

Register of Donations of the Confraternity of Santa Maria dei Battuti of the City of Cividale del Friuli

In Italian, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Northeastern Italy, Udine, Cividale del Friuli, dated 1484

ii (paper) + 19 + ii (paper) folios on parchment, contemporary foliation in Arabic numerals in pale brown ink, top and bottom outer recto, 1-18, with first leaf unfoliated (collation i¹² ii⁸ [-8; leaf cancelled with no loss of text]), ruled faintly in crayon with full length vertical bounding lines (justification 168-179 x 131-133 mm.), written in faded brown ink in a careful Gothico-Antiqua script in fourteen to twenty-four long lines, headings and title (on unfoliated first leaf) written in the same ink in a formal Gothic Rotunda script with some calligraphic embellishments, one- to three-line calligraphic initials and two- to three-line red initials, two-line red initial with brown pen-filling (f. 1), TWO LARGE COLORED DRAWINGS, unfoliated first leaf, the Virgin Mary, crowned and seated upon a cushion, nursing the Infant Jesus, within a wreath of leaves and flowers with a coat of arms pendant from the bottom; f. 1, two additional coats of arms, each within a wreath of leaves and flowers, marginal additions and annotations in at least two hands, one of which dates to the end of the fifteenth century and one of which dates to the early sixteenth century, marginal pointing hands, some soiling and staining in the margins, evidence of cropping on the first leaf and f. 1. Bound in its ORIGINAL oak boards, slightly bevelled, now rebacked with quarter leather, with remains of a fore-edge clasp on upper and lower board, nearly illegible cursive inscription (possibly written over an earlier inscription) at the top of the upper board, "1718 27 Aprile presente per / [...?] sig[...?] lo [...?] i cosa frazo fine anno [...?] / sui[...?] / Numero 1," leaves from earlier manuscripts pasted on the inside of both boards: parchment bifolium pasted on the inside of the upper board containing a continuous passage from Pseudo-Priscian's *De accentibus liber*, written in a compressed thirteenth or fourteenth-century Gothic cursive script, cropped along bottom and right outer edge and folded along upper edge, pasted with its lower edge along the outer edge of the inside of the upper board and folded in half, with a modern color plate (larger than, but in other respects identical to, tav. 30 in Mariani Canova, 1969) pasted underneath [a modern inscription, "Nova decretalium compilatio Gregorii VIII, Venetiae 1499, Nicolaus Jensen," identifies the image in the clipping], a small parchment leaf containing notes in Italian on burials, written in fifteenth-century cursive is pasted on the inside of the lower board. Dimensions 299-301 x 215 mm.

This handsome manuscript in its original binding is a record of the charitable obligations from the most important and oldest Italian (Venetian) penitential confraternity in the late fifteenth century. Historically, its text is of interest and warrants closer examination. It was made for the nobleman-prior of the confraternity, and is dated. Illustrated with two large drawings of Venetian origin, one heraldic, and the other depicting the Virgin and Child, the manuscript is previously unknown in the art-historical corpus.

PROVENANCE

1. The title inscription on the first, unnumbered leaf makes it possible to identify the confraternity to which this book belonged and the year in which it was produced: "Questo e lo Quaderno ditto Elemosinario de la Fradaglia de madona sancta Maria fatto sotto el nobel homo ser Bonjacomio de Claricinis Priol. Et sotto ser Barnaba fiol del nobel homo ser Antonio de Mania Camerar. In el. 1484" (This is the booklet called *Almsgiving of the Fraternity of Madonna Santa Maria*, made under the nobleman Ser Bonjacomio de Claricinis, prior, and under Ser Barnaba, son of the nobleman Ser Antonio de Mania, chamberlain, in 1484). According to records in the Archivio dell'Ospedale di

Cividale (q.a.90), a Bongiaco de Claricini served as prior of the Confraternity of Santa Maria dei Battuti of Cividale del Friuli in 1484, the same year that the *camerario*, or chamberlain, of the confraternity was Barnaba, son of Antonio de Maniaga (see Scarton, 2012, p. 303). The identifications of Bongiaco de Claricini and Barnaba de Maniago as prior and *camerario*, positions each man appear to have held concurrently in that year only, strongly suggest that this manuscript was produced during the their tenure or at its conclusion. Moreover, these archival records appear to have been copied in scripts quite similar to those used in this manuscript (see Scarton, 2012, Tavola 6).

