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SAINT BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX, *Opera*, including *De precepto et dispensatione*, *De gratia et libero arbitrio*, *De diligendo Deo*, *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae*, and other works

In Latin, manuscript on parchment  
[Southern Netherlands, c. 1450-1475]

*i + 135 + i leaves, complete (i-viii8, ix7 [6 canceled, text continuous], x-xviii8), catchwords in lower margins of final versos, signatures, guide for rubricator untrimmed f. 22, two columns of 30 lines written in a black ink in a Gothic bookhand between four verticals and 31 horizontals ruled in gray (justification 171 x 50-16-50 mm.), prickings survive for verticals and horizontals, rubrics in red, text capitals touched red, two- and three-line initials alternately in red or blue, eight large flourished initials in varying combinations of red, blue, grey, and yellow, neat red patterns around original holes or repairs in parchment (very slight wear, opening of a further text erased on f. 135). Bound in nineteenth-century tan calf, panel stamped in blind over wooden boards, metal cornerpieces and center bosses, spine in six compartments, earlier leather fore-edge tabs (scuffed, lacking four tabs). Dimensions 254 x 168 mm.*

Large handsome codex, its script and decoration wholly characteristic of manuscripts produced in the milieu of the reformed monasteries of the Windesheim Congregation and including a group of writings by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux--one of the favorite authors of the *Devotio Moderna*--evidently selected to suit the needs of the Augustinians of Windesheim. Bernard's attitudes toward monastic reform and his practical mysticism, both expressed in texts here, were fundamental to the evolution of the tenets of the *Devotio Moderna*.

PROVENANCE

1. The script--with the revival of the *punctus flexus*--shows that the book was made in a house of the Windesheim Congregation. The influence of the Ijssel region, the location of Windesheim, is also evident in the flourishing of the initials, although the penwork extensions in the lower margin are only found in Southern Netherlandish manuscripts. Erased ownership inscription on verso of f. i; shelfmark on recto;
2. Le Tellier, avocat, his nineteenth-century bookplate inside upper cover.

## TEXT

f. iv, Contemporary list of contents, ending with the Apologia, incipit, "In hoc volumen haec opuscula continentur";

1.

ff. 1-21v, Bernard of Clairvaux, *De praecepto et dispensatione liber*; rubric, *Incipit prologus beati Bernardi abbatis de precepti et dispensatione*; incipit prologus [Letter to the Abbott of Coulombs], "Domino abbati Columbensi, frater Bernardus..."; incipit, "Qua mente iam tacebo. Qua fronte tamen loquar..."; explicit, "[...] et doctiori disputatore, et opere prolixiori"; epilogue, "Ego enim putaveram modum...quod et studui, satisfacere voluntati."

[Leclercq] *Opera sancti Bernardi*, III, pp. 253-294; see also Steiger, A., "Sancti Bernardi De praecepto et dispensatione liber," in *Cistercienser-Chronik*, 24 (1912), pp. 129-135; see also new edition and French translation: Bernard de Clairvaux, *Le Précepte et la dispense. La Conversion*, tr. Callerot et al., Paris, 2000. The treatise on *De praecepto et dispensatione liber* was written at the request of two Benedictine monks from Chartres, soliciting the advice of Bernard on diverse questions concerning the Rule of Saint Benedict.

2.

ff. 21v-40v, Bernard of Clairvaux, *De gratia et libero arbitrio*; rubric, *Incipit prologus sancti Bernardi in libro de gratia et libero arbitrio*; incipit prologus, "Opusculum de gratia et libero arbitrio..."; incipit, "Loquente me coram aliquando..."; explicit, "[...] nos quos justos invenit hos et magnificavit. Explicit liber beati Bernardi abbatis de gratia et libero arbitrio."

