

SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX, *Traicté d'aymer Dieu* [Anonymous French Translation of *De diligendo Deo*]

In French, decorated manuscript on parchment
France, c. 1535-1550

36 ff., preceded by one paper and one parchment flyleaves, complete (collation: i¹⁰, ii⁶, iii¹⁰, iv⁶, v⁴), written in a fine and regular Roman script, in brown ink, on up to 22 lines (justification 156 x 100 mm.), parchment ruled in red, rubrics in red, another rubric in blue, two decorated initials: large reserved Roman capital on grounds of acanthus leaves and hatched design traced in brown ink. Bound in a nineteenth-century English binding of dark blue morocco over pasteboards, smooth spine with gilt filets and gilt title "S. Bernard de l'amour de Dieu" and date at foot of spine "MS Saec. XV. [or XVI?]", frame on boards composed of triple gilt filets, center of boards with gilt heraldic arms and motto "Carpe Diem." (Phillipp Augustus Hanrott). Dimensions 310 x 250 mm.

This elegant manuscript is apparently the only surviving copy of a hitherto unknown French vernacular translation of the important work of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux on the Love of God. This translation offers a bridge between the better-known late twelfth-century translation and the seventeenth-century printed version of the Feuillant monk Antoine de Saint-Gabriel (1674). The quality of the script and fine ornamentation suggest that the present codex is most likely a presentation copy to an unknown patron.

PROVENANCE

1. Style of script and two decorated initials suggest a French origin of circa 1540-1550 for this manuscript, likely copied during the later portion of the reign of King Francis I (who dies in 1547). The very neat and calligraphic script of this manuscript suggests it was copied as a presentation copy, although the recipient remains unknown.
2. Philip Augustus Hanrott (1776-1856), important British bibliophile and collector, who had the manuscript bound in his characteristic armorial binding. His library was dispersed in a number of sales in 1834 by Evans: "Catalogue of the Splendid, Choice and Curious Library of P. A. Hanrott, Esq..." (5 sales in all). This particular manuscript might have been included in these sales, but is not readily identifiable and apparently does not figure in the catalogues we have consulted. There are a number of manuscripts bound with the same heraldic arms. See British Library, London, BL, Add. MS 19900 (*Le livre de senecque des quatre vertus...*, MS. 15th c.); see also Paris, BnF, MS fr. 28640, Bonaventura, *Life of St Francis*. Philip Hanrott was also once owner of the Hours of Joanna I of Castile or Joanna the Mad (London, BL, Add MS 18852).
3. Armand de Crochard, his book stamp in blue on f. 1: "Bibliothèque d'Armand de Crochard. Fontaine Milon. Maine et Loire."
4. Unidentified round book stamp found on recto of first paper flyleaf in upper righthand corner, blurred and illegible.
5. European Continental Collection.

TEXT

ff. 1-1v, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, *Traicté d'aymer Dieu* [Anonymous French translation of *De diligendo Dei*], Prologue, rubric, *Le Prologue de saint Bernard Abbé sur le traicté d'aymer Dieu*; Dedication : *A illustre personne Monseigneur Haymericus Diacre de l'Eglise Rommaine, Cardinal, & Chancelier : Bernard Abbé dict de Clairevaux. Vivre et mourir en Dieu* [To the illustrious Lord Haimeric, Cardinal-Deacon and Chancellor of the Roman Church, from Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux, who seeks to live for the Lord and die in him]; incipit, "Vous souliez me demander des oraisons, et non pas des questions, et certes je ne m'estime a l'ung ny a l'autre idoyne: mais mon estat m'en admoneste, combien que ma conversation...";

ff. 1v-36v, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, *Traicté d'aymer Dieu* [Anonymous French translation of *De amore Dei*], rubric, in blue, *Le Traictié*; incipit, "Vous voulez donc scavoit de moy pourquoy et comment Dieu doibt estre aymé ? Et moy aussi. La cause pour laquelle on doibt aymer Dieu, c'est Dieu"; explicit, "[...] Parquoy la ou il n'y aura plus lieu de misere, ou temps de mesericorde, la certes n'y pourra estre aulcune affection de pitié."

The present codex contains an anonymous French vernacular translation of the treatise by Bernard of Clairvaux, *On loving God* (translated from the original Latin, *De diligendo Deo*). The treatise begins with the question: "Why we should love God and how we ought to do it." The work is dedicated to Haimeric (or Aimery), Cardinal Deacon and Papal Chancellor of the Roman Church by Bernard, Abbot of Clairvaux "to live to the Lord and to the Lord to die." Haimeric was a Burgundian Prelate, the cousin of Pierre le Chastre, Archbishop of Bourges. He was made the Pope's Chancellor in 1123 and died in 1141. Bernard thus composed his work between those dates, likely circa 1132-1135 (see B. de Clairvaux, ed., 1993, Introduction, p. 27).

