

LES ENLUMINURES, LTD

2970 North Lake Shore Drive 11B
Chicago, Illinois 60657

tel 1-773-979-5986
fax 1-773-528-3976

Les Enluminures

Le Louvre des Antiquaires
2, Place du Palais-Royal
34, allée Riesener
75001 Paris

tél : 33 1 42 60 15 58
fax : 33 1 42 15 00 25

Statutes and Privileges of the Brothers and Sisters of the Order of the Penitence of Saint Dominic

In Latin and Italian, illuminated manuscript on parchment

[Italy, Venice, Convent of the Corpus Domini, after c. 1405 (before c. 1413)]

47 folios, complete, mostly in quires of 8 (i-v⁸, vi⁴⁺¹, plus 2), written on 19 long lines (justification 130 x 95 mm.), traces of ruling, brown ink, blue paragraph marks, rubrics, TWO MINIATURES occupying one-third page each, 2 LARGE INITIALS, one historiated (fol. 1) and the other decorated (fol. 14v), 3-line initials alternately in blue and red with alternating penwork in violet and blue on ff. 30, 31v, 32v, 33v, 34v, and 37v, small 1-line initials in red, certain capitals in the text stroked in yellow, written by several hands at different dates, numerous marginal notes, numerous pointing hands, some catchwords, some drawings in pencil, words and passages underlined in red, parchment affected by humidity on fols. 1, 8v, 9, 16v (affecting the legibility of the script on the last two folios) and 45. CONTEMPORARY BINDING of dark brown calf over boards, simple geometric decoration composed of single blind-stamped fillets and six bosses on each cover (rubbed), spine sewn on three raised thongs, traces of ties in green velvet. Dimensions 216 x 159 mm.

Unpublished and wholly intact illuminated copy of the Statutes and Privileges of the well-known Dominican Convent of the Corpus Domini in Venice. According to research by Dr. Gaudenz Freuler, the manuscript was made in the scriptorium of the convent and illuminated by the young Cristoforo Cortese, who included portraits of the nuns in the illuminations. Manuscripts from the Corpus Domini were dispersed in the eighteenth century. A sister manuscript, the Rules of the Nuns of the Corpus Domini, is in Siena (Bibl. Comunale, MS T. II.8).

PROVENANCE

1. Executed in the scriptorium of the Convent of the Penitential Sisters of Saint Dominic in Venice (known as the Corpus Domini). Founded in 20 January 1393

by a papal bull of Boniface IX, this convent became one of the six richest in Venice in the sixteenth century and it welcomed nuns from noble families. Its famous scriptorium under the direction of Tommaso Caffarini undertook the production of books for use in the convent and employed Cristoforo Cortese.

2. On the paste-down of the upper cover of the binding is written in Latin and in brown ink the dates 8 March 1678 and 10 January 1679 and three names: P. Rocherai, P. Martini, and Joseph Campelli, Dominican (the last name repeated twice).
3. Private Collection, England ? or France?, in 1899, according to a manuscript annotation written in French and in English, in the lower margin of f. 1: "MS. rel. à l'origine de l'ordre des Dominicains du commencement du XV^e siècle, partie en latin, partie italien / MS relating to the origin of the Order of Dominicans written at the beginning of the 15th century part in Latin part Italian. DWD l'an 1899."

TEXT

ff. 1-13v, Confirmation of the Statutes of the Brothers and the Sisters of the Order of the Penitence of Saint Dominic, privilege granted by Pope Innocent VII (1336-1406) on 26 June 1405 (see Ripoll, vol. II, p. 473, no. III); rubric, "[...] privilegii plenarie ... "; incipit, "Innocentius episcopus servus servorum Dei. Ad perpetuam rei memoriam..."; explicit, "Explicit copia privilegii confirmationis regule fratrum et sororum ordinis de penitentia beati dominici de quo ordine fuit supradicta beata Katerina de Senis."

ff. 14-30, Translation of the act that precedes in Italian for the use of the sisters of the order and for those women who want to inform themselves concerning the act; rubric, "Questa e la copia del privilegio de la confirmatione de la regola de frati e de la suora dell'ordine della penitencia..."; incipit, "Innocencio veschovo servo de servi di Dio ..."; explicit, "Data in Roma appo santo Pietro sei di innanci calende di luglo cio e a di vinti sei di giugno nell' anno primo del nostro pontificato e papato. Explicit."

