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JAMES OF MILAN, *Stimulus divini amoris* (*The Goad of Divine Love*); BONAVENTURE, *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum* (*The Mind's Road to God*); BONAVENTURE, *De triplici via* (*The Triple Way*)

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment

England, c. 1360-1400(?), with fifteenth-century marginalia in Middle English

74 folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, 1-74, lacking 59 leaves: three full quires of 10 leaves before f. 9 (which begins quire "f"), one full quire of 10 leaves before f. 18 (which begins quire "h"), and 19 leaves from the surviving quires (collation i¹⁰ [-1, -2, -8, lacking two leaves at the beginning of the quire and one leaf after f. 5, with loss of text] ii¹⁰ [lacking nine leaves; the only surviving leaf of this quire is neither the first nor the last leaf of quire] iii¹⁰ [-9, lacking one leaf after f. 16, with loss of text] iv¹⁰ v¹⁰ [-1, -2, 9, lacking two leaves after f. 27, with loss of text; the leaf lacking after f. 33 is bound as a singleton after the quire, f. 35] vi¹⁰ vii¹⁰ [-1, -2, -3, -8, lacking three leaves after f. 45 and one leaf after f. 49, with loss of text] viii-ix¹⁰), horizontal catchwords, alphanumerical quire signatures in brown ink (a-n, mostly cropped), ruled in brown ink with single vertical and double horizontal bounding lines extending the full height and width of page (justification 115 x 67 mm.), written in brown ink in Gothic cursive bookhand (Anglicana with some secretary influence) in single column on 31 lines, rubrics in red, running titles in the upper margins in red (ff. 1-44), capitals touched in red, 2-line initials in blue with red penwork flourishes, one 4-line puzzle initial in red and blue with red penwork flourishes (f. 62), lacking half of f. 15, large holes on the first eight and the last three leaves, the hole on f. 1 repaired with a parchment cutting from a seventeenth-century French document, lower margins excised with some loss of text on ff. 32 and 34, stains throughout, however in overall fair condition with legible text. Remboîtage, re-bound in eighteenth or nineteenth(?) century in vellum over pasteboards, strips of a seventeenth-century document used to support gutters of some gatherings (cf. repair on f. 1), strips of manuscript from c. 1200 inserted along the spine between text block and the binding, wormholes on the stained covers, wormholes on the paper pastedowns, sewing of quires is tight preventing full opening, but in overall good condition, modern fitted case decorated with strips of a seventeenth-century French document (cf. repair on f. 1) in excellent condition. Dimensions 170 x 115 mm.

Manuscripts made in medieval England are relatively rare, and even rarer are those containing Middle English. This devotional compendium contains three popular texts by thirteenth-century Franciscan authors, including one of the earlier recorded copies of the *Stimulus divini amoris* from England and one of only two English copies recorded in private hands. Widely read in the Middle Ages in both Latin and the vernacular, the *Stimulus* held special appeal to lay readers, perhaps especially female readers. This copy includes marginalia in Middle English worthy of further study.

PROVENANCE

1. The manuscript was likely made in England by a Franciscan friar for his own use in the fourteenth century, c. 1360-1400, as suggested by the evidence of the text and the styles of the penwork decoration and script. The small size of the book suggests that it was originally used by an itinerant preacher.

2. Remained in England until the late fifteenth century when short marginal notes were added in Middle English on ff. 1, 1v, 2, 2v, 12v, 13, 13v. The longer inscriptions include such devotional reflections as "Lett god have the (=thee) in the hiest degree" and "Mans soule is not to be wyked" (f. 12v).
3. The binding, using fragments of a French seventeenth-century document, suggests that the manuscript was brought to France by that date, perhaps by one of the many Franciscans who fled to the Continent in the 1520s and 1530s, especially to Pontoise, outside Paris, after the martyrdom of John Forest (d. 1538), the confessor of Queen Catherine of Aragon.
4. Sold at Forum Auctions, London, January 25, 2017, lot 117.

TEXT

ff. 1-44v, incipit, "//in cuius foraminibus nisi pedis [sic] affectus posueris ... o clemens o pia o dulcis maria, Salve et cetera," *Expliciunt meditationes fratris et domini Bonaventurus Sacre pagine doctus egregii ab auensis Episcopi et curus Romane Cardinalis de ordine fratrum Minorum*;

James of Milan, *Stimulus divini amoris*, Distelbrink, no. 217-219, edited with Bonaventure's works in St. Bonaventure, *Opera omnia*, ed. A. C. Peltier, vol. 12, pp. 631-703 (edition from a printed copy), here beginning imperfectly toward the end of chapter 1 (ed., p. 634), and lacking leaves and quires throughout (see collation, above).

ff. 45-62, *Hic incipit compendium quod dicitur Itinerarium [sic] mentis ad deum et cetera*, incipit, "In principio primum partum a quo ... Benedictus dominus meam: et dicet omnis populus fiat fiat amen," *Explicit*;

St. Bonaventure, *Itinerarium mentis ad Deum*, Distelbrink no. 19, edited in St. Bonaventure, *Opera omnia*, ed. Quaracchi, vol. 5, pp. 295-313.

The *Itinerarium Mentis ad Deum*, was written by St. Bonaventure (1221?-1274) in 1259 during his spiritual retreat at Mt. Alverno, where St. Francis had received the stigmata thirty-three years earlier. In total 138 manuscripts of the *Itinerarium* are known, 15 of which were used for the edition (St. Bonaventure, *Opera omnia*, ed. Quaracchi, vol. 5, pp. XXVII-XXXIII, 295-313). The work aims to describe the stages of contemplation leading to the highest degree, ecstasy, and is divided into seven chapters, each chapter dealing with a degree of contemplation, the steps to a mystical union of man with God (for an English translation, see Bibliography and Online Resources). The work was among the principal sources for the *Imitatio Christi* of Thomas à Kempis.

ff. 62-71v, incipit, "Ecce descripsi eam tibi tripliciter proverbiorum (xx)ii. Cum omnis ... et illa excedenciam quousque perveniatur ad complacenciam et osculum et amplexum. Ad quod nos perducatur ihesus christus Amen. et cetera et cetera," *Explicit*.

