

LES ENLUMINURES

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Carthusian Rules and Sermons for Visitations In Latin and Italian, illuminated manuscript on parchment Northeastern Italy, c. 1564

ii (paper) + 84 + ii (paper) folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil top outer corner recto, complete, (collation i^o ii-xx^t xxi²), no catchwords or signatures, horizontal rules in ink and vertical bounding lines in lead point, prickings top and bottom margins, two prickings often visible in the outer margin, at the midpoint and near the bottom of the page (justification 94-92 x 60 mm.), written in an upright rounded gothic bookhand influenced by humanistic script in twenty-one long lines, red rubrics and paragraph marks, two-line red initials, four 2- or 3-line red or brushed gold initials with colored infill (f. 6, infilled with a flower; f. 11, infilled with bust of a man), THREE PARTIAL BORDERS of brightly colored scrolling acanthus (ff. 11, 35, 51), ILLUMINATED INITIAL AND BORDER f. 1 with a 6-line pink initial infilled with blue with white tracery, a realistic bird perched on the initial's cross bar, extending into a three-quarter acanthus and floral border including the figure of a bearded monk in a gray robe in the outer margin, completed in the lower margin with an intricate gilt vinestem ornament, f. 1 slightly trimmed at top and with smudge lower margin, f. 20 small slit lower margin, ink on a few pages shows some powdering, some soiling, generally very fine condition. ORIGINAL BINDING of limp vellum, yapp edges, smooth spine, back reinforced early on with additional strip of vellum, new endpapers. In modern cloth clamshell box, in very sturdy condition, vellum cracking lower outer edge. Dimensions 130 x 90 mm.

The austere perfection of the life of Carthusian monks has been admired from the origins of the order in the Middle Ages – “never reformed because never deformed.” Key to their enduring success was the system of visitations to inquire into the condition of each house and insure against abuses. This system produced a whole genre of little-studied manuscripts that record these visitations. The present profusely illustrated manuscript, including the order of visitation with texts in both Latin and Italian, brief notes from actual visitations, and a rich collection of Carthusian sermons brings this to life.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in Northeastern Italy in the sixteenth century as suggested by the evidence of the script and the style of the initials; one of the final texts record the results of a visitation concluded on November 3, 1564 (see f. 81v) and this manuscript must have been copied shortly after, if not in 1564.

Our manuscript includes interesting evidence that its pages were ruled with the aid of some kind of mechanical instrument or rake. The horizontal rules are ruled in ink, and in the outer margin one can see two prickings –in the middle of the page, and near the bottom (well below the last line of text) – which were used to anchor the instrument. On f. 12v we see that something went wrong and the beginning of the first eight lines are ruled with lines that turn upward at a sharp angle. The scribe subsequently carefully followed the ruling, resulting in very crooked lines of text. The vertical bounding lines were added by hand in pencil (and are pricked in the upper and lower margins).

2. Sold by Bernard Rosenthal, New York; his typed description NY (undated, 1960s) laid in.
3. Booksellers' or owners' notes include, inside front cover in ink, "90 mm"; front flyleaf in pencil, "CEH1913," and a longer, erased, pencil note, back flyleaf.

TEXT

ff. 1-49, Seven Carthusian sermons for visitations, and three sermons for the election of the prior. Their content is carefully matched to the occasion. We have identified only one in other sources, but further study of Carthusian sources would likely uncover more.

ff. 1-6, *Incipiunt sermones uisitacione, sermo primus*, incipit, "Aprehendite disciplina ne quando irascatur dominus ... Ps. ii[:12], Cum propter fragilitatem conditionis humane... apprehendite disciplinam sanctam ut hic per eam beatis fructum vestre sanctificationis ... qui est benedictus in secula seculorum";

Also found in *Les Enluminures*, TM 333, ff. 23v-30v, on this site, and Leeds, University Library, Brotherton Collection 13 (Ker, 1969-2002, vol. 3, pp. 49-50).

