

ANTONIUS AZARO OF PARMA [ANTONIUS DE AZARO PARMENSIS], *Postillae super evangelia de tempore*

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment
Germany or Austria, c. 1350-1375(?)

210 folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, top outer recto, 1-210, complete (collation i-vi¹⁰ vii¹² viii-xii¹⁰ xiii⁸ xiv-xvii¹⁰ xviii⁸ xix¹² [-2; cancelled with no apparent loss of text] xx¹⁰ xxi¹⁰ [+11, f. 210, tipped in]), quires numbered on the final verso in Roman numerals, i-xxi, in the lower margin (some cases cropped), trace of a horizontal catchword at the end of quire xv, ruled in brown ink with full-length horizontal and vertical bounding lines, some prickings remain lower margin (justification 139-141 x 100-102 mm.), written in brown ink in a neat Gothic script, showing some influence of cursive, in two columns of thirty-one to forty lines, space left for rubrics, red rubrics, capitals touched in red, one-line red paraps, two- to four-line plain red initials, space for five-line initial (f. 35v), six-line plain red initial (f. 1), many of the sermons have been subdivided through a system of lettering in the margin, beginning with A and proceeding through the alphabet at regular intervals, with letters initially written in brown ink and then written in red, some marginal corrections and one substantial cancellation of text by the scribe, marginal notes (partially cropped) and pointing hands in several fifteenth- and sixteenth-century hands, eighteenth-century inscription, "Carmeli Leontini," on f. 1, some very slight losses of text due to the contraction of the parchment around holes (see f. 156) and the cutting away of parchment in the lower margin of f. 174 (ff. 166-174 all show signs of parchment having been cut away), some substantial holes in the parchment that the scribe worked around (see ff. 20, 87, and 126), tear in the lower corner of f. 141, text of f. 1 is rubbed and faded but mostly legible, slight soiling and staining of outer margins from handling. Bound in eighteenth-century mottled boards backed with calf, sewn on four raised bands, with inscription, "SERMONES / MS," painted in orange on the spine, with a woodcut pasted on the front pastedown of two putti supporting arms, filled in by hand and tinted, and with several modern typed labels pasted on the front pastedown and a typed excerpt from Ruggenthaler (2005) pasted and folded on the back pastedown, crumbling along the edges of the spine and boards, in modern slipcase with spine gilt-stamped, "SERMONES / DE AZARIO." Dimensions 184 x 132 mm.

There is no modern critical edition of the popular and influential collection of sermons by the Dominican, Antonius Azaro of Parma, and there are only two copies recorded in North America. This particular copy consists of a less common version of his sermon cycle (two of the sermons are otherwise unattested), which was particularly valued for its literal exegesis; one scholar notes that Antonius's sermons made Peter Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* preachable. Included is a system of marginal letters for reference and numerous notes.

PROVENANCE

1. Evidence of script – especially the distinctive "con" abbreviation – and spelling – the use of "w" in place of "v" (eg. "ewangelio") or "vu" (eg. "wlt") and "k" in place of "c" (eg. "kathedram") – suggests that this book originated in Germany or Austria, as does the decoration. The cursive features observable in the script, in particular the vertically compressed 'g', the tall two-lobed 'a' and the pendular abbreviation for 'r', suggest a date during the second half of the fourteenth century, possibly around the middle of the century.

