

NICOLAUS DE AQUAVILLA [NICOLAS D'HACQUEVILLE], *Sermones de sanctis* [Sermons for the Sanctoral]; *Sermones de communi sanctorum* [Sermons on the Commons of the Saints]

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment

France (Paris?), c. 1275-1325

210 + [1] folios on parchment, complete (collation: i-xiv8, xv6, xvi-xxv8, xxvi6, xxvii7 [of 8, missing the last leaf of quire, likely a cancelled blank]), tight gothic script in light brown ink, text on two columns, with up to 40 lines per column (justification 140 x 100 mm), quire signatures, catchwords, paragraph marks in alternating red or blue, guide letters, guide words for the rubricator in the margin (e.g. f. 13v; f. 18 etc.), penwork initials in blue or red with opposing color filigree penwork, one larger parti-colored initial with filigree penwork (10 line high) with a descender (bandes d'I) along the lefthand column (opening leaf), marginal annotations in a later late 14<sup>th</sup> or early 15<sup>th</sup> c. hand (e.g. ff. 20v-21; ff. 211-211v). Bound in a limp vellum 16<sup>th</sup>-century binding, smooth spine, title on the spine "Sermones fratris Nicolai de Aquavilla," traces of ties (now wanting). Dimensions 205 x 155 mm.

This collection of unpublished model sermons for the Sanctoral and the Common of Saints by Nicolaus de Aquavilla (d. c. 1417), a French Franciscan preacher, appears to have been copied within the author's lifetime or little after, making this an important witness for this text, which survives in fewer than twenty manuscripts. It includes a colophon with the name of the scribe, "Gaufridus." Likely for use in a Franciscan milieu, we suggest that it may have been copied for a Franciscan friar (from Italy?), who was studying at the University of Paris.

## PROVENANCE

1. Manuscript copied by an identified scribe who provides only his first name "Gaufridus," as stated in the colophon: "Expliciunt sermones fratris Nicholai de Haquevilla de festis omnium sanctorum que celebrantur per totum annum. Expliciunt sermones fratris Nicholai de Haquevilla de ordine minorum fratrum et dicitur preparate maior. Nomen scriptoris Gaufridus cultor amoris" (fol. 210v). The associated formula "cultor amoris" [devotee of love] is found in other signed manuscripts, for instance Vendôme, BM, MS 225: "Nomen scriptoris Nicholaus cultor amoris" (France, Paris (?), 13<sup>th</sup> c.). Our Gaufridus "cultor amoris" is not recorded in Bénédictins du Bouveret, *Colophons de manuscrits occidentaux des origines au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Fribourg, 1976).

Script and decoration are evidence that this manuscript was copied in France, very likely in Paris, c. 1275-1325. The script contains a number of French features, especially abbreviation marks. The single-compartment 'a', long final 's', and final 'm' extending below the baseline, together with great speed of execution and letters more or less broken up into their component strokes, are frequently found in manuscripts from the university of Paris. (A remarkable oddity is the use of an ampersand for "et", very uncommon after 1230, alongside the usual Tironian *nota* '7'). The filigree initials are also typical of French Parisian production of the 1270s onwards (see Stirnemann, 1990, cat. 35, 39, 45). Therefore, despite the early presence of this manuscript in Italy, it seems mostly likely that it was copied in Paris.

A Franciscan origin is suggested by the choice of texts by a Franciscan preacher (although this is not proof that it was necessarily copied in or intended for a Franciscan milieu) but also the presence of a near contemporary or at least early enough ownership mark referring to "fratrum minorum" (brothers minor) (f. 210v; f. 211). Given the text and the overall appearance of the manuscripts, it could have been copied for the use of a Franciscan Friar (perhaps from Italy) studying at the University of Paris.

2. The notes added on ff. 20v-21 and 211rv by a Franciscan friar are evidence that the manuscript was in Italy relatively early in its history. The script is a larger, fast, and disjointed personal hand with cursive features (looped ascenders) and distinctly Italian orthography. It is an idiosyncratic script and as such is difficult to date, but it could be as much as half a century later than the manuscript.
3. Inscription placed below the colophon (15th c.?), partly effaced: "Iste liber est fratrum minorum [...]" [This book belongs to the Brothers Minor...]. Unfortunately, the name of the abbey has been scratched out. Another inscription (same hand) is found on f. 211 recto (an added flyleaf, no doubt): "Iste lib[er] est consesu ad usum fratri [J]acomo de Patro(?) decanum (?) de ordine fratrum minorum."
4. At the foot of the spine, one reads "i 4" or perhaps "14," perhaps a shelfmark. On the front cover a few other numbers "[..]36" and "en 850."
5. France, Private Collection. A pasted strip on the upper pastedown contains an inscription in brown ink (19th c.) in French, suggesting that the manuscript was in France at least by the 19th century. The inscription reads: "In 4o fin XIII ou commencement du XIV" [In-4 format, end of the 13th or beginning of the 14th century].