[Leclercq] *Opera sancti Bernardi*, III, pp. 165-203; see also edition in Bernard de Clairvaux, *Opere di San Bernardo. A cura di Ferruccio Gastaldelli-Trattati*, Milan, 1984, pp. 335-423; see also study with Latin and French texts in Bernard de Clairvaux, *L'Amour de Dieu. La Grace et le Libre arbitre*, introd. F. Callerot et alia., Coll. Sources Chrétiennes, no. 393, Paris, 1993. The composition of *De gratia et libero arbitrio* is around 1128. For Bernard, grace and free will, were not opposed to each other.

3.

ff. 41-64v, Bernard of Clairvaux, *Homiliae super missus est in laudibus virginis matris*; rubric, *Prologus beati Bernardi abbatis in omeliis sequentibus*; incipit prologus, "Scribere me aliquid et devotio jubet..."; incipit, "Missus est Gabriel angelus... [rubric] *Omelia prima*: "Qui sibi voluit evangelista..."; explicit, "[...] Expliciunt omelie beati Bernardi abbatis super evangelio missus est Gabriel angelus etc. Deo gratias [...] et ultra. Finito libro sit laus et gloria Christo. Scriptoris [munus sit Deus tertius est unus] [?]."

Published in [Leclercq] *Opera sancti Bernardi*, IV, pp. 13-58.

4.

ff. 65-83v, Bernard of Clairvaux, *De diligendo Deo*; rubric, *Incipit liber beati Bernardi abbatis de diligendo deo*; incipit, "Viro illustri domino A[imerico] ecclesie..."; explicit, "[...] ut talis fiam qualem littere vostre predicant. Explicit liber beati Bernardi abbatis de diligendo deo".

[Leclercq] *Opera sancti Bernardi*, III, pp. 109-154; see also edition in Bernard de Clairvaux, *Opere di San Bernardo. A cura di Ferruccio Gastaldelli. - Trattati*, Milan, 1984, pp. 221-331; see also English translation and presentation: Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux, Treatises*, II, "On Loving God," Cistercian Publications, 1974, pp. 85-132; see also study, Latin and French texts in Bernard de Clairvaux, *L'Amour de Dieu. La Grace et le Libre arbitre*, introd. F. Callerot et alia., Coll. Sources Chrétiennes, no. 393, Paris, 1993.

The first version of the treatise *De Diligendo Deo* was written in the years 1124-1125. But the text was then reedited to be offered to Cardinal Aimeric c. 1133-1125. From it derives the celebrated formula: "The measure of our love for God is to love him without measure."

5.

ff. 84-106v, Bernard of Clairvaux, *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae*; rubric, *Isti sunt gradus humilitatis*; incipit, "Duodecimus gradus humilitatis est..."; rubric, *Incipit liber beati Bernardi abbatis de .xii. gradibus humilitatis*; incipit prefatio, "Rogasti me, frater Got[efride], quatinus ea que..."; incipit, "Locuturus ergo de gradibus humilitatis..."; explicit, "[...] in tuo corde quam in nostro codice leges. Expliciunt tractatus beati Bernardi abbatis de duodecim gradibus humilitatis."

See edition in Bernard de Clairvaux, *Opere di San Bernardo. A cura di Ferruccio Gastaldelli-Trattati*, Milan, 1984, pp. 1-119; see also English translation and presentation: Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux, Treatises*, II, "The Steps of Humility and Pride," Cistercian Publications, 1974, pp. 1-82. Note that in the present copy the *Retractio* is copied after the *De gradibus*.

6.

ff. 106v-107, Bernard of Clairvaux, *Retractio*; rubric, *Retractatio beati Bernardi abbatis in libro precedenti*; incipit, "In hoc opusculo, cum illud de Evangelio... "; explicit, "[...] ipse breviter intimare curavi."

See edition in Bernard de Clairvaux, *Opere di San Bernardo. A cura di Ferruccio Gastaldelli-Trattati*, Milan, 1984, "Retractio," p. 38.

7.

ff. 107-121, Bernard of Clairvaux, *De laude novae militiae*; rubric, *Incipit prologus beati Bernardi abbatis in libro de laude nove milicie*; incipit prologus, "Hugoni, militi Christi et magistro miliciae... "; rubric, *Incipit liber beati Bernardi abbatis ad milites templi de laude nove milicie. Capitulum primum est sermo exhortatorius ad milites templi*; incipit, "Novum milicie genus ortum nuper... "; explicit, "[...] ad proelium et digitos vestros ad bellum."

