omne regnum in seipsum diuisum desolabitur luc 11[:17]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet scolam thebanam troyanam et romanam ... secundo principaliter, etc. Hic deficit residuum istius sermonis";
- f. 54, [*Feria sexta, after Dominca tertia*], incipit, "Hic est uere saluator mundi, Io. 4[:42] capitulo. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet lapidum herbarum et uerborum ...";
- ff. 56v-58v, [*Sabbato, after Dominca tertia*], incipit, "Nec ego te condempnabo [Jo 8:11]. Pro huius thematis introduccione inuenio 3 scolas scilicet solam uulgaricam canonicam et theologicam ... et complete agone huius vite vivemus in Gloria. Ad quam gloriam etc. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen [Ends mid. F. 58v; remainder and f. 59, blank];
- f. 59v [Added in a fifteenth-century hand in pale red ink], incipit, "Ave maria matre <?> patre/ Vergine genetrice ancilla do<n>a/ Futura tu fusti del tuo fio et matre/ ... Sola per di a morte de le eterno luto, Oro per nuy[?]."

Hymn in honor of the Virgin Mary; fifteen verses in "terza rima."

Rogerus de Eraclea (or de Platea), O.F.M., *Quadragesimale scolarum* ("Quaresimale delle Scuole"); although the importance of this collection of sermons has been known to scholars since they were discussed, on the basis of one manuscript, by G. Palumba in 1966, they are still unedited, except for the prefatory letter and one sermon in Cenci, 1995, pp. 295-318, and largely unprinted, except for short excerpts (see works by Roccaro, Cenci, and Palumba, cited below). The importance of a critical edition of this text – valuable for the history of the medieval Church in fourteenth-century Sicily, and as an exceptionally interesting example of a medieval sermon collection – as underlined as recently as 2008 by Marta Romano. The evidence of the manuscript described here will be indispensable for any critical edition.

The text survives in only six manuscripts including this one: Assisi, Bibl. del Sacro Conv. 492;

Florence, Laurenziana, MS Plut.24 Cod 5; Florence, Laurenziana, MS Acquisiti e doni 421 (incomplete, ending with the sermon for Saturday in the third week in Lent); Nuremburg, Cod.Cent.IV.13; and Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS Maged.221. A seventh manuscript was recorded at Gemona, at the convent of St. Anthony in 1451, but its location is unknown (and is probably the same as the manuscript once Seminario Patriarcale de Venezia, Cod.L.III). The preface by the author is found only in the manuscript described here and in Florence, Laur. Acquisiti e Doni 421.

Medieval sermon collections commonly include either sermons for the Temporal, or Proper of the Time (the Sundays and Feasts celebrating the life of Christ, such as Christmas, Easter, and the Ascension), or sermons for the Sanctoral, or Proper of the Saints, that is the feasts of the saints and the Virgin Mary. The text in this manuscript is an example of a third type of collection, particularly popular in Italy, of sermons for Lent,

known as a *Quadragesimale* (or *Quaresimale* in Italian), from the Latin word for Lent, "*Quadragesima*" (literally "fortieth"). Commemorating the forty days Jesus spent fasting in the desert, Lent, from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday, the day before Easter, was a traditional period of penitential observance in the medieval church, with a focus on sermons and sacramental confession.

