

ARNULFUS DE BOERIIS, *Speculum monachorum*; PS. AUGUSTINE, *Speculum peccatoris*; ISIDORE OF SEVILLE, *Synonyma* (abridged and reworked)
In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper
Western Netherlands or Northern Rhine (Westphalia?) c. 1500-1525

i (paper) + 22 + *i* (paper) folios on paper, modern foliation in pencil top outer corner recto, watermark, angular letter P, with two lines, above a rod with quatrefoil, Piccard Online 109628, Wesel, 1511 (and numerous similar, Piccard Online 109693, Xanten, 1507, 109610, Arnhem, 1526, 109896, Wesel, 1505-6, etc.), and letter P with two lines, above a rod with crescent moon (?), not identified in Piccard, texts are complete, once part of a longer manuscript (collation, *i*¹² *ii*¹⁰), no catchwords or original signatures, quires numbered 1 and 2 in modern pencil (Arabic numerals) center lower margin, frame ruled in blind with all rules full-length (justification, 150-147 x 102-95 mm.), written below the top line in an upright well-spaced hybrida script in two columns of twenty-eight to twenty-five lines, majuscules within text stroked with red, red rubrics, three- to two-line red initials with simple pen decoration, in excellent condition, first folio slightly soiled and darkened. Quarter bound in modern marbled paper and vellum over pasteboard, in excellent condition, covers slightly bowed. Dimensions 204 x 143 mm.

The texts included here are all spiritual treatises giving advice on how to live as a good Christian. It is noteworthy that two are attributed to St. Bernard (although not actually by him), a fact that testifies to his continuing influence at the end of the Middle Ages. Isidore's *Synonyma*, here in an abbreviated version that deserves further study, has rarely been available on the market (three sales since 1954, of two manuscripts, in the Schoenberg Database). Bernard's writings and Isidore's *Synonyma* were often read in *Devotio Moderna* circles.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in the first quarter of the sixteenth century, c. 1500-25 in the Western Netherlands or Northern Rhine as indicated by the evidence of the script, decoration, and watermark.
2. All the texts included here are complete, and the first folio is darkened, suggesting that it may have served as the beginning folio for a significant amount of time. Nonetheless, the small size of the manuscript, and the tab glued to f. 1, suggest it was once part of a lengthier codex, and it is almost certain based on the similarities in script, decoration, layout, and binding that this manuscript was once bound with the manuscript described on this site as TM 615 (theological texts and *quaestiones*, possibly by Johannes von Frankfort (?), together with an anonymous theological commentary and a text on the Properties of the planets and zodiac).

TEXT

ff. 1-3, *Incipit speculum beati bernardi abbatidis ad monachos*, incipit, "Si quis emendacioris uite desiderio tactus cogitacionum ... quomodo puluere contegantur et sempiterne obliuioni traduntur";

Arnulfus de Boeriis, *Speculum monachorum*; printed in Migne, *Patrologia latina*, vol. 184:1175-8, where the text is attributed to Pseudo-Bernard; the text here lacks the last few lines in Migne, and concludes with a phrase not in Migne; Bloomfield, 1979, no. 5582, listing as variant titles:

Speculum interioris hominis, *Speculum monasticum*, or *Speculum super emendacionem vite hominis religionis*, and listing more than sixty manuscripts; see also Janauschek, 1981, p. ix, no. 95, identifying Arnulfus de Boeriis (Arnoul de Boeriis, Arnoul de Bohéries, Arnulfus de Boeriis, d. 1149) as a Cistercian from the diocese of Louvain (possibly from Bohéry-Saint-Hilaire).

As the title makes clear, this is a treatise addressed to monks, in the form of short aphorisms about the monastic life, exhorting the monk to read and meditate on these pages as one looks in a mirror, to contemplate your inner soul and to emend your life in every aspect. The metaphor of a mirror is encountered frequently in medieval devotional literature. There are a few sentences counseling perfection in each aspect of a monk's day, from the time spent in Choir chanting the Psalms, at the altar if the monk was a priest, at work, at meals, confessing one's faults at the monastic chapter, and concluding with advice for general behavior (including the advice to avoid eloquence, since it is better to be rustic rather than urbane in one's speech).

ff. 3-13, *Incipit speculum peccatoris beati Bernardi abbatis clareuallensis*, incipit, "Utinam saperent et ingelligerent ac nouissima prouiderent [Deut 32:29]. Quoniam karissime frater in uia huius seculi fugientis sumus ... ut per hoc eternam dampnationem euadas et cum ihesu Christo domino nostro uitam eternam possideat. Quam tibi et mihi concedat que est benedictus in secula Amen";

Ps. Augustine, *Speculum peccatoris*; Bloomfield, 1979, no. 4918, listing almost two hundred manuscripts; Stegmüller, 1950-1980, no. 1481 (no manuscripts listed); printed in Migne, *Patrologia latina*, vol. 40:983-992; Allen, 1927, p. 353-4.

This widely disseminated text circulated under many names, most commonly Augustine, or as here, St. Bernard, but also St. Anselm, St. Gregory and St. Basil. It was a popular text in the late Middle Ages, and was translated into German (Roth, 1991, and TM 543), French (Chesney, 1951), and English. A few manuscripts attributed the text to Richard Rolle, although as Allen concluded, there is no likelihood that the text was written by the English hermit (Allen, 1927, pp. 353-4). Hugh of St. Victor is quoted, so the text cannot be earlier than twelfth century. Allen observed, "It is a severely ascetic work entirely without mysticism, dwelling on the gloomy side of religion to the total exclusion of the joy." It does tend to focus on the brevity of this life and the importance of preparing for the life in the world to come.

ff. 13-22v, *Incipit tractatus beati ysidori ad instauracionem bone uite*, incipit, "Dilecte fili dilige lacrimas noli differre eas. Tantum promptus esto ad lamenta quam tum fuisti pronus ad culpam. Qualis tibi fuit ... lacrimae penitentium apud deum pro baptismo reputatur"; f. 19, *Hic introducuuntur persone duorum videlicet deflentis hominis et ammonentis rationis, Homo*, incipit, "Anima mea in angustiis est cor meum. Fluctuat ubicumque ... Odium enim separat hominem a regno dei. Beato animo recipe omnes."