[Leclercq] *Opera sancti Bernardi*, III, pp. 213-239; see edition in Bernard de Clairvaux, *Opere di San Bernardo. A cura di Ferruccio Gastaldelli-Trattati*, Milan, 1984, pp. 427-483;

Bernard was very involved in contemporary events, especially the launching of the Second Crusade, and it was his advocacy that secured the approval of the Knights Templar at the Synod of Troyes in 1128. To further the Templars's appeal for alms and men, Saint Bernard praised the Order in the *De laude novae militae*, which he dedicated to their founder, Hugh de Payens.

8.

ff. 121-135, Bernard of Clairvaux, *Apologia as Guillelmum abbatem*; rubric, *Incipit liber appollogeticus beati abbatis ad dominum Willelmum abbatem sancti Theodorici*; incipit, "Venerabili patri Willelmo frater Bernardus fratrum qui in Clara Valle sunt inutilis servus salutem in Domino. Usque modo si qua me scriptitare... "; explicit, "[...] a vobis semper fiat, omnino precor et supplico. Valete. Explicit liber appollogeticus beati Bernardi abbatis clarevallis"; erased opening of a further text, not included in the list of contents.

[Leclercq] *Opera sancti Bernardi*, III, pp. 61-108; see also edition in Bernard de Clairvaux, *Opere di San Bernardo. A cura di Ferruccio Gastaldelli-Trattati*, Milan, 1984, pp. 123-217.

Saint Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux (1090-1153), gave memorable expression to the ideals of the new Cistercian Order in the *Apologia*, addressed to William, Abbot of Saint Thierry, where he criticized what he saw as the excesses of the Benedictines, particularly their love of ornament. He is considered one of the fathers of the *Devotio Moderna*, founded in the fourteenth century in The Netherlands as a reform movement by Geert Groote, who was significantly influenced by Cistercian ideals and practice. They based much of their

spirituality on Saint Bernard, and they were especially attracted to his interests in monastic reform and practical mysticism. The collection of Bernard's texts gathered together in this manuscript would have been well suited to a house of the Windesheim Congregation (the name given to the group of Augustinian monasteries that formed part of the *Devotio Moderna*), for it includes Bernard's practical insights into monasticism expressed in *De praecepto et dispensatione liber* and assembles his main mystical texts including *De gratia et libero arbitrio* and *De diligendo Deo*.

## LITERATURE

Bernard de Clairvaux. *The Works of Bernard de Clairvaux. 5, Treatises* [introduction by M. Basil Pennington][translated by Ambrose Conway and Robert Walton], Cistercian Publications, Washington, D.C., 1974. Translations of "De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae" and "De diligendo Deo liber".

Bernard de Clairvaux. *Le Précepte et la Dispense. La Conversion. Texte latin des S. Bernardi Opera* par J. Leclercq, H. Rochais et Ch. H. Talbot. Introduction et traduction par F. Callerot, J. Miethke, C. Jaquinod, Paris, 2000.

Hyma, Albert. *The Christian Renaissance: A History of the Devotio Moderna (1380-1520)*, Grand Rapids, the Reformed Press, 1924.

[Leclercq]. Bernard de Clairvaux, *S. Bernardi Opera...*, *Tractatus et opuscula ad fidem codicum recensuerunt J. Leclercq...* H. M. Rochais,..., Romae, Editiones Cistercienses, 1963.

Post, R. R.. *The Modern Devotion, Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism*, Leiden, 1968.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

On Bernard of Clairvaux, life and writings (e-text of "On loving God")

<http://www.ccel.org/b/bernard/>

Texts on the Devotio Moderna

<http://www.etss.edu/hts/MAPM/info3.htm>

Dionysian Spirituality and the Devotio Moderna

<http://www.op.org/domcentral/study/aumann/cs/cs07.htm>