ff. 30-31, Commentary by Tomaso of Siena of the Order of the Dominicans assuring the faithfulness of the Italian translation; rubric, "Certa dechiarragione de la differena del sopradetta privilegio volgaricato di per se per le suore dal volgaricato di per se per gli frati";

ff. 31v, Privileges enjoyed by members of the Order of the Penitence ; rubric, "Queste infrascritte sono certe copie dalcuni privileggi et quali sappartengono alle persone dell'ordine de la penitencia di misser santo Domenico";

ff. 31v-32v, Copy of a privilege of Pope Honorius IV (1285-1287) granted at Rome 28 January 1286 (see Ripoll, vol. II, p. 10, no. IX), with a date added in the margin, 1286

and by another hand: bull *Congruum existimentes* ; incipit, "Honorius episcopus servus servorum dei. Universis tam viris quam mulieribus de penitentia beati Dominici..."; explicit, "...et beatorum Petri et Pauli apostolorum eius se noverint in cursurium";

ff. 32v-33, Copy of a privilege of Pope Boniface IX (1389-1404), granted at Rome on 18 January 1401 (see Ripoll, vol. 2, p. 410, no. CLXV), and the date added in the margin 1401, and by another hand: bull *Humilibus et honestis* ; incipit, "Bonifatius episcopus servus servorum Dei. Dilectis filiis universis..." ; explicit, "Nulli ergo omino hominum liceat etc." ;

ff. 33v-34v, Partial copy of a privilege by Boniface IX, without date, without place, and without the beginning of the bull, permitting the brothers and sisters of the Penitence of Saint Dominic to receive the sacraments, attend Mass, as well as to preach ; incipit, "Bonifatius episcopus servus servorum Dei. Ad perpetuam rei memoriam sacre religionis..." ; explicit, "...de speciali gracia et apostolice potestatis plenitudine indulgemus, etc." ;

ff. 34v-37v, Copy of a privilege granted to the sisters of the Penitence by Pope John XXII given at Avignon on 1 June 1326 (see Ripoll, vol. II, p. 169, no. XLIX), with the date 1326 in the margin; incipit, "Johannes episcopus servus servorum...Cum de mulieribus que bighine vulgariter et communiter nuncupantur felicis recordacionis..." ; explicit, "...sed perseverantibus in consumatione prestatur." ;

ff. 37v-39, Commentary in Italian on the four preceding privileges, noting their location (one of the notes mentions that the third bull is found with Tomaso da Fermo, General Master of the Order of the Dominicans from 1401 to 1413. This citation points to the likely date of the writing of the commentary between 1405 and 1413). There is also the precision that the four original privileges are found at the sisters of the Order of the Penitence of Saint Dominic at Venice with the following indication of the different types of documents: letters, bulls, privileges, etc.; incipit, "Per maggiore ainsamento e piu chiara informacione de le sopradette suore..." ; explicit, "...e verace sposa e precipua seguitatrice del suo eterno sposo misser Christo Jhesu [...] Amen" ;

ff. 39-44, rubric in Italian followed by text in Latin retracing the ceremony of the reception of the sisters of the Penitence of Saint Dominic (text, response, didascalies), with precisions by another hand on f. 42v ; rubric, "Del modo del ricevere le donne all'ordine de la penitencia di misser san Domenico secondo la communale usança et che si contiene nela regola et in nell'ordinacioni de le suore del detto ordine" ; incipit, "Est sciendum quod postquam mulier recipienda fuerit diligenter examinata..." ; explicit, "Ad quam ipse nos omnes perducatur qui cum Patre et Spiritu Sancto vivit et regnat Deus. Per omnia secula seculorum. Amen" ;

ff. 44-45, Privilege of immunity for the members of the Order of the Penitence ; rubric, "Certa dechiaracione d'alcuna inmunitade et libertade la quale anno le persone

dell'ordine de la penitencia di san Domenico. E come se de significare a veschovi e a sacerdoti curati";

ff. 46, list of the 38 sisters received at Venice, certain of them are deceased, written in two hands. Two names (Maria da la Norione, Mina da la Berengho) are followed by the title "beata"

ff. 47, blank

Compilation of official texts concerning the brothers and sisters of the Order of the Penitence of Saint Dominic. The important privilege of Innocent VII of 1405 is the prominent text, along with its translation for the sisters (and brothers) who do not read Latin. The prominence of the text and the accompanying illustration suggests that the work was copied on the occasion of, or shortly thereafter, the penitents received the bull. The other papal bulls concerning the order are present exclusively in Latin but accompanied by an explanation in Italian. Two other texts as well as a list of the sisters of the convent complete the ensemble.