2. This is a manuscript that was designed for easy reference, and includes numerous signs that it was in fact used in this way. The marginal letters subdividing many of the sermons would have enabled easy reference to particular passages. One later annotator has added brief marginal notes indicating particular topics of particular interest or utility to preachers, topics like faith – “de fide” (f. 26) – prayer – “de oratione” (f. 92v) – and envy – “de invidia” (f. 94). Another annotator has commented at greater length, sometimes copying particular phrases from the sermons into the margins or noting the topics.
3. This book belonged to the library of the Carmelite monastery in Lienz, Austria, as attested by the eighteenth-century inscription, “Carmeli Leontini,” on f. 1. Founded in 1349, this house amassed a substantial collection of books. According to the catalogue compiled by Christian Drescher (d. 1822), at the time of the monastery’s dissolution in 1785 it possessed 4,835 books and 118 manuscripts, subsequently sold. Some of the monastery’s books (all identifiable as such by the inscription “Carmeli Leontini,” possibly in the hand of Drescher) passed into the hands of the Franciscans who took up residence in the Lienz monastery, while others came into the possession of the Franciscan house in Salzburg, but no manuscripts remain among this number. Ruggenthaler has identified one manuscript from the Carmelite library in the University Library of Innsbruck (see 2005, p. 4).
4. Sold by Weiss & Co. in 1926; lot 2 in *Codices, manuscripti, incunabula typographica. Catalogus primus*, Munich, 1926.
5. Belonged to Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas H. Plummer (1873-1928), D.S.O., a Canadian soldier, who served as a member of the British War Mission in Germany after the end of World War I. This manuscript was sold by Sotheby’s after his death; lot 26 in *Printed books and a few manuscripts ... comprising a collection of XV century mss. and printed books ... comprising the property of the late Lieut.-Colonel T. H. Plummer, D.S.O*, 9 March 1931.
6. A modern typed label pasted on the upper pastedown, “ADELHEID A. VON HOHENLOHE,” may identify a subsequent owner of this manuscript. The arms roughly sketched on the woodcut pasted on the inside pastedown resemble those of the Hohenlohe family (argent, two lions passant gardant sable).

TEXT

ff. 1-10v, [Antonius Azaro de Parma, *Sermones de tempore*] *Dominica prima in aduentum*, incipit, “Cum appropinquasset ihesus ierosolimam etc. Matt. 21. [Matthew 21:1] Tempus quod hodie incipit et durat vsque ad natiuitatem domini ... Quot nobis prestare dignetur”;

Schneyer 1.303-4: nos. 184-187; Meersseman, 1940, nos. 1-4.

ff. 10v-11v, *In die natalis christi*, incipit, “Paruulus natus est nobis et filius datus est nobis. ysaia ix. [Isaiah 9:6] In quibus verbis duo notanda ...”; f. 11, *De eodem*, incipit, “Puer autem crescebat plenus sapientia et gratia dei erat in illo. Luc. xiiij. [Luke 2:40] In verbis propositis tria dicuntur ... Rogemus domini”;

Two Christmas sermons, not included in Schneyer or Meersseman, 1940.

ff. 11v-37, [Antonius Azaro de Parma, *Sermones de tempore*] *Infra Natiuitatis dominica*, incipit, "Erat [sic] maria et ioseph mirantes etc. Luc. 2. [Luke 2:33] Quia istis diebus fecimus festum de natiuitate saluatoris ... semper gaudere cum illo";

Schneyer 1.291, 304: nos. 188-196, 25; Meersseman, 1940, nos. 5-14.

f. 37r-v, incipit, "Cum intrasset ihesus capharnaum Accessit ad eum centurio etc. Matt. vj. [Matthew 8:5] Hoc ewangelium expositum est ... de alijs membris. Responsio supra s p;";

Sermon for the Thursday following Ash Wednesday; not included within Schneyer; no. 15 in Meersseman (1940).

ff. 27v-89v, [Antonius Azaro de Parma, *Sermones quadragesimales*] incipit, "Audistis quia dictum est antiquis diliges proximum tuum et odio habebis inimicum tuum. Matt. 5. [Matthew 5:43] Sicut a sanctis dicitur et verum est ... vt mali conuertantur et boni melioventur";

Schneyer, 1.293, 307-309: nos. 231-233, 236, 239-245, 248-253, 43, 255, 44, 260, 47, 262-263; nos. 16-17, 20-21, 23-26, 28-36 in Meersseman (1940). The sermons corresponding to nos. 18-19, 22, and 30 are different from those in Meersseman. Three of seven additional Marial sermons present in some manuscripts (see Meersseman, 1940, pp. 27-28; he lists ten manuscripts) appear between nos. 17 and 18, 24 and 25, and 31 and 32.

