

FRIAR (?) THOMAS, *Sermones de tempore et de sanctis* [*Franciscan (?) Sermon Collection*]

In Latin, manuscript on parchment

Italy (or Southern France?), fourteenth century (c. 1300-1350?)

i (parchment pastedown) + 145 + *i* (parchment pastedown) folios on parchment (of varying quality throughout the manuscript), written in two hands, incorrectly foliated in ink by the second scribe, top right margin recto, as follows: ff. 74-97, 99*-202, 205*-213, 213bis-220, [skips 98, 202-203, with 213bis], incomplete, missing initial 73 folios and a number of final folios, (collation *i-ii*¹², *iii*¹⁴, *iv-vi*¹², *vii*²⁰, *viii*¹⁸, *ix*²¹[one leaf added after 15], *x*¹²), catchwords at the end of each quire, quires *i-vi* ruled in drypoint, prickings remain outer margin (justification 101 × 72 mm.), text written in 23 long lines in a gothic semitextualis script, notes for rubricator in margins, chapters begin with red initials, majuscules stroked in red, red rubrics and inconsistent underlining, quires *viii-xi*, (justification, 111 × 80 mm.), written in 34-40 lines in a cursive gothic script, damage from damp and chalking, f. 115 is torn, f. 115v is blank, f. 74 stained and damaged from damp with the top half now illegible, ff. 114v, 85v, 115, and 220v are partially illegible, original parchment defects on folios 80, 109, 110, 115, 129, 155, 160, 161, 193, marginal text on f. 187 is cut off by trimming, but overall in good condition. Bound in early-modern vellum, incorrectly labelled on spine, "Jacobus de Voragine, *Legenda aurea*." Dimensions 139 × 91 mm.

Of interest to scholars in many fields, in particular those studying the cult of the saints and Franciscan preaching, the evidence provided by this collection of sermons also opens a significant new line of research. It is related to a collection of sermons previously thought to exist in a single manuscript, now in the Vatican Library. The existence of two related manuscripts of this collection, compiled by an author known only as Thomas, calls for a new evaluation of the importance of these sermons and their little-known author.

PROVENANCE

1. The evidence of the script suggests that this manuscript was copied in southern Europe, probably Italy, but possibly Southern France, in the fourteenth century, almost certainly in the first half, c. 1300-50. The first part of the manuscript (quires one-six, through f. 148v) is written in an abbreviated gothic semitextualis script distinguished by single-compartment 'a' and uncial 'd' with a sloping shaft (only rarely short and horizontal as in Italian textualis manuscripts). All the other letters have distinctive rotunda/textualis forms (tironian *et*, 'b' with a circular lobe, sometimes hardly distinguishable from 'h' with a circular limb almost always ending on the baseline). "Qui," is abbreviated in the Italian fashion ('q' with a cross stroke through the descender). However, some influence of Northern textualis can be seen in the treatment of all the minims that always end in an angular foot. Another distinctive letterform is the open-form 'u' with an elongated left stroke.

The inclusion of sermons for the feasts of contemporary saints (St. Francis, canonized 1228; St. Dominic, canonized 1234, and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, canonized in 1235) provides a *terminus post quem* for the composition of these sermons and this manuscript.

The second part of the manuscript, written in an informal, quickly written, cursive gothic script, was likely copied in the same place by a contemporary of the first scribe who completed the text for his own private use. Particularly notable is a variant form of 'm' found in both parts of the manuscript: the two first minims are closed as 'o' and the final minim descends below the baseline and is hooked. In both sections of the manuscript abbreviations are dense and irregular. There are glosses in the hand of this second scribe in the first part of the manuscript on ff. 82v, 114v-115. The present foliation in red comes from this period.

This type of quickly written, informal cursive script is difficult to date closely, but the characteristics of both scripts are in keeping with scripts used in the first half of the fourteenth century. An earlier cursive script from the thirteenth century would be likely to use a two-compartment 'a'. The vigorous quality of the first script, and the general lack of functionless hairlines, supports a date from the first half of the fourteenth century.

2. At some point this manuscript was rebound and trimmed to a smaller format, losing a substantial part of the original book, ff. 1-73. The manuscript was kept in a library that mistakenly identified and labeled it as *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine.

TEXT

ff. 74-75v, [beginning imperfectly, with the opening lines damaged by damp and illegible], explicit "... Qui totus fuit seraphyacus";

ff. 75v-79, *In purificatione Virginis Mariae*, incipit, "Vidua hec pauper plus quam omnes misit. Mt. 12. Non potero mutare verbum domini dei mei ut plus vel minus loquar. Propheta Ballam invitatus a rege balac ut malediceret populo Israel ... et accensus flamma divini amoris quid numquam recedet ab eo";

Schneyer, 1969-1990, 5:557, no. 4; the Feast of the Purification is celebrated on 2 February.

ff. 79-83v, *In sancto Blasio*, incipit, "Per multas tribulationes probatur amicus dei effectus est. Iudit. Comedite amici <domini> et bibite et inebriamini karissimi. Cant 5. Spirituale convivium ad quod convenistis ... Repugneret tandem culpa mortalis et <?> nostro potest facere";