ff. 6-10v, *Sermo secundus in uisitacione*, incipit, "Corripiet me iustus ... ps. cxl [140:5], Sicut dicit Augustinus homo est quedam res summe deficiens. Deum aut summe sufficiens ... Dauid prophetarum eximius in uerbis ... Hic nostrum claudo sermonem. Ad unitate domine ... in secula seculorum, Amen;

ff. 10v-19, *Sermo tertius pro reconciliatione et pace*, incipit, "Uirgine ambluetis ..., Ad eph. iii [Ephesians 4:1], Ut spiritus sancti gratia facilius ... Venerabiles patres et fratres in christo karissimi. Si recte consideremus ... augmentationem et caritate perfecta. Quam nobis concedat yhesus christus ... Amen;

ff. 19-24, *Sermo quintus de unitate et pace*, incipit, "Fiat unum ovile et unus pastor, Johannis viiii capitulo [John 10:16]. Beatus Bernardus laudans ac magnificans unitatem in promotione ... Nolite ergo fratres spiritum ambitionis unitari, sed sequimini christum qui est via veritas et vitam ... Amen;"

See below, ff. 29-34v, for sermon four.

ff. 24-29, *Sermo sextus de instructione uisitacionis*, incipit, "Honora medicum propter neccesitatem ..., Eccl. xxxviii[:1]. Uenerabiles fratres et patres optimi. Cum mortalium opera imperfecta ... Vt eternam gloriam adipisci mereamur ... Amen;

ff. 29-34v, *Sermo quartus pro pace ponenda*, incipit, Erravi sicut ovis ..., Psalmus cxviii[:176]. Venerandi patres, patres et fratres dilectissimi versiculus iste si bene consideratur ... ipse emendetur et ceteri timeant. Adiuuante domino nostro Jesu christo ... Amen; [ends mid folio; remainder blank];

ff. 35-39v, *Sermo in uisit[atione] a Reuerendo patre carthusie imposita*, incipit, "Uisitabis fratres tuos si recte agant ..., primo regum xvii[:18] ... Et ex hoc ait nobis reverende pater cartusie. Visitabis fratres tuos ... omnia deus benedictus ... Amen;

ff. 39v-41v, *Sermo primus in electione prioris*, incipit, "Exaltem eum in ecclesia ... Ps 106[:32]. Exaltem eum ... quam pura debet esse dignitatis prelationis ...";

ff. 41v-43, *Sermo secundus in electione prioris*, incipit, "Ostende quem elegeris Actuum primo[:24]. Heu quam multi hodie inueniuntur que in electionibus ...";

ff. 43-49, *Sermo quintus prioris electi*, incipit, "Uias tuas domine ... ps. xxiiii[:4]. Cum solius dei opera perfecta sint ... Vias tuas ... Venerandi patres et fratres dilectissimi cum propter fragilitatem humanam ... ad pretegendum nos dexteram tue maiestatis extende,"; [ends top f. 49, remainder and ff. 49v-50v, blank but ruled];

Although sermon five follows the second sermon for the election of the prior, there is nothing missing in the manuscript.

ff. 51-66v, *Incipit ordo uisitandi domos ordinis. Prior et omnibus tam clericis quam laicis proffesis ...*, *Capitulum xxx secunde partis antiquarum consuetudinum ordinis cartusiensis de uisitationibus ...*, incipit, "In nomine sancte et indiuidue trinitatis. Obstatum cartusiensis ordinis ..."; [f. 53], *Capitulum iiii secunde partis antiquarum consuetudinum ordinis nostri de reprehensione*, incipit, "Cum dominus precepit non transferendos terminos ..."; [f. 57], *Capitulum primum secunde partis nouarum constitutionis de reprehensione*, incipit, "Quicumque incisos sotulares quos uulgariter estiuales uocamus ..."; [f. 59v], *Capitulo quarto de la secunda parte de le antiquam constuetudinem del nostro sancto ordine de la certosa della reprehensione*, incipit, "Per che il nostro signor[e] dio ..."; [f. 64], *Sequitur Capitulo primo de la secunda parte de le noue constitute de la reprehensione*, incipit, "Caduno chi portera calzari ...";

Order for the visitation of Carthusian monasteries; of particular interest is the fact that the statutes concerning reprehension are in both Latin and Italian (*Statuta antiqua* I, cap. iv, see above, f. 59v, and *Statuta noua* ii, cap. i, see above, f. 64); printed in Hogg, 1989, reprinting the Basel 1510 edition (for the *Statuta antiqua*, pars 2, ch. 30, see Hogg, vol 2, pp. 223-229).

