

MARCHESINUS DE REGIO LEPIDI, *Mammotrectus* (abbreviated)

In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Northern or Central Italy, c. 1300-1330

188 folios on parchment, foliation in ink in Arabic numerals, upper outer margin, 1-40, and then ff. 41- end, modern foliation in pencil, complete (collation, i⁴ ii-iii¹² iv¹² [-8, following f. 45, cancelled with no loss of text] v-xii¹⁰ xiii¹⁰ xiv⁶ xv⁸ xvi¹⁰ xvii¹⁰ [-10, cancelled]), no catchwords or signatures (quires lettered in pencil in a modern hand), ruled in ink with the top two and bottom two horizontal rules full across; full-length single vertical bounding lines (justification, 107-104 x 78-74 mm.), written below the top line in a small cursive gothic bookhand thirty-three to forty long lines, index by another scribe in a rounded gothic bookhand in two columns of forty lines, notes for the rubricator and guide letters for initials in margins, red rubrics, running titles, and chapter numbers (in Arabic and Roman numerals), capitals stroked in red or occasionally in yellow, lemmata underlined in yellow or red, one- to two-line red initials copied in the margin outside the text space, approximately thirty-six four- to twelve-line parted red and blue initials with pen decoration in red or red and violet with violet infilling. Thirteen-line HISTORIATED INITIAL, f. 1, depicting the author in a Franciscan habit and holding a book on a deep blue ground with white highlights, bordered in violet, extending into a full-length border with lush acanthus in orange and blue entwined around a long stem. Margins trimmed close with the text occasionally cropped (primarily the index), very small hole (ink-burn?) with small loss on f. 4, and a few other small holes cut into the parchment including ff. 19 and 22v, original holes, once with sewn repairs on ff. 31v, 52, stain in gutter on ff. 30-32, parchment is crinkled (presumably from damp), but overall in good condition. Bound in limp vellum wrappers made from a fragment of a fourteenth-century Italian canon law manuscript, sewn on two bands, attached to the wrapper at the head and tail bands, once with two ties (now missing two), quires are loosely attached to the lower band, upper cover slightly torn along the top edge, spine slightly split, housed in a modern box. Dimensions 124 x 96 mm.

This is a very early copy, possibly made during the author's lifetime (and one of the few early manuscripts with an attribution to the author) of the *Mammotrectus*, an important Franciscan reference work. The present exemplar is an abbreviated version, copied in a very portable format by Franciscus of Appignano, a scribe whose work is known in two other manuscripts. Although this text survives in numerous manuscripts, this is one of only three copies sold in the last one hundred years (each listed in multiple sales in the Schoenberg Database).

PROVENANCE

1. The evidence of the script and the style of the decoration suggest that this was copied in Northern Italy in the opening decades of the fourteenth century, c. 1300-1330. This is a very early copy of the text, which is datable between 1279 and 1297 (discussed below), almost certainly made within the author's lifetime or within a few decades of his death, and probably copied in a locality close to where the text was written.

The script used by the main scribe is an Italian cursive bookhand, a script that had its origin in Italian notarial scripts. The double-compartment 'a', and the loops at the right of the ascenders of 'b', and 'l', are quite distinctive, and suggest a date early in the fourteenth century (Derolez, 2003, p. 133, calls scripts such as this one "*cursiva antiquior*" and suggests that in Italy it is rare to find cursive scripts used as bookhands with two-compartment 'a's in the fourteenth century; unfortunately he has no Italian examples in his plates). It is the type of bookhand one would

expect in an academic environment (cf. for example, Thomson, 1969, plate 72, a good example of an Italian academic hand, although it is probably later than our manuscript, and uses single compartment 'a'.)

The manuscript is signed by the scribe on f. 153, who calls himself Brother Francis, born in Appignano ("Apponiani natus frater franciscus fuit hoc operatus/ manus scriptoris benedicantur in omnibus horis. Amen"; he is not listed in *Bénédictins du Bouveret. Colophons*, 1965-1982). Apponiani, now known as Appignano del Tronto in the province of Ascoli Piceno, east of Rome, was the site of an early Franciscan Convent, possibly as early as 1215, certainly by 1279 (Moorman, 1983, p. 24 and Grelli and Santoni, 2002). Probably the most famous Friar from Appignano was the theologian Francis of Marchia, who was also known as Francis de Appignano (as well as, de Pignano, de Esculo, de Ascoli, Franciscus Rubeus, and the *Doctor Succinctus*), who was born c. 1285–1290 in the village of Appignano del Tronto.

