

LES ENLUMINURES

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Occupatio Devotorum

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment
Erfurt, Charterhouse of Salvatorberg, c.1400

i + 110 + i parchment folios, flyleaves probably added when volume was rebaked, modern foliation in pencil in upper right corners, (collation uncertain due to lack of catchwords, added leaves, and early binding, may be i², ii⁰, iii⁸⁺¹ [f. 21 added], iv-ix⁸, x⁴⁺² [f. 75+76 added, stubs visible], xi⁸, xii⁶, xiii⁸, xiv¹⁰, xv²), pricking along the outer margin, single column ruled in brown ink (justification 74 x 63 mm), 15-16 lines in several northern textualis scripts, some majuscules flashed in red, 2-line plain red initials, 2-line plain red initials, 2-3 line gold initials flourished in light blue, 2-4 line red ink initials flourished in red, some using reserved parchment as the second color in a puzzle initial, added manichulae and marginal notes throughout, contemporary parchment repairs, holes, and offcuts common throughout, but otherwise in good condition. Early modern binding of wooden boards sewn on 5 thongs, covered with brown tawed leather, medieval red leather tabs on edges of pages, metal clasp on upper board (modern buckle), rebaked, modern flyleaves, pastedowns from waste sheets of unfinished prayerbook. Dimensions 123 x 92 mm.

Silent and solitary, the Carthusian Order continues to capture our imaginations today for the same reasons they did in the Middle Ages. Living austere, isolated lives, praying alone and silently in their individual cells, monks joined their brethren only on Sundays and holidays. This volume offers the kind of small, humble book such Carthusian monks treasured in the Middle Ages. Its Gospel readings are permanently bookmarked with red leather tabs, and the rest of its paper pages contain a bouquet of extracts from prayers, scholastic texts, and more, all designed to guide meditation throughout a monk's quiet life.

PROVENANCE:

1. The Carthusians of Salvatorberg, Erfurt, founded in 1372, "Carthusiens' prope Erfford," on front and rear pastedown (rear visible under UV), both now upsidedown and suggesting that the pastedowns were removed and reapplied when the flyleaves were added.

Remarkably, the manuscript is described in detail in the late fifteenth-century catalogue of Salvatorberg, where it was pressmark F. 89, catalogued as "Occupatio devotorum, et habet IIII distinctiones, valens valde pro meditatione et contemplacione et videtur excerptum principaliter ex libro Bonaventure, qui dicitur Ymago vite, cum quibusdam addicionibus. Varia notabilia et puncta et diverse doctrine ex diversis collecta. Textus passionis Christi secundum omnes 4^{or} evangelistas. Oraciones de s. Jeronimo secundum omnes dies septimane. De perfectissimo modo vivendi intellectualiter. Sermo b. Augustini de die extremo. De XV signis ante diem iudicii...De statu perfectionis, et ibidem consequenter multa puncta notabilia [Duties of the Devoted, having 4 sections, useful for meditation and contemplation and largely excerpted from the book by Bonaventure called the *Imago vita*, with a range of additions and important quotations, including the Passion Gospels from the four evangelists, prayers by St. Jerome for every day of the week, the most perfect way of living in the world, a sermon by St. Augustine

on the 15 Signs of Judgement Day, the Statute of Perfection, and many other similar selections]" (Lehman, 1928, p. 365).

The final sections listed are no longer present in this binding, which is therefore likely sixteenth century. They are the following: "Meditacio brevis de novissimis. Hore de beatissima Katerina. Quedam alie spirituales oraciones, [Brief Meditation for Novices. Hours of the Most Blessed St. Katherine. Several other spiritual prayers]" (Lehman, 1928, p. 365).

2. Dr. Andre Rooryck (1923-2010), Belgium, his MS 5.
3. Sotheby's London, "Western Manuscripts and Miniatures," 5 July 2005, lot 56.
4. Private continental collection.

TEXT

ff. 1-19, "Varia notabilia et puncta et diverse doctrine ex diversis collecta," short excerpts attributed to a range of writers on religious topics, including Jerome (ff. 1, 10), Bernard (ff. 2v, 3), Gregory (ff. 5v, 16), Seneca (f. 6), Augustine (ff. 7, 9v, 14v, 15), f.18 blank;

ff. 19v-75, "Textus passionis Christi secundum omnes 4^{or} evangelistas," the Passion sequences from the Gospels, each tabbed with red leather, Matthew (f. 19v), Mark (f. 35), Luke (f. 48v) and John (f. 61v), with prayers, f. 75v blank, the beginning of each Gospel tabbed with red leather;

ff. 76-86, "Oraciones de s. Jeronimo secundum omnes dies septimane," prayers to St. Jerome for use on each day of the week, partly ascribed here to St. Anselm, beginning on Sunday (f. 76), with Monday (f. 78), Tuesday (f. 79), Wednesday (f. 80), Thursday (f. 82), Friday (f. 83) and Saturday (f. 84v), f. 76 tabbed with red leather;

ff. 86-92v, "De perfectissimo modo vivendi intellectualiter," *Excerpta ex summa patrum vel fratrum et doctorum de perfectissimo modo intellectualiter vivendi*, includes an extract from William Peraldus's *Summa de virtutibus et vitiis*, incipit, "Fons et origo omnium bonorum homini spirituali est in cella sua ... aliquid circa corpus Domini, quod eis prohibitum est?"