Isidorus Hisplaensis, *Synonyma*; ed. Elfassi, 2009, and earlier in Migne, *Patrologia latina*, vol. 83:825-68; Dekkers, 1961, 1203; Cardelle de Hartmann, 2007, 168-9; and Diem and May, Monastic Manuscripts Project (Online Resources), with a partial list of ten manuscripts. Elfassi does not publish a complete census, but reports that there are 508 complete manuscripts and 81 with extracts (and describes the thirty-six he used for his edition).

This is a significant reworking of Isidore's text, abbreviated, and presented in a different order, beginning in the second book at II.24 (Elfassi, ed., p. 81, line 228), The second section of the text begins on f. 19 in the first book at I.5 (ed., p. 6, line 25), continuing through f. 21, l. 3, col. b, "Commotus sum ..." (I.75, ed. p. 60, line 760), and then returning to book two, f. 21, l. 11, col. b, "Queso te o anima ..." (II.1, ed., p. 63, line 1), and concluding, "Odium enim separat ..." (II.36, ed. p. 91, line 358).

Throughout, there are numerous verbal changes and sections omitted; for example, on f. 13v, l. 4 from bottom, col. a, "Nullus sit casus quem non premeditatio prevenit ..." [Elfassi, ed. p. 83, line 267], is followed by "Et bona et mala ..." [ed. p. 85, line 284]; f. 13v, l. 3 from bottom, col. b, "Disce a Christo ..." [ed. p. 87, line 314]; f. 14, l. 5, col. b, "Non enim habebis indulgentium .." is ed., p. 90, line 350, and f. 14v, l. 17, mid col. a, "In omnibus actibus tuis imitare bonus emulare sanctos ..." is ed. p. 94, line 403]). Further study to determine if this reworking of the text circulated in other manuscripts, or if it is unique to this manuscript, would be of interest to scholars working on the reception of this text in the later Middle Ages (see Elfassi, 2009, pp. cxv-cxvi, for example, describing the an abbreviated and re-ordered version printed in Cologne, 1473, that also circulated in manuscripts; apparently not, however, closely related to the version in the manuscript described here).

Isidore of Seville (c. 560-636), bishop of Seville from 600 until his death, was the last of the great Latin fathers. He was a prolific writer, whose works include histories, grammatical treatises, and religious and theological texts. His best known and most important work, the *Etymologiae*, survives in as many as 1,000 manuscripts, is a vast storehouse of universal knowledge – grammatical, scientific, and theological – that served as a crucial source of information for the entire Middle Ages. Isidore, long the patron saint of students and schoolchildren, in 1999 was named the patron saint of the Internet, because of his ability to assimilate and organize information.

The *Synonyma* (Synonyms), dated by its editor after 595 and before 631 (likely 604-612), circulated with many titles, including the *Liber lamentationum* (Book of Lamentation); the title used in this manuscript, *Tractatus beati ysidori ad instauracionem bone uite* (A Treatise by the Blessed Isidore to Restore the Good Life), is a good description of its contents. It begins with an effusive lamentation in which Man complains about the bitterness of the human condition, and then continues as a dialogue between Man (*homo*), and Reason (*ratio*) or the soul, in which Reason tells Man how he can reach eternal joy. Reason gives Man advice about the prospect of damnation and the forgiveness and mercy of God. The second book follows naturally on this theme and instructs the reader on how to lead a good Christian life and gain salvation in the life to come. As we have noted above, the text in this manuscript is an abbreviated and restructured version that begins in the second book, followed by an abbreviated version of the first book, and then concludes with part of the second book.

The work is written in rhythmic prose and structured around the repetition of words and phrases with the same meaning, or synonyms (the reason for its title). Nonetheless, despite Isidore's use of this traditional rhetorical device, it would be misleading to see this as primarily a grammatical or rhetorical treatise, although it has sometimes been discussed as such by modern scholars. It was a popular text throughout the Middle Ages, as the number of surviving manuscripts testify, and it was particularly popular in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in

the German speaking world, where, as Elfassi has outlined, it was valued for its inwardly focused spirituality, and rejection of life in this world (Elfassi, Online resources). It has been compared with both the *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas a Kempis, and Henry Suso's *Horologium sapientiae* – the last comparison probably more apt, given the use of dialogue in both works. Certainly, modern scholars are right to point out the important differences between the spiritual focus of this late sixth- or early seventh-century work and these classics of late medieval spirituality, but these differences were unlikely to have been important to its late medieval audience. Its popularity in regions where the influence of the *Devotio moderna* was strong suggests that the later Middle Ages embraced it for its spiritual counsel and interpreted its message through their own eyes.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Watermarks, Piccard Online

<http://www.piccard-online.de/ergebnis1.php>

Speculum monachorum, online text (attributed to St. Bernard)

<http://www.binetti.ru/bernardus/153.shtml>

Albrecht Diem and Will May, Monastic Manuscript Project (Isidore, *Synonyma*)

<http://www.earlymedievalmonasticism.org/texts/Isidore-Synonyma.html>

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