This manuscript, however, was copied by another Francis of Appignano, who signed two other manuscripts, a Breviary dated 1333, once owned by the noble Cingoli family, that also includes a colophon ("Apponiani natus frater Franciscus hoc operatus, anno Domini MCCCXXXIII. Istud opus fuit expletum tempore guardianie fratris Francisci in loco Montis Alti in festo Sanctorum Processi et Martiniani de sero in vesperis. Deo gratias. Manus scriptoris benedicatur in omnibus horis"), and a copy of St. Bonaventure's Life of St. Francis dated 1332, formerly in the personal library of the fifteenth-century Franciscan San Giacomo della Marca, now M. 5 of the Museo Civico di Monteprandone, just a few kilometres east of Appignano (f. 85r, "Apponiani natus frater Franciscus fuit hoc operatus. Est in Ordine Minorum qui scripsit istum librum. Anno Domini MCCCXXXII. Iste liber fuit scriptus tempore guardianie fratris Francisci de Apponiano in loco Montis Alti, et fuit expletus in vigilia natalis in hora tertia"). In both these manuscripts the scribe identifies himself as the guardian of the Franciscan convent at Montalto Marche, only about ten kilometers north-northwest of Appignano del Tronto (we thank Professor Christopher Schabel who investigated the identity of this scribe; see Schabel, 2013, and Loggi, 2000). Although speculative, it seems possible that Franciscus copied the manuscript described here early in his career, before he became guardian at Monalto Marche (although unfortunately, nothing is known about his career, apart from the evidence provided by these three manuscripts).

There has been considerable scholarly debate about how many Franciscan and Dominican manuscripts were copied "in-house" by the friars themselves. This manuscript certainly was, although the question of whether the opening initial was also painted "in-house" remains an open one.

2. The manuscript includes almost no notes or other annotations added by readers, apart from the short additional entries added on ff. 80v-81 (now partially trimmed); f. 1, erased inscription, now illegible (but possibly legible under ultraviolet), with "[con]ventus" a likely reading of the second word.

3. Martin Schøyen Collection of Oslo and London (MS 117, bookplate, inside back cover); sold at Sotheby's, June 21, 1988, lot 74.

4. London, Sotheby's, December 1, 1998, lot 75.

TEXT

ff. 1-93, [prologue], *Incipit liber mamutrecti editi a fratre marchisino de ordine fratrum minorum*, incipit "Inpatiens proprie impericie ac ruditati conpatiens pauperum clericorum qui ad predicationis officium ... parvulorum mamutrectus poterit appellari"; f. 1, [text], *Incipit prologus super totam bibliam*, incipit, "'Frater Ambrosius etc.' Frater scilicet in fide. 'Perferens', id est portans... cogito, tas, m. cor., trisyllabim cum participio"; f. 4v, incipit, "'Desideri mei etc.' et infra, hoc presagium, gii, id est divina prescientia vel prenuntatio ... Origenes sub Alexandro"; f. 5v [Genesis], incipit, "'In principio creavit celum et terram etc.' et infra. Genesis grece bresith hebraice generatio latine. Hec abissus scilicet profunditas aquarum ... Hic locus, li, m. cor. est paruus locus"; ... [Apocalypse, ch. 22], incipit, "Alpha est lictera prima ... , 'et etiam amen' id est vere. unum latinam et unum ebrayicem. Veni domine. Apud ebreos gratis id est sanctum pretio. Nisan dicitur Aprilis ... Sabath, ... Martius," *Explicit expositio super totam bibliam*;

Explanations of the difficult words in the Bible, in biblical order from Genesis through the Apocalypse; the text is abbreviated, and chapters are omitted from many biblical books. The sentence at the end, following "Veni domine" is the beginning of the section of the text that follows the discussion of biblical words in other manuscripts (a section that is not in fact included in this manuscript), beginning with a discussion of the Hebrew months, copied here by the scribe in error (see Stegmüller, *Repertorium*, 1976-80, no. 4777).