ff. 89v-93v, incipit, "Ibat ihesus in ciuitatem Samarie que dicitur Sychar. Ioh. 4°. [John 4:5] Cum quadam vite saluator noster predicasset ... credimus ipsum esse saluatorem mundi et humani generis. Rogemus";

Lenten sermon, not included in Schneyer; nbo. 37 in Meersseman (1940).

ff. 93v-139, [Antonius Azaro de Parma, *Sermones quadragesimales*] incipit, "Perrexit ihesus in monte oliueti etc. Ioh. 8. [John 8:1] Quia tempore quadragesime peccatores reconciliantur deo per penitentiam ... saciabor cum apparuit gloria etc.";

Schneyer 1.294, 309-312: nos. 265-266, 272-275, 277, 59, 279, 284, 61-62, 287-291, 294-297, 300; nos. 38, 42-45, 47-50, 52-55 in Meersseman (1940). The sermons corresponding to nos. 39-41, 46, and 51 are different from those in Meersseman. Three of seven additional Marial sermons present in some manuscripts (see Meersseman, 1940, pp. 27-28; he lists ten manuscripts) appear between nos. 38 and 39, 45 and 46, and 52 and 53.

ff. 139-146, incipit, "Egressus ihesus cum discipulis suis trans torrentem cedron. Ioh. 14. [John 18:1] Ideo passio domini a quattuor ewangelistis scripta est ... in templo dei. Te deum laudamus";

This Good Friday sermon is not included within Schneyer, though Meersseman identifies it as a variant of his no. 56 (see 1940, p. 29, where he lists ten manuscripts in which he has identified this variant). It also survives in Ansbach, Staatliche Bibliothek, Mss. lat. 121 and lat. 151;

Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, Q. IV. 5; Graz, Universitätsbibliothek, Mss 246 and 1347; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cgm 1127 and Clm 14108; Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, I 228; Tübingen, Universitätsbibliothek, Mc 118. In many of these manuscripts this sermon appears alongside sermons of Antonius Azaro of Parma and in two cases it is attributed to him (Graz, Ms 1347 and Tübingen, Mc 118).

ff. 146-148v, [Antonius Azaro de Parma, *Sermones de tempore et de quadragesima*] *Sabbato in vigilia pasce*, incipit, "Vespere autem sabbati que lucessit in prima sabbati venit Maria Magdalene et altera maria videre sepulchrus [sic]. Mat. vltimo. [Matthew 28:1] Heri sermo post vesperas fuit sepultus dominus noster ... manifesta est visio christi ad quam";

Schneyer 1.294: no. 73; no. 57 in Meersseman (1940).

ff. 148v-152v, *Dominica beata virgine*, incipit, "Nolite me vocare Noemi et pulchram sed amara quia amaritudine repleuit me dominus. Ruth. [Ruth 1:20] Dominica hystoria huius verbi potes incipere uirginis amaritudines sic ..."; f. 150, *In die sancto*, incipit, "Maria Magdalena et maria Iacobi et salome etc. Marc. vltimo. [Mark 16:1] Hodie celebramus resurrectionem domini ... Ostende faciem tua [sic] etc.";

Not included within Schneyer; Meersseman identifies the first of these as the seventh of seven additional Marial sermons present in some manuscripts (see 1940, pp. 27-28; he lists ten manuscripts); the second is his no. 58.

ff. 152v-196, [Antonius Azaro de Parma, *Sermones de tempore et de quadragesima*] *Feria secunda*, incipit, "Duo ex discipulis ibant in castellum etc. Luc. vltimo. [Luke 24:13] Dominus ihesus volens in die resurrectionis sue apparere fecit ... et tandem perducatur ad uitas glorie";