This *Quadragesimale* was structured to include a sermon for every week-day in Lent (known in the medieval Church's calendar as *ferial days*, so each Sunday was followed by *feria ii-vi*, then *Sabbato*, or Saturday), and two sermons, one for the epistle reading, and one for the Gospel reading for each of the six Sundays in Lent. The manuscript now in Assisi extends the cycle beyond Holy Saturday (the day before Easter), and includes two sermons for Easter, and one for the Monday and Tuesday following Easter, with a total of fifty-six sermons (see Roccaro, 1992, pp. 20-24). The manuscript described here includes thirty sermons of these possible fifty-six. It begins with a sermon for Ash Wednesday and continues – although not completely in liturgical order – through the sermon for Palm Sunday. Compared with the Assisi manuscript (following Roccaro's numbering), our manuscript lacks II (*feria v* after Ash Wednesday), XXIII (*feria ii*, after *Dominica secunda*), XXV (*feria iv*, after *Dominica secunda*), XXXII-*XLIV* (*feria ii*, after *Dominica quarta* through *Sabbato*, after *Dominica v*, or Passion Sunday), and *XLVII-LVI* (*feria ii*, following Palm Sunday through *feria iii* after Easter). The text follows liturgical order – with omissions – until the sermon for Palm Sunday, which is then followed by four sermons: *feria vi* following the second Sunday, the third Sunday (the sermon on the Gospel), and *feria vi* and *Sabbato* following the third Sunday in Lent. There may also be omissions in the text of the sermons that are included here (see for example the ending of the sermon for the third Sunday in Lent beginning on f. 53, which notes "here the remainder of the sermon is missing").

As all the scholars who have worked on the sermons have noted, the text in these manuscripts differs substantially (cf. Cenci, and Roccaro, "*Sermones*," 289-93, noting differences between Assisi and Plut. 24 cod. 5 for example). Cenci, whose work represents the most careful study based on all of the known manuscripts, including this one, to date (see Cenci, 1995, pp. 287-288, discussing this manuscript as M, then in a private collection) considered this manuscript a witness to the original recension of the text, intended – with its authorial prologue – for reading and study, but with many errors, omissions through homoioteleuton, corrections, adaptations, and abbreviations. Of particular significance is the reading on f. 32v, where this manuscript is the sole witness of the reading Cenci regards as the author's original and an important clue to its origin, "*Item a patria ut a Messina messanenses.*" As Cenci noted, it is incomplete – possibly reflecting its exemplar, or in his judgment, perhaps because of the death of the client who was having the manuscript copied. However, a point worth further research is whether this manuscript and Florence, Laur. Acquisiti e Doni 421 – the only two extant manuscripts with the author's preface – are evidence that the original version of the text included fewer sermons, since both of these manuscripts include fewer than the fifty-six sermons found in the Assisi manuscript and other witnesses.

The text is known for its early references to Dante (c. 1261-1321; see especially Palumba, 1966; this manuscript includes one citation from Dante on f. 34v-35), and the author's propensity for citing proverbs in Italian (for example, f. 2, and f. 37, incipit, "*Dico quod in uulgari proberbio qui dicit ama chi tama ...*"). There are numerous classical references (f. 37v, Bacchus and Apollo; f. 23, "*De dedalo qui fuit magnus artifex*"), as well as legends, mythology, stories from the east, Greece, Rome, and more recent tales from France, and other places.

Modern scholars are divided as to the date of composition and author of these sermons; a careful review of all the evidence in the course of preparing a critical edition, based on the text of all known manuscripts, will likely shed light on the controversy (Romano, 2008). Cenci argued from internal evidence that the *Quadragesimale* must date after 1360, since it includes (in at least one manuscript) a mention of the death of Richard Fitzralph, archbishop of Armagh in 1360, as well as other clues, and suggests – using the evidence of reading preserved in this manuscript – that it was probably composed at Messina in 1367 at the request of Andrew of Alcamo, OFM, and later preached in Naples in 1368. Given this late date, Cenci suggests it was written by a Franciscan, Ruggero da Eraclea, later Gela, in Sicily – a figure known in at least one document dated 1367, promoting him as a master of theology, published by Cenci, but otherwise little known.