ff. 93-95, *Incipit expositio super responsoria et super hymnos et super lectiones et super officia omnium dominicalium totius anni. Dominica prima aduentu*, incipit, "Stallabunt montes dulcedinem, id est guttandam emittent, stillo id est gutto ...; ... *De sancta Cecila*, ... constructe sunt porte";

Explanations of the difficult words found in the antiphons and responsories of the Divine Office, including an abbreviated Temporal and Sanctoral, beginning with the first Sunday in Advent and concluding with the feast of St. Cecelia (November 22).

ff. 95-102, *Incipit hymnarium. Primus hymnus in dominicis diebus ad nocturnum*, incipit, "'Primo dierum omnium' et infra, Torporibus id est pigritiis ... *In consecratione ecclesiarum* ... , *Ad laudes*, incipit, "'Angularis fundamentum' et infra, conpages, nis, m. ... paradisum translati ad requiem de labore";

Explanations of the difficult words in the Hymns of the Divine Office beginning with the hymns for Sundays at Matins, followed by the first Sunday in Advent, and concluding with the hymns for the Consecration of a Church.

ff. 102-138, *Incipit expositio super legendam sanctorum totius anni scilicet de proprio sanctorum. Et primo de sancto Antonio conf. de ordine fratrum minorum*, incipit, "In gallis [added above line, yspanie] ciuitate Vlixbona secundum usum <?> id est habitatoribus ...";

Explanations of the difficult words found in the lives of the Saints (from the readings for Matins); oddly, the text does not begin in November, when according to Roman Use followed by the Franciscans the liturgical year began, but instead begins with Anthony of Padua (June 13), followed by Marcus et Marcellianus (June 18), Gervais and Protasius (June 19), and then continuing through the year, concluding with Basilidis, Cyrinus, Naboris and Nazarius (June 12). The section on Francis (October 4) is very lengthy (here on ff. 115-119v).

ff. 138-153, *De sermonibus et omeliis totius anni et primo de prima dominica de aduentu. Sermo sancti leonis pape*, incipit, "Latebras m. cor. id est secreta que latent ...; ... *In festiuitatibus confessoris non pontificis*, ...longanimis, id est dius. Expectans <plr?>. cor."; [scribal colophon, in red] incipit,

"Apponiani natus frater franciscus fuit hoc operatus/ Manus scriptoris benedictum in omnibus horis";

Explanation of difficult words in the Office readings for Sundays in the Temporal, beginning with the first Sunday in Advent, followed by the common of saints.

ff. 153v-154v, [Continuing the Common of Saints, in the hand that copied the alphabetical table that follows], *De virginibus Augustinus*, incipit, "Id elaborandum est ab elaboro ...; ... *De consecratione ecclesie* ... uberiorem id est abundantiam";

ff. 154v-188v, *Incipit tabula in Mamotrecto*, incipit, "Abba pater, Mr. 14 [Mark 14:36] ... [Z]ona, Eccl. 45 [Ecclesiastes 45:9]."

Alphabetical list of biblical words, with references to where they occur in the Bible (book and chapter number only).

Marchesinus de Regio Lepidi, *Mammothrectus*; there is no modern critical edition of the text, or study of its circulation and transmission in the numerous surviving manuscripts. It was printed often in the fifteenth century and later; first edition, *Mammothreptus*, Munster, 1470; Hain, *Repertorium*, nos. 10551-10574 (further editions listed in van Liere, 2003). Many of these editions include only part of the text, and more often than not they do not correspond closely with the materials found in the earliest manuscripts. A new critical edition is necessary (cf. Roest, p. 132, note 66). Stegmüller, *Repertorium*, 1976-88, nos. 4776, 4777, lists about sixty-seventy manuscripts, many of which are extracts, or only include part of the text, additional manuscripts are cited by van der Heijden and Roest, Online Resources.

