

Ludovico Brunori, Life of Jerome of Ancona (*Beati Jeronimi de Ancona laudum opusculum*)  
In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
Italy (Ancona), dated 25 May 1506

*i* (modern paper) + 10 + *i* folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, top, outer corner recto, (collation, one quire of ten leaves), no catchwords or signatures, ruled very lightly in lead with single full-length vertical bounding lines, inside, outside and between the columns, top horizontal rule full across, (justification, 218 x 155-150 mm.), written below the top line in a practiced late Italian bookhand influenced by humanistic script, in two columns of forty lines by two scribes, the second scribe beginning on f. 9v, majuscules in text touched with red, red rubrics, two-line red initials, some with decorative void spaces within the initials, and some with red pen decoration, ONE HISTORIATED INITIAL, f. 2, of a man in a dark brown robe, half-length, presumably Jerome of Ancona, with an eight-line pink initial on a dark blue square ground with white highlights, with spiky green, pink and red acanthus extending from the initial and forming a border in the top and inner margins, and a vividly painted coat-of-arms, f. 1v, showing a red castle in a simple landscape, surmounted by a green ecclesiastical hat and tassels, in excellent condition, slight damage to the initial, f. 2, some soiling, bottom, outer corners, and off-set red on some folios. Bound in modern vellum, edges stained red, in excellent condition. Dimensions 283 x 205 mm.

This is the unique copy of the life of the hermit, Jerome of Ancona, by a Dominican monk, Ludovico Brunori. The manuscript also includes a list of notable citizens of Ancona at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The text was edited in 1963 by Dom Jean Leclercq and is an important witness to the hermitical movement in Renaissance Italy, as well as being a valuable source for the history of Ancona.

## PROVENANCE

1. Written in Italy, in Ancona; the author notes that the text was written 25 May 1506 (see f. 9), and there is no reason to believe that this is not also the date of this manuscript. Ecclesiastical coat-of-arms, f. 1v, possibly the bishopric of Ancona, would accord with the semi-official aspect of this manuscript, recording the life of a well-beloved local hermit shortly after his death. The text is addressed to the important citizens of Ancona, and includes a list of their names at the end.
2. Belonged to the Congregation of the Hermits of St. Romuald of the Camaldolese Order, a reformed Order of the Camaldolese; ownership note, s. XVII (?), f. 1v, "Congregationis Eremitatum sancti Romualdi ordinis camaldulensis sub numero 4."
3. Sotheby Sale, London, April 11, 1961, lot 171; catalogue description from this sale pasted inside front cover.
4. Belonged to Harry A. Walton Jr. of Covington, Virginia; his manuscript A-2344 (in pencil, inside front cover), but not included among the manuscripts from his library catalogued in C. U. Faye and W. H. Bond, *Supplement to the Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, New York, The Bibliographical Society, 1962, pp. 517-524.

## TEXT

ff. 1v-9 [f. 1, blank], *Frater ludovicus brunorus de padua ordinis predicatorum sacre theologie professor, illustrissimis ancone dominis magnificis regulatoribus omnique senatui sallutem plurimam dicit, incipit, "Maiores nostri tum huius uestre magnificentissime urbis ueteres ... [f. 2] Quidam veteres recte sapientes quatuor propter quae honor cuiquam impendendus sit ... [f. 2] Ortus beati patris hyeronimi, Beatus igitur Hyeronimus de ancona ordinis uite heremitice frater .... Eius me interuentionibus recomendetis." Istud uero non in totum sed in parte beati Ieromini de Ancona laudum opusculum ego magister Ludouicus Brunorus de Padua, ordinis predicatorum et conuentus sancti dominici ancone predicator indignus edidi tempore prioratus uenerabilis prioris fratris nicolai pironi millesimo quingentesimo sexto die uigesimo quinto maii. Expletumque est ad laude dei et beati ieromini anconitani. Finis. Qui scripsit, scribat, semper cum domino uiuat/ Viuat in celis semper cum beato Ieronimo felix,*

f. 9v, *Et tunc temporis existentibus dominis infra scriptis magnifice comunitatis ancone uidelicet, incipit, "Stephano condam thomasii fatatis, ....; Et regulatoribus infrascriptis existentibus, uidelicet, incipit, "Andrea condam Ioannis bonfioli ...";*

f. 9v, *Miraculis que in uita fecit a domino, incipit, "Cum semel ad eum mulieres quedam et ancone nobiles ... et illico eam inde extrassit."*

ff. 9v-10v, *Et infrascriptis magnifice comunitatis ancone senatoribus almi consilii existentibus, uidelicet, incipit, "Ioannes farolinus, Stephanus de fatatis ..."; Et infrascriptis erant duodecim consilarii, uidelicet, incipit, "Petrus de carbonibus, ... Ieronimus riciardi."*

Nothing is known about the author of this text except for the information contained in the text itself. He identifies himself as a Dominican monk at Ancona, formerly from Padua, and a professor of sacred theology (he is not included in Thomas Kaeppli. *Scriptores ordinis praedicatorum medii aevi*, Romae, Ad S. Sabinae, 1970-). This life of Jerome of Ancona, or the "*laudum opusculum*" as Ludovico calls it, is addressed to the notable citizens of Ancona (their names are attached). It is characterized by full-blown Renaissance oratory that gives the author ample opportunity to display his learning (while stressing that Jerome had no need for such learning, having direct knowledge of God through holy Faith). Ludovico cites both classical and medieval sources, including Aristotle, Cicero, Seneca, Thomas Aquinas, and Augustine. It seems possible that this life may have been written as the first steps toward seeking Jerome's formal recognition as a Saint (which never took place).