Roccaro in contrast, argued the treatise was by another Franciscan active in Sicily, known as Rogerus de Platea (Rogerus de Piazza Armerina, Ruggero de Platea, Ruggero de Platea, or Ruggero da Piazza). He was born probably c. 1304, studied at Naples, and then served as provincial general of the Franciscan province in Sicily from 1336 until perhaps 1345. He was a prominent figure, who served at the Sicilian court, and was appointed Bishop of Bosa in Sardinia in 1360, and the Bishop of Mazara del Vallo in Sicily in 1363; he died sometime after 1374. In Roccaro's view the *Quadragesimale* originated in sermons preached during his first years as provincial general, around 1336, and then were recopied and adapted later (arguing, for example, that the reference to Richard Fitzralph represents a later addition, not present in the author's original).

The question of their origin aside, these sermons represent a fascinating, and idiosyncratic, approach to the sermon form. In one manuscript, the collection is known as the *Quadragesimale scholarum*, the "Quadragesimale of the schools." As he states in his preface, Rogerus aims to create in these sermons a "school" for the Church where the doctrine of Jesus is taught, to compete with the views taught in earthly, or secular, schools, whose views he presents to contrast with the true doctrine. He begins with the biblical theme for that day, and then links the theme to the views of three "schools" each expressing a different teaching, either good or bad, and then concludes with the true teaching of the Gospel; for example in the sermon for the fifth feria following the second Sunday in Lent (printed by Cenci, 1995, pp. 297-318), the author begins by introducing the ideas on the afterlife expressed by Sardanapalus, the Assyrian ruler famous for his indulgent lifestyle, the Roman consul Catiline, and Attila the Hun. In this sermon, all three examples are negative and contrast with the true teaching of the Gospel. This novel device is used consistently in each of the sermons in the *Quadragesimale* and allowed the author considerable scope to display his erudition. He then returns to the biblical theme and proposes a virtue, a vice or a good work, linked to the theme and then expanded by discussing where it originated, how it is exercised, and its outstanding features. The sermons certainly have a learned air about them, although at the same time, their use of the vernacular, and illustrative stories, suggest they were intended to also interest a wider audience.

## LITERATURE

Bériou, Nicole. "Les Sermons latins après 1200," in Beverly Mayne Kienzle, ed. *The Sermon*, Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 81-83, Turnhout, Brepols, 2000.

Cenci, Cenci. "Il quaresimale delle scuole di fr. Ruggero da Eraclea," *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum*, 88 (1995), pp. 269-318.

Delcorno, C. "Medieval Preaching in Italy (1200-1500)," in *The Sermon*, ed. by Beverly Kienzle. Typologie des sources du moyen âge occidental 81-83, Turnhout, Belgium, Brepols, 2000, pp. 449-560.

Longère, Jean. *La prédication médiévale*, Paris, Etudes augustiniennes, 1983.

Palumbo, G. "Il codice 492 della Biblioteca di S. Francesco nella Comunale di Assisi," in *Dante e l'Italia meridionale. Atti del Congresso nazionale di studi danteschi*, Florence, 1966, pp. 463-478.

Roccaro, Cataldo. "I 'signa finalis iudicii' nel 'Sermo I' di Ruggero da Piazza," *Schede Medievale* 28-29 (1995), 45-57

Roccaro, Cataldo. *Scritti Minori*, ed. Tommaso Guardi, Palermo, Università degli Studi, 1999.

Roccaro, Cataldo. "La 'scrittura' dei sermoni latini: struttura e tecnica compositiva fra enunciazione teoriche ed applicazione pratica," in *Scritti Minori*, ed. Tommaso Guardi, Palermo, 1999, pp. 231-265.

Roccaro, Cataldo, ed. Rogerii de Platea, *Sermones*, ed., Franciscana 5, Palermo, 1992.

Romano, Marta M. "'Il 'Quadragesimale' di frate Ruggero: 'status quaestionis' e proposte di lavoro,'" *Schede Medievale* 46 (2008), pp. 169-177.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

"Rogerius de Piazza Armerina," in Maarten van der Heijden and Bert Roest, "Franciscan Authors, 13<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century: A Catalogue in Progress"

<http://fr-authors.2-www.de>

<http://users.bart.nl/~roestb/franciscan/index.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>

TM 611