Schneyer 1.295, 297, 304-305, 313: no. 76, 315, 197-213, 110, 112-114, 116-117, 119; nos. 59-77, 80-84 in Meersseman (1940). The sermons corresponding to nos. 78-79 are different from those in Meersseman.

ff. 196-197, *Dominica xvij^a*, incipit, "Cum intraret ihesus in domum cuiusdam principis phariseorum sabbato manducare panem etc. Luc. 14. [Luke 14:1] Dicit ergo ewangelium quod quidam magnus princeps phariseorum intendens ... quia cum sanctis omnibus coronabitur";

Not included in Schneyer; corresponds to no. 85 in Meersseman, but beginning differently.

ff. 197-210, [Antonius Azaro de Parma, *Sermones de tempore*] *Dominica xviii*, incipit, "Audientes pharisei quod ihesus silencium imposuisset saduceis etc. Matt. 23. [Matthew 22:34] In populo iudeorum fuerunt quidam heretici ... Qui uiuit et regnat deus per omnia secula seculorum";

Schneyer 1.297-298, 307: nos. 121-123, 125-126, 128, 228; nos. 86-92 in Meersseman (1940).

Included in this collection are more than one hundred sermons, most of which come from the *Sermones de tempore et de quadragesima*, also known as the *Postillae super euangelia de tempore*, of Antonius Azaro of Parma. This was a popular medieval sermon cycle; Schneyer lists 143 surviving manuscripts (Schneyer, 1969, vol. 1, p. 298-299) and Kaeppli, 1970, lists 237, pp. 101-103, all

in European repositories and mostly housed in Austrian, German, and Czech libraries. There are only two manuscript copies in North America. This sermon cycle was first printed in Cologne in 1482 (*Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* 2248). There is no modern critical edition of these sermons.

The text of this manuscript is of considerable interest. Many of the standard ninety-three sermons in Antonius's sermon cycle are omitted and less widely attested variants, also attributed to Antonius, are included instead or are inserted as further additions. Two sermons within the collection appear in neither Schneyer's nor Meersseman's lists of sermons *de tempore* attributable to Antonius. It is still possible that these two sermons were, like the variant sermons, the work of Antonius; as such, they warrant closer study.

Relatively little is known regarding the life of Antonius Azaro of Parma. Antonius entered the Dominican order around the end of 1259 or the beginning of 1260 and, according to the Italian Dominican historian Leandro Alberti (1479-1552), he was still alive in 1314. Nothing is known of his reputation as a preacher, but manuscripts containing his sermons date back to the beginning of the fourteenth century and their proliferation through the end of the fifteenth century attests to the popularity of his work. Commonly known as the *Postillae parmensis*, Antonius's cycle of *Sermones de tempore* were prized by Dominicans for their practicality and their scriptural exegesis, which focuses chiefly on the literal sense of Scripture. Summing up the appeal of Antonius's sermons, Marian Michèle Mulchahey writes that he "had, in effect, made the Comestor's *Historia scholastica* [an immensely influential Biblical paraphrase] preachable" (430). As such, his sermons would have served as valuable standard reference works for Dominican preachers.

The careful subdivisions of many of the sermons contained within this manuscript and the copious notes in its margins all suggest that it was used early on as a preacher's reference. The marginal letters subdividing many of the sermons would have enabled easy reference to particular passages. One later annotator has added brief marginal notes indicating particular topics of particular interest or utility to preachers, topics like faith – "de fide" (f. 26) – prayer – "de oratione" (f. 92v) – and envy – "de invidia" (f. 94). Another annotator has commented at greater length, sometimes copying particular phrases from the sermons into the margins or noting the topics (in many cases these annotations have been partially cropped). Given that some sermons have been subdivided or annotated heavily while others have not, it would be interesting to track which are subject to the greatest attention.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Antonius Azaro of Parma, *Postilla super evangelia dominicalia per circulum anni cum quadragesimali*, Cologne, 1482

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