Surprisingly, before the present work, there was no treatise explicitly dedicated to the sole theme of the "Love of God." This work contains the major themes of Bernardine spirituality: Bernard was considered in a way the last of the Fathers of the Church. He elaborates in this work his theory of the "Four degrees of Love," or four types of love that Christians experience as they grow in their relationship with God: loving one's self; selfish love, loving as God, and finally loving one's self in God. It is in this work that Bernard coined the saying: "You want me to tell you why God is to be loved and how much. I answer, the reason for loving God is God himself; and the measure of love due to Him is immeasurable Love" [*Causa diligendi Deum, Deus est, modus, sine modo diligere*]. In the present French sixteenth-century translation, the quote is found f. 1v: "Vous voulez donc scavoit de moy pourquoy et comment Dieu doibt estre aymé? Et moy aussi. La cause pour laquelle on doibt aymer Dieu, c'est Dieu. La manière, sans mesure."

The Latin original is found in numerous manuscripts (over 60 extant manuscripts, listed in *Sancti Bernardi Opera*, vol. III, pp. 112-115). *De diligendo deo* was first printed in Cologne, circa 1470 and is edited in PL, 182, 973-1000. The work was amongst those that attracted interest at an early date from French vernacular translators, to wit the equally anonymous twelfth-century French translation found in the compilation of Bernardine works in French in Nantes, Musée Dobrée, MS 5 (f. 162 and following): "L'epistole l'abei Bernart de Cleresvals a un eveske cardinal, de diligendo Deo..." (see G. Durville, *Catalogue de la bibliothèque du musée Thomas Dobrée* (1904), pp. 223-261; L. Delisle, in *Journal des savants*, 1900, p. 150; see also S. Gregory, *La traduction en prose française du 12e siècle des Sermones in Cantica de Saint Bernard*, Amsterdam, 1994, who also edits the French *De l'amour de Dieu*). More generally, on the early French vernacular translations of Bernard, see A. Schulze, *Zu den altfranzösischen Bernhard Handschriften...*, Leipzig, 1903. The work was later translated

in the seventeenth century by Dom Antoine de Saint-Gabriel, a Feuillant monk ([Antoine de Saint-Gabriel transl.] *Traité de l'Amour de Dieu*, in *Traitez spirituels de S. Bernard, premier abbé de Clairvaux*, Paris, 1674). A recent critical edition of the Latin original and a modern translation has been published by Sources chrétiennes (1993, no. 393). There is also the very good English translation "On Loving God" by R. Walton, in *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux*, Volume V, Treatises II, Cistercian Publications, 1974, pp. 91-132.

This particular French vernacular translation has never been edited and published. Linguistically it constitutes a most interesting link or middle-ground version between the late twelfth-century version (published by S. Gregory, 1994) and the later seventeenth-century translations such as the one by the Feuillant monk Antoine de Saint-Gabriel (published Paris, 1664). It is a testimony to the endurance of Bernardine spirituality in the sixteenth century, as well as a fine example of humanistic calligraphy. Last but not least, one can only underscore the beauty of the French language in this first half of the sixteenth century. Further research on the study of Bernard of Clairvaux in the sixteenth century might yield clues as to who might have commissioned this translation, but above all it merits to be published for its own merit.

LITERATURE

Bernard de Clairvaux. *Traitez spirituels de S. Bernard, premier abbé de Clairvaux*, Paris, J. de Laize-de-Bresche, 1674.

Bernard de Clairvaux. *L'amour de Dieu. La grâce et le libre arbitre*. Introductions, traductions, notes et index par F. Callerot et alia, Paris, 1993 [Sources chrétiennes, no. 393].

Chatillon, F. "Notes pour l'interprétation de la préface du *De Diligendo Deo* de S. Bernard," *Revue du Moyen Age Latin* 20 (1964), pp. 98-112.

Gilson, E. *La théologie mystique de saint Bernard*, Paris, 1947.

Leclercq, Jean. *Saint Bernard. Textes choisis et présentés par Dom Jean Leclercq*, Namur, 1958.

Gregory, Stewart. *La traduction en prose française du 12e siècle des Sermones in Cantica de Saint Bernard*, Amsterdam, 1994.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, *On Loving God*, in English:
http://www.ccel.org/ccel/bernard/loving_god.toc.html

On Bernard of Clairvaux:
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_of_Cclairvaux](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bernard_of_Clairvaux)

Translation by Antoine de Saint-Gabriel (1674):
<http://books.google.fr/books?id=wfZbAAAAQAAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Traitez+spirituels+de+S.+Bernard,+premier+abb%C3%A9+de+Clairvaux,&hl=fr&sa=X&ei=8DjxUlbGEGILbOp- agegF&ved=0CDYQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=Traitez%20spirituels%20de%20S.%20Bernard%2C%20premier%20abb%C3%A9%20de%20Clairvaux%2C&f=false>

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