Similarly, the main source of information about the Blessed Jerome of Ancona is this text (with the exception of a brief work by Girolamo Speciali, printed in Venice in 1795, and reprinted by Leclercq, which contains a few more details of Jerome's early life). Ludovico Brunori call him "a brother of the hermitical life," who was born of noble parents in Ancona. His father was Simon, Ser Thomasii de Ancona (Speciali lists his father as Simone di Tommaso Ginelli). When Jerome was twenty he left behind his family and life in Ancona and went to live a religious life on Monte Conero, outside of Ancona, where he built a hermitage attached to the Church of St. Peter. He went to Rome on foot to seek Pope Alexander VI's blessing in 1500 (the Jubilee year), and died in 1506, on April 23 when he was 43. The *Vita* stresses how important he was to the life of the whole region, describing the crowds gathering at his hermitage, his works of charity, and eloquently recounting his death and the services at the Cathedral.

Although the Church never formally declared Jerome a saint, he is included in the Franciscan martyrology, where he is venerated as the Blessed Jerome of Ancona. Franciscan tradition holds that he was a Franciscan tertiary, that is, a layperson affiliated with the Order, but it is interesting that Ludovico Brunori does not mention this in his account of Jerome's life.

The text is a valuable witness to the cultural and religious history of Renaissance Italy, shedding light on popular devotion and the hermitical movement. Beyond this, the list of 139 notable men of Ancona makes it a document important to the history of Ancona; Ancona lost its independence in 1532 when it was occupied by the Papal army and annexed. The archives were burnt at that time, and thus very few documents survive before that date (Leclercq reports that there are only sixteen charters dating earlier than 1506 are included in G. A. Rota, *L'Archivio storico comunale di Ancona*, Ancona, 1956; see p. 373, note 10).

The manuscript was owned at an early point in its history by the Congregation of the Hermits of St. Romuald of the Camaldolese Order, a reformed branch of the Camaldolese Order, founded in 1520 by Blessed Paul Giustiniani (1476-1528), which emphasized a return to the hermitical life that had been important to the Order's founder, St. Romuald, but which had largely been replaced by conventual life by Paul's time. Paul Giustiniani had important connections to the area around Ancona, and his writings show familiarity with hermits from the area, including Jerome. One of the original foundations belonging to this Order was the Hermitage of St. Benedict, which was a short distance from Jerome's hermitage. The church of St. Peter and Jerome's hermitage were granted to the hermitical community of St. Maria Gonzaga in 1518. After a fire in 1558, it was restored by Camaldolese Hermits (and today is the site of a luxury hotel). This branch of the Order continues today as the Camaldolese hermits of Monte Corona.

## LITERATURE

Aubert, R. "Jerôme d'Ancône," in *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, Paris, 2000, vol. 27, p. 1029.

Caby, Cécile. *De l'éremitisme rural au monachisme urbain: les camaldoules en Italie à la fin du Moyen Âge*, Rome, Ecole française de Rome, 1999.

Kaeppli, Thomas. *Scriptores ordinis praedicatorum medii aevi*, Rome, Ad S. Sabinae, 1970- .

Leclercq, Jean. "Une Vie de Jérôme d'Ancône par Ludovico Brunori," *Traditio*, 19 (1963), pp. 371-410.

Leclercq, Jean. *Camaldolese Extraordinary: The Life, Doctrine, and Rule of Blessed Paul Giustiniani*, Bloomington, Ohio, Ercam Editions, 2003.

Rota, G. A. *L'Archivio storico comunale di Ancona*, Ancona, 1956.

Speciali, Girolamo. *Notizie istoriche dei Santi Protettori di Ancona e dei cittadini illustri che con la loro santità l'hanno illustrata*, Venice, 1759.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Butler, Richard Urban, and Leslie Toke. "Camaldolese." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 3, New

York, Robert Appleton Company, 1908. 25 Jul. 2009

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03204d.htm>

Camaldolese Congregation of the Order of St. Benedict, the monastic community of Camaldoli:

[http://www.camaldoli.it/en\\_index.htm](http://www.camaldoli.it/en_index.htm)

Camaldolese Hermits of MonteCorona:

<http://www.camaldolese.org/pages.php?pageid=1>

TM 382