The *Mammothrectus* (also spelled, *Mammothreptus*, *Mammothtractus*, and *Mammothrepton*) can be dated between 1279 and 1297; the papal Bulls discussed in the final section of the text (not included in this copy) allow it to be dated between 1279-1312 (includes the Bull *Exiit*, dated 1279, but lacks *Exivi* from 1312, which would have been the next important Franciscan Bull to discuss); the earliest mention of it is in the last testament of Saint Louis of Toulouse, who died in 1297 (Van Liere, 2003, p. 198). The title of this work is used by the author in his prologue, "He who so directs the steps of the small ones may be called 'Mammothrectus', because he answers to the duty of a true teacher." *Mammothrectus*, literally means "nourished by a nurse," and it is used in this sense by Augustine in his Commentary on the Psalms. In this context, the author was almost certainly thinking of a "wet nurse," calling to mind the biblical passage from I Corinthians 3, "I have fed you with milk and not with meat," a metaphor for this work that was intended to provide thorough, yet elementary instruction (Van Liere, 2003, p. 200).

The work begins with the author's prologue, explaining his purpose: "Impatient with my own inexperience and weary of the ignorance of poor clerics who are promoted to the office of preacher, I have decided to read the Bible from cover to cover and diligently to study all the other materials that are read aloud in church ... and to point out to the poor reader the meaning, pronunciation, and gender of all the difficult words ..." (translation in van Liere, 2003, p. 207). The first section is a commentary on the difficult words found in the Bible, arranged in the order of the biblical books from Genesis to the Apocalypse, discussing their meaning, pronunciation, declension, and etymology. This is followed in some manuscripts and early editions by brief paragraphs on basic biblical exegesis, pronunciation, spelling, Hebrew festivals and the liturgy (not included in this manuscript), and then followed by extensive verbal commentaries on liturgical texts, using the same method as found in the first section on biblical

words, including the antiphons, responsories, prayers, hymns, homilies, and saints lives from the Divine Office. The final part, again found in some manuscripts and editions, but not this copy, is a verbal explanation of the Franciscan Rule and papal bulls related to the Franciscan order.

In short, this text provides everything that friars needed to learn after their novitiate. It was meant to be an adequate introduction to the Bible and to the Divine Office, and it was geared to the needs of young friars going through the (sub) provincial Franciscan school network after their novitiate training, who used these texts daily and who needed to master them in order to preach, and to serve as lectors. As Roest has observed, combining as it does elementary instruction in grammar and an introduction to the Bible, it is probably representative of the character and level of teaching in custodial schools, and it thus provides modern scholars with valuable information about these schools, from which relatively few sources survive (Roest, 2000, p. 132, and van der Heijden and Roest, Online Resources).

Little is known about the author, Marchesinus de Regio Lepidi (or Marchesio da Reggio). He was also called Johannes Marchesinus (or Giovanni Marchesini), in late sources but this is probably apocryphal (the first traceable use of "Giovanni" is in Fulvio Azzari, *Compendio dell'istorie della città di Reggio*, Reggio Emilia, Bartoli, 1623). We do know that he was an Italian friar from Reggio, close to Milan, and that he was a witness to a will at the Franciscan Convent in Imola in 1275 (Van Liere, 2003). With somewhat less certainty he is also said to have joined the order in the Bologna province, probably received a lectorate training at the Bologna *Studium generale* in the early 1270s, and he was possibly a lector in Faventia (1280) and designated lector in Bologna (van der Heijden and Roest Online Resources). In addition to the *Mammotrectus*, he wrote two cycles of sermons and a *Centiloquium* (once attributed to Bonaventure).

Since this is a very early copy of this text, almost certainly made during the author's lifetime or soon after (and possibly one of the few manuscripts that include an attribution to the author), the form of the text preserved here is of particular interest. It is apparently abbreviated and certainly differs from the contents outlined by Stegmüller and printed in the 1478 edition (Online resources). Further study and comparison with other early manuscripts could show whether it is a unique, shortened text, compiled for his own use by the scribe, or whether it might represent an early version that circulated in multiple copies.

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<http://web.tiscalinet.it/corradettiivan/text/allcodici.htm>

and

http://www.sangiacomodellamarca.net/biblioteca_san_giacomo.htm

Digital e-text of *Mammotrectus*, c. 1478

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