The three sets of arms drawn on the first two leaves of the manuscript support these identifications. On f. 1, the arms on the left (quarterly, 1 and 4 party per pale, sable and argent, with two horns, argent and sable; 2 and 3, gules, with branch of three apples, or) belong to the Claricini family, who had settled in Cividale del Friuli in the middle of the fourteenth century and been invested with the arms and name of Dornpacher by the Holy Roman Emperor, Sigismund, in 1418 (see *Annuario*, 1882, pp. 370-371). On f. 1, the arms on the right (barry of four, vert and argent) belong to the Maniago family of Venice (see Woodward, 1896, p. 102). The arms on the first illuminated leaf (gules, a fess argent) are those of Cividale del Friuli, in the province of Udine in northeastern Italy.

At the time of this manuscript's production, Cividale del Friuli was part of the Republic of Venice, having been annexed during the Republic's expansions in the early fifteenth century. The Confraternity of Santa Maria dei Battuta of Cividale was the city's oldest known confraternity, founded as a penitential fraternity in the second half of the thirteenth century, and it remained throughout the rest of the Middle Ages the city's most prominent confraternity. Judging from the marginal notes of later donations or of obligations fulfilled, added in later hands of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this book most likely remained in the possession of the confraternity or one or more of its members.

2. The binding inscription may contain some clues as to the book's later ownership, but unfortunately it is nearly illegible. It does appear to bear the date 27 April 1718.

TEXT

[Description follows contemporary foliation]

Unnumbered leaf, recto, *Questo e lo Quaderno ditto Elemosinario de la Fradaglia de madona sancta Maria fatto sotto el nobel homo ser Bonjaco de Claricinis Priol. Et sotto ser Barnaba fiol del nobel homo ser Antonio de Mania Camerar. In el. 1484;* [verso blank];

ff. 1-12v, [Register of the confraternity's obligations and donations listed by month], *Çenaro*, incipit, "Nota Cameraro chomo a di xi de Çenaro la Fradaglia e obligada ognanno per lanima de Maistro Benuignudo a far vna Elemosina cum star ij de faua e cum star vj de Formento cum tutto quello che li apartien ... [f. 11v, *Decembro*] ... E cussi se faça de anno in Anno";

ff. 12v-17v, [Register of the confraternity's donations listed by particular commodities], *Tutto lo formento che la fradaglia paga de fitto e qui de sotto scritto*, incipit, "Nota Cameraro che la Fradaglia paga ognanno a la Prebenda che fo di mi ser padre(?) Marino Mansionario formento star j ..."; f. 14v, *Qui be tutto lo vino che la fradaglia paga de fitto*, incipit, "Nota Cameraro chomo la Fradaglia paga a la Preuenda che fo di me ser padre(?) Marin cantor e Mansionario de Ciuidal. Vino conzi iij. Seli ij

...;" f. 15, *Tutti li denari la fradaglia paga de fitto*, incipit, "Nota Cameraro chomo la Fradaglia paga al Couento de san francescho per vno legatto sopra le Case che foreno de Brida apresso Merchado. Soldi lxxvij ...;" f. 16v, *Tutto loglio che la fradaglia paga per cheschadun modo*, incipit, "Nota Cameraro chomo la fradaglia paga ognanno a la Giesia de san Piero et a san Stephano de Borgo de san Piero per la Casa che staua Maistro Gabriel barbir. Oglio Mieri ij ... E por questo li detti Camerar el Sicristano hanno un Maso posto in Muymas chomo a par in lo quaderno a li posti dey Mallarj che pagano formento 2 c(?)"; [f. 18, blank].

This manuscript records the obligations and donations of the Confraternity of Santa Maria dei Battuti of Cividale del Friuli in the year 1484. The first list treats obligations pertaining to particular dates, often feast days, on which offices were said for the souls of named men and women or alms were distributed in their names and at their bequests. The second organizes charitable donations according to the commodity being disbursed (wheat, wine, money, and oil) and identifies specific individual and institutional recipients.

