Manuscripts for Preaching and Confession

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Manuscripts for Preaching and Confession:
Windows on Daily Life in the Middle Ages

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e-Catalogue Twelve
Exploring Text Manuscripts

This new series of e-catalogues focuses on select themes of text manuscripts available in our inventory on www.textmanuscripts.com. This series follows two earlier series of text manuscript catalogues, including the Primers. These remain available in digital form on our website and in print by order.

Look for our e-catalogues on the first Tuesday of the month.

Manuscripts for Preaching and Confession:
Windows on Daily Life in the Middle Ages

Manuscripts related to pastoral care (the church’s ministry for the spiritual welfare of the laity) were an important genre in the Middle Ages, serving the practical needs of the medieval clergy, and offering scholars and students today valuable insights into daily life in this period. Sermons were the popular media of the late Middle Ages, when listening to a visiting preacher was both a religious duty and sought-after entertainment. We hear of crowds enthusiastically listening to sermons in town squares for hours and hours. Reading medieval sermons today, we are linked to the experience of these ordinary people, who themselves never wrote a word, and who left no trace in the historical record. Going to confession was probably not something people looked forward to as much, but handbooks written to guide priests administering this sacrament, which survive in astonishing numbers, can be equally enlightening for modern historians—details of sins and transgressions can reveal daily life in interesting ways. The nine manuscripts for pastoral care in this list include six sermon collections and other texts used by preachers composing sermons, and three confessional manuals.

Sandra Hindman and Laura Light
1. Sermons, including THOMAS AQUINAS, *Quadragesimale (third series)*, and others; Homilies from the Angers Homiliary; Marian Exempla; Texts on Confession including *Ad habendum salutifere confessionis ordinem*

In Latin, manuscript on parchment
Central Europe (Southern Germany or Austria?), c. 1250-1275

**PORTABLE VADEMECUM FOR PREACHING AND HEARING CONFESSIONS**

**DESCRIPTION:** 144 folios on parchment, complete, written in approximately twelve different hands, red initials, almost total loss of text on p. 1 through abrasion, 15th-century leather binding over wooden boards. Dimensions 130 x 90 mm.

An extensive Franciscan or Dominican pastoral care manuscript, including sermons, sermon exempla, and texts related to confession. The ninety-three sermons probably by Thomas Aquinas, the much earlier homilies from the Angers Homiliary, and the sermons by unknown authors, identified only in this manuscript, make this a manuscript of considerable scholarly importance. Preachers included exempla, or moral tales, in their sermons to teach and entertain; here we have five: “Charitable Almsman,” “Ebb the Thief,” “The Rustic who Removed Landmarks,” “Jew of Bourges”, and “The Prior of St. Saviour’s, Pavia.” This manuscript was likely copied while Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) was still alive. [TM 762]

$65,000

2. CONRAD HOLTNICKER OF SAXONY, *Sermones de sanctis et de communi sanctorum* and *Speculum Beatae Virginis Mariae* (Mirror of the Blessed Virgin Mary); with Sermons by ALDOBRANDINUS DE CAVALCANTIBUS, ANTONIUS AZARO OF PARMA, MARTINUS POLONUS, and unidentified authors

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment
Austria (Vienna?) or Southern Germany, c. 1275-1300

**PREACHING AND MARIAN DEVOTION**

**DESCRIPTION:** 190 folios on parchment, complete, red initials, 15th-century blind-tooled leather binding over wooden boards, with chain hasp and intact chain, modern repair reattaching the back cover with new material sewn to the exiting thongs. Dimensions 182 x 127 mm.