Other Latin manuscripts with these statutes in Italian include Les Enluminures, TM 333, described on this site, Keeble College Oxford, MS 34, Italy, fifteenth century (Parkes, 1979, pp. 127-128), and Partridge Green, Sussex, England, St. Hugh's Charterhouse, Parkminster, MS ee.30 (B.76), Genoa, first half of the fifteenth century (Ker, 1969-2002, vol. 4, pp. 133-136).

ff. 66v-68v, *Sequitur. Ex carta capitula generalis anni domini 1389*, incipit, "Cum propter priorum ordinis ... ex sola suspitione condemnt. Hic emictuntur conuersi";

ff. 68v-78v, *Hic legitur carta uisitatorum. Facto precepto et allata precedentum carta ...*; [ends top f. 78v, remainder blank];

Includes a general list of transgressions that the visitators inquire about, followed on ff. 74-78v by more detailed lists organized by office beginning with the prior and ending with simple

monks; the sacristan, for example on ff. 77v-78, is asked if he carefully preserves the books in his care.

ff. 79-83, *Forma carte visitationis*, incipit, "In nomine sancta et indiuidue trinitatis ..."; [f. 80v], incipit, "Monachos vero dure reprehendimus eo quod male seruant cellam et silentium ...", [f. 81v], Stetimus in actu uisitationis diebus 8. Datum uel data indicata domo iii No. 1564 cum apprehensione sigillorum domorum ..."; [f. 82], Et primo ordinauimus ad laudem dei et animarum salutem ad omni edificationem Item ordinauimus quod quecumque non obedierit sacriste in tabula missarum ipsa die careat pitantia ... ad presidentis arbitrum"; [ends top f. 83, remainder and f. 84rv, blank but ruled].

The section begins with the formulas used in the actual visitation records, with no actual names filled in (i.e. of the monastery, prior, etc. are all referred to as "N"), followed (beginning on f. 81) with a list of faults found at a visitation on November 3, 1564 (date is found on f. 81v), followed by what appears to be a second undated visitation.

The Carthusian order, founded by St. Bruno c. 1084, was celebrated throughout the Middle Ages and for centuries after for the purity and austerity of its version of the religious life. By the end of the fifteenth century, there were about 200 Carthusian monasteries, and the order survived the vicissitudes of the Reformation in Catholic European countries (Martin, 1995). Each Carthusian monk spends most of his life living as a hermit in his own cell, but at the same time lives under the rule and discipline of a community and participates in the communal liturgy of the monastery. The success of the Carthusians at creating a balanced life and maintaining this life through their statutes, the guidance of the prior of the Grande Chartreuse, and the order's General Chapter is summed up by the famous adage, "numquam reformata, quia numquam deformata" (never reformed because never deformed).

The system of visitations described in our manuscript was key to the success of the Carthusian order. Visitors, appointed by the general chapter, visited each Charterhouse (the name used for Carthusian monasteries) every two years, examined the spiritual, liturgical, economic, and administrative health of the community, and then mandated necessary reforms. Sermons were an integral part of the visitation; the rich collection of visitation sermons in our manuscripts are of special note.

Many Carthusian monasteries must have had copies of the visitation statutes, and possibly records of visitations, but there does not appear to be a census of these manuscripts (Martin, 1995, states that the actual record of visitations seldom survive since they were often destroyed, see note 9). The contents of our manuscript, which combines visitation sermons, statutes, details on how to assemble the final document recording the results of the visitation (including texts from the General Chapter of 1389), and very brief notes from an actual visitation in 1564, and perhaps notes from a second, undated, visitation, offers particularly rich avenues for further research. The texts in Italian in the present manuscript appear to be relatively uncommon, and the number of sermons in our manuscript is also worthy of note.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Statuta ordinis cartusi | | ensis a domno Guigone priore cartusie edita ..., Basel, Johannes Amerbach, 1510, VD16 G 4071

<http://gateway-bayern.de/VD16+G+4071>

"[Zwischen Kloster Und Stadt](#): Hagiographie der Kölner Kartäuser um 1500" (with links to digitized copies of the *Statuta ordinis Cartusiensis*, Basel, 1510)

<https://kartaeuser.hypotheses.org/261>

Analecta Cartusiana

<https://analectacartusiana.monsite-orange.fr> (monsie-orange.fr)

Official Website of the Carthusian Order

<http://www.chartreux.org/>

which includes an English translation of excerpts from the Carthusian Statutes

<http://www.chartreux.org/en/frame.html>

Webster, Douglas Raymund. "The Carthusian Order," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 3, New York, 1908

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03388a.htm>

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