Although their roots date back earlier, from the late Middle Ages and well into the Early Modern Period confraternities were an extremely important part of the life of most cities and some rural districts across Europe. According to Miri Rubin's expansive definition, medieval confraternities were formed "to promote welfare and security within a framework governed by an idiom of kinship, entered into and forged by ritual, and bound by mutual obligation" (Rubin, 1993, p. 186). This particular confraternity developed out of the *disciplinati* movement, which originated in Perugia in 1260 and spread to Cividale del Friuli in the same year. In public processions, the *disciplinati* flagellated themselves in penance, imitating the Passion of Christ with their own bodily suffering. These public processions of flagellants were a short-term phenomenon, but the movement gave rise to a number of penitential fraternities in northern Italy that practiced flagellation. The existence of this confraternity is first attested in 1290 when its Statutes, among the oldest in Italy, were formulated (Scarton and Vicario, 2014, p. 198). This was the primary confraternity in Cividale, though it had to compete for favor and space with others like the Confraternity of the Holy Spirit, founded at the beginning of the fourteenth century. A secular community of flagellants (hence *Battuti*), the Confraternity of Santa Maria dei Battuti included men and women (there is a reference to "tutti li fradelli e sorelli de la fradaglia" on f. 2) in the city. The confraternity took up the administration of the charitable hospital of Saint Martin, contributed to public works in Cividale del Friuli (see Nazzi, p. 136), and pursued other works of charity.

This register of donations and charitable obligations was probably made by or for Barnaba de Maniaga while he was chamberlain (*camerario*) of the confraternity. One or two chamberlains, appointed annually, oversaw the confraternity's holdings and disbursements. At the end of his term, the chamberlain would draw up accounts of income and expenditure to be passed along to his successor, along with any surplus goods held by the confraternity. Registers like this one would have aided in this final settling of accounts, and, in some cases, these inventories were added to the registers of the outgoing chamberlains (see Scarton and Vicario, 2014, pp. 146-150).

Though this manuscript appears to have served a practical function in recording the confraternity's obligations and donations, its maker or makers clearly exercised care in producing an attractive and durable receptacle for these records. Along with the inscription on the unfoliated first leaf, the arms drawn on the second leaf (f. 1) testify to the investment of the confraternity's officials, its prior and *camerario*, in memorializing their involvement in overseeing both the obligations and donations enumerated within the manuscript and the creation of the

manuscript itself. A similar book of Cividale confraternity records, this one for the Confraternity of the Holy Spirit in 1506, also includes arms, most likely those of the named *camerario*, drawn within a laurel wreath on its opening leaf (see Mattaloni, 1999, p. 483). While this does not appear to be an entirely consistent practice – records shown in Mattaloni (1999) and Scarton (2012) tend to employ similar large, formal Rotunda scripts but no drawings – it may indicate that it was not unusual for confraternity officials to underscore their administrative contributions to their confraternity.

ILLUSTRATION

The drawings on the first two leaves of this manuscript (the unfoliated first leaf and f. 1) have been executed by the same artist in black ink.

On the first leaf, the Virgin Mary, robed in pale blue, sits enthroned upon a cushion washed in pale pink. She nurses the naked Christ child, and the flesh of the Virgin and Child has been tinted in a delicate flesh tone. Virgin and Child are encircled by a prominent laurel wreath washed in pale green, shaded with pen strokes, and adorned with pink-tinted flowers. Pen drawn tendrils, shaded in pink, extend to the left and right from the top and bottom of the wreath, and the arms of Cividale del Friuli (gules, a fess argent) hang from the bottom of the wreath, visually linking the confraternity's civic identity to its devotional dedication to the Virgin Mary.

On the second decorated leaf, f. 1, the Claricini arms (quarterly, 1 and 4 party per pale, sable and argent, with two horns, argent and sable; 2 and 3, gules, with branch of three apples, or) and Maniago arms (barry of four, vert and argent) occupy to linked wreaths executed in the same style, with similar extending tendrils along top and bottom. These wreaths, a common device in fifteenth-century Italian manuscripts, highlight the identities of the two men most probably responsible for overseeing or ordering this manuscript's production.

Though the device of the arms hanging from or within laurel wreaths is not uncommon, the shapes of these wreaths and arms, the placement of the pink-tinted flowers on the first wreath, and the tendrils extending from the wreaths all bear a resemblance to a similar design in the illuminated margin of Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, MS Lat. II, 75 = 2198, a mid-fifteenth-century Venetian manuscript whose illuminations have been attributed to Leonardo Bellini (see Mariani Canova, 1969, tav. 3). Cividale del Friuli was annexed to the republic of Venice in 1420, and it seems quite likely that the artist who decorated this manuscript was from Venice.

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