This collection of some of the most important works by the early Franciscan writer, Conrad of Saxony, including sermons and his ascetic and mystical commentary on the “Ave Maria,” the *Speculum beatae Mariae virginis*, was copied not long after their composition. The *Speculum* circulated widely, but there are only four copies recorded in the United States and it is rare on the market (only one copy recorded as sold in the last century). The manuscript survives in a handsome fifteenth-century binding in a remarkably fine state of preservation, including a chain attached to its lower board attesting to its use in a late medieval chained reference library. [TM 767]

$125,000
PORTABLE VADEMECUM FOR PREACHING AND HEARING CONFESSIONS

[1. ~ TM 762]

Full description and images available online
PREACHING AND MARIAN DEVOTION

[2. ~ TM 767]

Full description and images available online
3. **NICHOLAS OF GORRAN, *Sermones de Tempore et de Quadragesima* (Sermons for the Temporal and for Lent) and excerpts from *Sermones de Sanctis* (Sermons for the Feasts of Saints)**

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
Northern France (Paris?), c. 1275-1300

**SERMONS BY THE CONFESSIONAR TO THE KING OF FRANCE**

**DESCRIPTION:** 136 folios on parchment, complete, written by three scribes, penwork initials, one historiated initial, slight water staining, a few margins trimmed, modern leather binding over wooden boards. Dimensions 203 x 139 mm.

A very early collection of the still unedited sermons of the influential Dominican preacher and royal advisor Nicholas of Gorran. This manuscript is an extremely important witness to these texts, copied during the author’s lifetime, and possibly even with his supervision. Early modification to the text here may reveal Nicholas’s intentions as he shaped these sermons at the Dominican convent of Saint-Jacques in Paris. Handsomely decorated, with a charming illuminated initial depicting the author receiving Christ’s blessing, this was quite likely made for a recipient of some importance. [TM 868]

$95,000

Full description, images and video available online

4. **ROBERTO CARACCILO DA LECCE, *Quadragesimale de poenitentia* (Lenten Sermons)**

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment and paper  
Central Italy, Marche(?), c. 1470-1475  
One inserted full-page miniature by the Masters of the Beady Eyes, Bruges, c. 1460

**POPULAR PREACHING FOR LENT**

**DESCRIPTION:** 98 folios on parchment and paper, complete, penwork initials, inserted full-page miniature within a floral border pasted onto the verso of the second front flyleaf, small stains and signs of use, 19th-century blind-tooled morocco binding. Dimensions c. 200 x 140 mm.

A fine manuscript of a late medieval bestseller containing sermons that circulated widely in print but are known in only nine complete manuscripts. Roberto Caracciolo da Lecce (c. 1425-1495) was one of the most famous preachers of his time, and his sermons were famous for their emotional impact, making his audiences laugh and cry. He did not shy away from dramatic gestures: he is famous for preaching a crusade sermon in full armor, complete with a sword. The cycle includes his sermon, “On the Infidelity of the followers of Muhammad,” a rare example of Christian polemic against Islam within a sermon cycle. The attractive full-page miniature by a professional artist from Bruges pasted on the leaf facing the beginning of the text is an unusual feature of this manuscript. [TM 1161]

$45,000

Full description, images and video available online
5. ALBERTUS DE PADUA (PADUENSIS), *Expositio evangeliorum dominicalium et festivalium* (Explanations of the Gospels for Sundays and Feast Days)

In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper
Northern Italy (Brescia?) or Austria (?), dated 1470

**AN ESSENTIAL PAIR: SERMONS AND BIBLICAL COMMENTARY**

**DESCRIPTION:** 310 folios on paper, complete, red and red and green initials, some with ornamentation, some water-staining, modern vellum binding, expertly restored with all leaves mounted on acid-free paper. Dimensions 315 x 220 mm.

Dated manuscript of the commentary, or Postillae, for Sundays and Feast days, composed by Albertus de Padua (died 1328), an Augustinian Hermit. Illustrating the close connection between biblical commentaries and preaching, these Postillae consist of commentaries on the selected Gospel readings, immediately followed by two or three sermons. The text was published frequently in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and survives in c. 30 manuscripts, mostly in European collections; there is no modern critical edition. [TM 588]

$38,000

Full description and images available online


In Latin, decorated Latin manuscript on parchment
Southwest Flanders or Hainaut (Tournai?), c. 1350

**UNEDITED, LARGELY UNSTUDIED, AND VERY RARE (USEFUL FOR PREACHERS)**

**DESCRIPTION:** 120 folios on parchment, complete, but bound out of order, illustrated catchwords, penwork initials, minor text loss on four folios, rodent damage last two quires, 19th-century binding of marbled boards with parchment corners and spine. Dimensions 240 x 170 mm.