St. Bonaventure, *De triplici via*, Distelbrink no. 18, edited in St. Bonaventure, *Opera omnia*, ed. Quaracchi, vol. 8, pp. X-XXV, 3-18.

De triplici via, known also as *Incendium amoris*, or as *Centiloquium*, was composed by St. Bonaventure after the *Itinerarium*, between 1259 and 1269. The work sets out a single path for devotional meditation, pursuing the same objective from three aspects: peace on the path of purification, truth on the path of illumination, and charity on the path of union. It was highly successful and survives in over 300 manuscripts (Distelbrink, 1975, no. 18).

The main text in this manuscript is the first, the *Stimulus amoris*, which is a mystical treatise composed by the Franciscan James of Milan (Jacobus Mediolanensis) sometime before 1293. It was often wrongly attributed to St. Bonaventure, as in the explicit to this text in our manuscript (f. 44v). The work concerns the contrast between divine love, especially as manifested in Christ's Passion, and the sinful inadequacy of mankind's response to it. James of Milan wrote that he who meditates on Christ's earthly life "will be rescued from the depths, brought to innermost secrets, and lifted to the highest heights with sweetness" (prologue to *Stimulus amoris*; and see Karnes, 2007, p. 392). The *Stimulus amoris* was one of the most frequently copied and influential medieval Franciscan texts; Eisermann describes some 500 Latin and 58 German manuscripts (Eisermann, 2001, pp. 64-209). For a list of the 500 Latin copies, see Online Resources. More copies have come to light since, including the earliest known dated manuscript of the text, intended for use in Genoa and internally dated 1293 (Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 25.3; Neff, 2007).

The work exists in four versions, of which only the first one, *Stimulus amoris minor*, is by James of Milan. The second redaction, *Stimulus amoris maior Ia*, composed in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, is divided into three books, the order of some of the chapters was changed and new chapters were added. The third version, *Stimulus amoris maior I*, composed also in the first quarter of the fourteenth century, was derived from the second version with a more developed division into chapters. The final, fourth version of the text, *Stimulus amoris maior II*, is another reorganization of the text, dating from the second half of the fourteenth century. The running titles in our manuscript, which divide the text into three books, suggest that the version contained in this manuscript is the *Stimulus amoris maior*. More research on the chapter divisions is required to identify the redaction of the *maior*; for more details about the different versions, see the study by Eisermann (2001) as well as the one by Distelbrink (1975), who identifies three versions: *brevis*, *intermedia* and *longa*.

James of Milan is documented in 1305 as lector to the Franciscans of Domodossola, in the Franciscan province of Genoa in Piedmont. Eisermann has speculated that he wrote the *Stimulus amoris* for the friar John of Parma (d. 1289) (Eisermann, 2001, p. 10, n. 38). The thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century manuscripts of the text were often limited to monastic and mendicant settings, but the work soon became remarkably popular among male and female lay and religious audiences, and was translated into Middle English (the anonymous *Prickynge of Love*; see 1983 edition by Kane) and German (Eisermann, 2001, pp. 343-358; Neff, 2007).

Our manuscript was written in England, as is suggested by the script, decoration, and the later marginal additions in Middle English (for other fourteenth-century English books copied by their pious owners, see Sandler, 1993). Some thirty English manuscripts of the *Stimulus* are known, of which only ten, in addition to the manuscript described here, were made in the fourteenth century: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 137 (from Christ Church Canterbury) and MS 252 (from Norwich); Cambridge, Trinity College, MS B.14.7 (from

Leicester); Cambridge University Library, MS li. I. 18 (from Cambridge) and MS Ll. I. 15; British Library, MS Royal 7. C. 1 (from Ramsey) and MS Royal 8. B. VIII (perhaps from Gloucester); Bodleian, MS Digby 58; Oxford, Corpus Christi College, MS 240, and a copy sold by Ellis & Elvey in 1894 (no. 2866) (cf. Eisermann, 2001). The *Stimulus* was extensively used in England, where it was known to influential theologians and mystics such as William of Pagula, Richard Rolle, and Margery Kempe. Our manuscript is an important early witness of the development of mystical thought and the inward-directed religious devotion.

The manuscript is an especially rare and important witness of Franciscan spirituality, because it is among the earlier recorded copies of *Stimulus divini amoris* from England and one of only two English copies recorded in private hands.

LITERATURE

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See online for *Stimulus amoris* in vol. 12,

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Stimulus amoris Fr. Iacobi Mediolanensis, Ad Claras Aquas, 1949.

The Prickyng of Love, ed. H. Kane, Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies 92:10, 2 vols, Salzburg, 1983.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Stimulus amoris in FAMA (IRHT, CNRS), a list of 500 copies
<http://fama.irht.cnrs.fr/oeuvre/271060>

St. Bonaventure, *The Mind's Road to God* (English translation by George Boas)
<https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/minds-road-to-god-1451>

St. Bonaventure, *De triplici via* (1499 edition online)
https://www.europeana.eu/fr/item/297/https___hispana_mcu_es_lod_oai_minerva_usc_es_10347___7025_ent0

St. Bonaventure, *De triplici via* (French translation)
<https://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerusonline/fr/f3g.htm>

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