ff. 92v-94v "Sermo b. Augustini de die extremo," a sermon, *De die iudicii*, attributed here to St. Augustine, incipit, "O fratres karissimi, quam timendus est ille dies, in quo Dominus noster Ihesus Cristus proposuit venire cum flamma ignis, que inflammabit adversarios suos ... priusquam te malignus rapiat infernus, ubi nulla datur indulgentia, ubi nullus egreditur ad veniam; de qua pena pius Dominus eripere dignetur, qui cum Deo Patre vivit et regnat" [CPPM, v. 1, 1036, 1190. PL 39.2210];

ff. 94v-95, an extract from William Peraldus's *Summa de virtutibus et vitiis*, here attributed to Jerome, incipit, "summa ergo diligencia est...sicut ostensum est";

ff. 95-97, "De XV signis ante diem iudicii," the Fifteen Signs of the Apocalypse (based on Thomas Aquinas, *Sentences IV*, here attributed to Jerome), *De XV signis dies precedencium diem iudicii*,

incipit, "Maria omnia in altitudine xv cubitorum exaltabuntur super montes excelsos, orbem terrarum non affligentia, sed sicut muri equora slabunt,"..."omnes homines morientur, ut simul resurgant cum mortuis longe ante defunctis";

ff. 97-98, pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux, "*De statu perfectionis*," incipit, "Si vis perfectus esse"..."quod facere poteris facias et in nullo te exemptes maxime in ecclesia";

ff. 98-110, "multa puncta notabilia," a section of excerpts containing short prayers ascribed to Isidore, Augustine, Jerome, Hugh of St. Victor, Cyprian and others; f. 110v blank.

It is extremely rare to find a volume that was catalogued in the Middle Ages by its own readers, and therefore, this book repays close attention to that early description and how it fits the present object. Today the volume opens and closes with sections of themed excerpts and short prayers, and even the medieval catalogue is content to leave them without enumeration or further description. We can note that the themes relate to monastic life, including chastity and poverty. The four Gospel accounts of the Passion present here were also included in European Books of Hours and featured in the mass. Though surely so familiar as to have been memorized, in this book these are tabbed with red leather for easy accessibility, a sure sign that they were highlights of the volume. Likewise, the daily Jerome prayers were tabbed in order to be found quickly, suggesting a special devotion to St. Jerome. The work with the incipit *Excerpta ex summa patrum vel fratrum et doctorum de perfectissimo modo intellectualiter vivendi*, refers to monastic cells and is known from other monastic manuscripts, including Melk, Benediktinerstift, Cod. 1554, ff. 126-28, and Cod. 1406, ff. 160-61. So many versions of *De statu perfectionis* existed by the fifteenth century that they "almost form a genre of their own" and they were certainly of interest in Carthusian circles (Zahnd, 2022, pp. 201, 214). Therefore, even if this particular example did not receive wide appreciation, the genre was commonly read.

This carefully selected group of excerpts and short texts strongly highlights the three elements of Carthusian life pointed to in the margin of f. 91, "Nota tria conservant nostrum ordinem, scilicet, solitudo, silencium & equalitas victualium" ("solitude, silence and equal food," f. 91). Generally, Carthusians gathered with their brothers just once a week, on Sundays, for mass and a meal. The rest of the time they spent in silent prayer and work in their individual cells and their cells' gardens. Therefore, even more than usual we must regard each of these textual snippets as both mantras used for meditation as well as mnemonics that called to mind more religious works held in a monk's memory. In this way, one small, tabbed book packed with brief texts like this one could contain a lifetime's worth of devotional and meditative practice.

LITERATURE

Lehmann, Paul, ed. *Mittelalterliche Bibliothekskataloge Deutschlands und der Schweiz, II, Bistum Mainz, Erfurt*, Munich, 1928.

Wenzel, Siegfried. *The Sermons of William Peraldus: an Appraisal*, Turnhout, 2017.

Zahnd, Ueli. "Martin Bucer's First Theological Program and the Late Medieval Concept of 'States of Perfection,'" *Revue des sciences religieuses* 96 (2022), pp. 197–217.

ONLINE RESOURCES

ARCA, Collection Particulière, CP 392
<https://arca.irht.cnrs.fr/ark:/63955/md343r077m3s>

English Heritage, *The Daily Life of a Carthusian* <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/mount-grace-priory/history-and-stories/carthusian-life/>

The Book and Coin Collection of Andre Rooryck
<https://www.paulfrasercollectibles.com/blogs/coins-banknotes/the-book-and-coin-collections-of-andr-rooryck?srltid=AfmBOop2JDsjdaUmHRCO1tGsSIK50l95JsFvgelRAGX1FqLaUZ3GkNIR>

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