Preachers drew on a large body of other texts that helped them compose their sermons. This is a commentary on the New Testament based on many of Gregory the Great’s works and drawing occasionally on Alulfus of Tournai’s *Gregoriales*. The scribe, who identifies himself as Ludolfus, produced his rare copy around 1350 in Southwest Flanders or Hainaut. The text is known in only three other manuscripts; this copy was, until now, apparently unknown, and is certainly the only of its kind on the market. As a witness to an unedited, and indeed largely unstudied, text used for sermon-writing, this manuscript warrants deeper study. [TM 1054]

$85,000

Full description, images and video available online
AN ESSENTIAL PAIR: SERMONS AND BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Full description and images available online
UNEDITED, LARGELY UNSTUDIED, AND VERY RARE (USEFUL FOR PREACHERS)
7.
RAYMUNDUS DE PENAFORTE, *Summa de casibus pœnitentialis* (Summa on the cases of penance) and *Summa de matrimonio* (Summa on marriage)

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment
Northern France, c. 1245-1255

**ANNOTATED WITH NOTES AND DRAWINGS**

**DESCRIPTION:** 180 folios on parchment, complete, penwork initials, added marginal drawings, slight water damage, thumbing and stains, 18th-century in gold-tooled red Morocco binding. Dimensions 138 x 92 mm.

Widely used during the later Middle Ages, handbooks (or summæ) for confessors guided priests in the administration of the sacrament of confession. This one by Raymond of Peñafort was the first to formalize the Catholic sacrament of penance into a rigorous system based on theology and canon law. As such, Raymond’s work became a medieval “bestseller” and was required reading as a textbook at the University of Paris. Its use over centuries is attested to by the donation of this manuscript to the Carthusian monastery of Villeneuve-lès-Avignon by Jean de Montagnac, an important patron of the arts. [TM 1087]

$65,000

8.
ANONYMOUS, confessional manual; ANTONINUS FLORENTIUS (ANTONINO PIEROZZI), *Confessionale*, Book II

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment
Northern France, c. 1450-1500

**UNUSUALLY ELEGANT HANDBOOK FOR A CONFESSOR**

**DESCRIPTION:** 85 folios on parchment, complete, line-fillers and decorated ascenders and descenders, contemporary blind-tooled leather binding, modern spine. Dimensions 215 x 140 mm.

The text in this manuscript, one of the most important confessional manuals of the Middle Ages, is here condensed into a convenient and practical guide for the instruction of inexperienced confessors. This is an elegantly copied, large-format manuscript of this popular text, still preserved in its original blind-stamped binding, setting it apart from numerous copies that were practical manuals for humble friars. Of special interest for its French provenance (most surviving copies of Antoninus’s text are Italian in origin), this manuscript is also perfect for use in the classroom to demonstrate how medieval manuscripts were made. [TM 771]

$27,000
ANNOTATED WITH NOTES AND DRAWINGS

[7. ~ TM 1087]

Full description, images and video available online
9.
ANTONINUS FLORENTINUS (ANTONIO PIEROZZI),
Confessionale [version: Defecerunt scrutantes scrutinio;]
and other texts

In Latin and Italian, decorated manuscript on paper.
Northern Italy (Florence, Milan?), dated 14[6]2

CURRENT EVENTS IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY: DRESS
CODES FOR WOMEN

DESCRIPTION: 112 folios on paper, complete, written by four
scribes, red initials, one penwork initial, limp vellum binding
reusing part of a 15-century manuscript leaf.
Dimensions 165 x 120 mm.

This pocket handbook of confession contains texts to assist
the confessor in his practical and daily tasks, notably the popu-
lar manual for confessors named Confessionale-Defecerunt. The additional texts that complete the Confessionale are
also of special interest, including an extract on women’s dress codes and the appended model of confession redacted
in the vernacular. If the date of 1462 given in two colophons is correct, the present manuscript was assembled only a
few years after the death of the author, Antoninus of Florence, who was canonized in the sixteenth century.

[TM 498]

$21,000

Full description, images and video available online
CURRENT EVENTS IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY:
DRESS CODES FOR WOMEN

[9. ~ TM 498]

Full description, images and video available online