## TEXT

ff. 1-192v, Nicolaus de Aquavilla [Nicolas d'Hacqueville], *Sermones de sanctis* [Sermons pour les fêtes des saints], rubric, *Sermoni adventu vel quando volveris* [Sermon for Advent or for when you want] incipit, "Preparate corda vostra domino et illi soli servite... Duo sunt ibi consideranda..." [Schneyer, IV, S 44, p. 200, no. 129]; following sermon (f. 3v), rubric, *De beato antonio sermo*; incipit, "Quasi stella matutina..." [Schneyer, IV, S 41, p. 200, no. 128]; following sermon (f. 6), rubric, *De beato iohanne baptista sermo primul*; incipit, "Tu puer propheta altissimi..." [Schneyer, IV, S 44, p. 200, no. 130]; rubric, *In translatione beati martini sermo*; incipit, "Enoch placuit Deo... In verbis istis duo..." [Schneyer, IV, p. 200, no. 134]; last sermon "de sanctis" (f. 190), without a rubric, "Dedi spiritum meum super eum... Verba ista ad litteram dicta sunt..." [Schneyer, I V, S 40, p. 200, no. 125];

ff. 192v-210, Nicolaus de Aquavilla [Nicolas d'Hacqueville], *Sermones de communi sanctorum*, first sermon "de communi sanctorum" (f. 192v); incipit, "Ecce ego mitto vos sicut oves... Verba ista dicuntur de omnibus..." [Schneyer, IV, C 2, p. 204, no. 178]; sermon (without a rubric), incipit, "Fecerunt autem filii Israel... Verba ista plana sunt..." [Schneyer, IV, C 11, p. 204, no. 183]; last sermon (without a rubric): "Sacerdotes tui induantur... O bone Jesu..." [Schneyer, IV, C 14, p. 204, no. 184]; explicit, "[...] illam coronam vite eterne concedat nobis ihesus christus filius dei unii amen";

f. 210v, Colophon containing identified scribe (Gaufridus): "Expliciunt sermones fratris Nicholai de Haquevilla de festis omnium sanctorum que celebrantur per totum annum. Expliciunt

sermones fratris Nicholai de Haquevilla de ordine minorum fratrum et dicitur prepareate maior.  
Nomen scriptoris Gaufridus cultor amoris."

This manuscript contains a collection of "model sermons" for the feasts of the saints (Sanctoral) and a few also for the Common of the Saints. The sermons were composed by Nicolaus de Aquavilla (Nicolas de Hacqueville), a franciscan preacher active circa 1300 (died circa 1317?). We know relatively little about Nicolaus de Aquavilla. His name suggests the topographical reference to "Hacqueville" corroborated by the spelling found in the colophon of the present manuscript: "Nicholai de Haquevilla" (f. 210v). Hacqueville being a town in Normandy, Nicolas de Hacqueville is thus thought to have been from Normandy. Some believe him rather to have been a Franciscan from England (see Richard Sharpe, *A Handlist of the Latin Writers of Great Britain and Ireland Before 1540*, Turnhout, Brepols, 1997, p. 383). Others have even suggested that he was a Dominican, which seems unlikely (see CGM, Bordeaux, 1880, tome I, p. 103, MS. 285, Nicolaus de Aquavilla, Sermons sur les saints, XIIIe s.).

The sermons found in this collection by Nicolaus de Aquavilla are "model" sermons, that is sermons grouped into a collection by a famous or renowned preacher (here Nicolaus de Aquavilla), to be used and adapted by other preachers, often less experienced. Collections of model sermons either offered "turnkey" sermons for a specific feast day (as in the present case) or for each Sunday of the liturgical calendar, or were used as a base or support to create other sermons adapted to local use.

There are two collections of sermons attributed to Nicolaus de Aquavilla: the most copied and widely disseminated are the *Sermones de tempore*. This collection has recently been chosen as the object of study and edition by two Swedish scholars (E. Odelman and M. Hedlund, 2007; edition in preparation). There are some 50 manuscripts that contain all or a portion of the *Sermones de tempore* and a number of early incunable and sixteenth century editions (Odelman, 2007; editio princeps *Sermones dominicales in Evangelia per anni circulum* (s.d.; Hain, 8353)).

By contrast, the present collection of model sermons for the Sanctoral and the Common of the Saints (*Sermones de sanctis*; *Sermones de communi sanctorum*, named in the colophon "Prepareate maior" after the opening words of the first sermon) is unpublished (although one cannot exclude that certain isolated sermons might have been published in the incunable period or the sixteenth century) (Bériou, 2008, p. 181; note 49). The collection as described in Schneyer has not been edited or properly studied. Schneyer lists only 16 manuscripts of the *Sermones de sanctis et de communi sanctorum* (Schneyer, IV, pp. 204-205). To this list, one should add London, BL, Egerton MS 3086 (13<sup>th</sup> century); Tours, BM, MS 482, Sermons pour les fêtes des saints (from Saint-Gatien, 14<sup>th</sup> c.).

Sermon manuscripts made for Franciscans constitute essential documents for the appreciation of the Minorite ministry of preaching. They are also central to the study of the culture of the Minorites who regarded the acquisition and production of books as an integral part of religious life. We are here witness to the transmission of a collection of model sermons composed by a French author for Franciscans across Europe to use and adapt according to their preaching needs and evolving culture. A close study of this manuscript with the other twenty-some extant codices will certainly reveal how this copy differs and whether the sermon collection was adapted to local use.

## LITERATURE

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Sbaraglia, G. G. and L. Wadding, *Supplementum et castigatio ad scriptores ttium ordinum S. Francisci a Waddingo...*, t. 2, Rome 1921, p. 265.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

On Nicolas de Aquavilla:

<http://beauchesne.immanens.com/appli/article.php?id=7197>

[http://users.bart.nl/~roestb/franciscan/franautn.htm#\\_Toc426759645](http://users.bart.nl/~roestb/franciscan/franautn.htm#_Toc426759645)

Bordeaux, BM, MS 285, Nicolas de Hacqueville, *Sermones de sanctis*:

<http://manuscrits-drac.bnsa.aquitaine.fr/?doc=1405>

On Medieval Sermons:

<http://sermones.net/>

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