Although the convent had its own scriptorium under the direction of Tommaso d'Antonio Caffarini, little is known about the activity of the scriptorium because manuscripts from the Corpus Domini were dispersed in the eighteenth century. The recovery of the present manuscript, including many important texts as well as a list of the first group of sister, is thus critical for the reconstruction of the history of the Corpus Domini.

ILLUSTRATION

f. 1, three-quarter page miniature, Saint Dominic and the Brothers and Sisters of the Order, illustrating Dominic bearing in his right hand the body of Christ and in his left a model of the church raises his cloak to protect the brothers (left) and the sisters (right) of the order. Wearing the black and white garment of the order, Dominic is nimbed with a star over his head, and two angels on the left and right, hold respectively a martyr's palm and a book. On a blue ground, framed in red and gold. Dimensions 102 x 60 mm.

f. 1, historiated initial *I* [nnocentius], Pope Innocent hands a copy of the statutes to the brothers and sisters of the order who kneel before him. The palette in blue, red, pink, black, gold, and green.

f. 14, three-quarter page miniature, illustrating Saint Dominic, nimbed with a star over his head, holding a book and the martyr's palm, while two angels hold open his cloak, under which the sisters of the Corpus Domini kneel. Dimensions 95 x 65 mm. The miniature itself is protected by its red silk cloth that dates from the origin of the book.

f. 14v, initial *I*, decorated with the same palette as the preceding in blue, red, black, pink, green, gold and white, comparable to that on f. 1.

Cristoforo Cortese (active Venice, c. 1390; died Venice, before 1445) was the most important Venetian illuminator at the end of the fourteenth century to the middle of the fifteenth century. Extensive documents trace his career from the beginnings to his death, but no surviving documents actually refer to works of art. A signed illumination (Paris, Musée Marmottan, Wildenstein Collection, no. 68) provides the basis for a series of attributions many for important lay confraternities in and around Venice. The earliest roots of Cortese's style are found in Paduan and Bolognese illumination and in the work of the Florentine illuminator Don Silvestro dei Gherarducci, who worked in the nearby Venetian monastery of San Michele in Murano.

The present illuminations represent important new additions to Cortese's early style and are crucial for the reconstruction of his career. They join a small group of other illuminations all associated with the Convent of the Corpus Domini: four fragments from a lost Antiphonal and an illuminated Rule in Siena (Bibl. Comunale, MS T. II.8). Among these, the Antiphonal is the most impressive. Two of the extant miniatures include portraits of the nuns, the lay sisters, and the male donors of the famous convent (see *Les Enluminures*, Cat. 10, nos. 29, 30, p. 9, and front cover; for other fragments from the same Antiphonal, see Hindman et al., no. 24). The Antiphonal also confirms in an interesting way the influence of Gherarducci on the early Cortese. Its frontispiece is directly inspired by miniatures of Gherarducci, because the director of the scriptorium advised the artists to base the production of their newly projected series of Choir Books on the model of those he had seen at San Michele in Murano. The Rule includes a portrayal of Saint Dominic consistent with those in the present manuscript.

LITERATURE

Corner, Flaminio. *Notizie storiche delle chiese e monasteri di Venezia e di Torcello*, Padua (G. Manfré), 1758, pp. 312-320.

Hindman, Sandra and M. Levi D'Ancona, Pia Palladino, Maria Francesca Saffiotti, *The Robert Lehman Collection, IV, Illuminations*, New York (The Metropolitan Museum of Art) and Princeton, N.J., 1997.

Ripoll, F. Thomas. *Bullarium ordinis fratrum praedicatorum*, Rome (H. Mainardi), t. II, 1730.

Sperling, Jutta Gisela. *Convents and the Body Politic in the Late Renaissance Venice*, Chicago and London (University of Chicago Press), 1999.

Venchi, Innocent. *Catalogus hagiographicus ordinis praedicatorum*, Rome (Postulatio generalis), 2001.