Schneyer, 5:557, no. 5; feast celebrated on 3 February.

ff. 83v-86, *In sancto Nicholao*, incipit, "Surrexit Moyses et defensis puellis adaquavit oves earum. Exo. 2. Si ad mentem revocatur ystoria libri Exodi verbum propositum est dictum in commendationem Moysi, qui defensis puellis etc. sed secundum intentionem nostri propositi eleganter assumitur ad commendationem beati Nicholai qui liberavit tres puellas quos pater intendebat tradere lupanarii... (explicit illegible)";

cf. Schneyer 5:560, no. 49; celebrated 6 December. Sermon also found in Angers 248, f. 6.

ff. 86-90v, *In sancto Thoma apostolo*, incipit, "Obsecro Domine ut vir Dei quem misisti veniat iterum et doceat nos. Iudit. 13. Tace et docebo te sapientiam (Job 33:33). In hoc verbo declaratur, qualis debeat esse auditoris status ... ad effundendum balsamum";

Schneyer 5:561, no. 50; celebrated 21 December.

ff. 90v-95, *De Spiritu Sancto*, incipit, "Qualis est dilectus tuus ex dilecto o pulcherrima mulierum. Cant. 9. Quales sumus verbo per absentes per epistolas, tales sumus et praesentes in facto (2. Cor. 10:11). Invidencie mordax malignitas praedicatores egregios ab exordio nascentis ecclesiae latrare non destitit ... si dilectionem habueritis ad invicem";

Schneyer 5:561, no. 51 (Pentecost).

ff. 95-97v, *De ascensione Domini*, incipit, "Quo abiit dilectus tuus, o pulcherrima mulierum? Quo declinavit dilectus tuus? et quaeremus eum tecum. Cant. 9. Purus sermo pulcherrimus firmabitur ab eo (Prov. 15:26). Omnis res per suam causam cognoscitur. Quattuor autem sunt causarum genera ... quia parare vobis locum";

Schneyer 5:561, no. 52 (Ascension).

ff. 99-104v, *De sancto Petro apostolo*, incipit, "Ecce relinquimus omnia et secuti sumus te. Quid ero erit nobis. Mt. 19. Petrus tangitur stipendiaries summi regis, confertur cum eodem de quantitate mercedis ... suam coronam perdidit et alius accepit";

Schneyer 5:561, no. 53.

ff. 104v-106, *In sancta Elizabeth*, incipit, "Quasi luna plena in diebus suis lucet. Eccl. 50. Quoniam secundum Dionysium in angelica hierarchia in tria dividitur secundum se omnes humani intellectus in substantiam, virtutem et operationem ... non extinguere in nocte lucema eius";

Schneyer 5:557, no. 7 (no title).

ff. 106-107v, *In sancto Matthia apostolo*, incipit, "Quis est electus quem praeponam ei. Jer. 49. Aurum eligite (Prov. 8:10). Duplex thesaurus proponitur nobis in verbis istis scilicet spiritualis et materialis. Spiritualis proponitur prout est amplexandus ... Jaab electissime, quem elegi";

Schneyer 5:557, no. 8; celebrated 24 February.

ff. 107v-111v, *De sancto Paulo*, incipit, "Vivo ego iam non ego vivit vero in me Christus (Gal. 2:20). *Ego sum via, veritas et vita* (Joh. 14:6) - Sicut dicit beatus Augustinus in libro de civitate Dei: Platonis? Sententia fuit, quod Deus esset omnibus causa essendi ...";

Schneyer 5:557 (no title), no. 2; celebrated 25 January.

ff. 111v-114v, *In sancto Michaele*, incipit, "Omnes angeli stabant in circuitu throni et ceciderunt in conspectu throni in facies suas (Apoc. 7:11). Vide et accipe librum de manu angeli (Apoc. 10:10). Verbum secundo propositum fuit dictum Johanni evangelistae, in quo declaratur sapientia ... custodiam angelorum deputatum";

Schneyer 5:558, no. 20; celebrated 6 September (and on other dates).

ff. 114v-118v, *In sancto Francisco*, "Quartus angelus tuba cecinit" (Apoc. 8:12) [incipit illegible due to damp stains];

Celebrated October 4.

ff. 118v-122v, *In sancto Luca*, incipit, "Salutat vos Luccas (sic) medicus karissimus. Act. 13. Viri fratres, vobis verbum salutis huius missum est (Act. 13:26). Apostolus Paulus multum nos laetificat in verbis propositis, quod scilicet verbum salutis, ubi commendat amicitiam divini sermonis tam ex parte auditoris ... verba sua sunt languentis animae medicina";

Schneyer 5:558, no. 22; celebrated 18 October.

ff. 122v-126v, *In mortuis*, incipit, "Non ingreditur sanctuarium donec impleantur dies purificationis eius. Levit. 12. Imple saccos eorum frumento (Gen. 44:1). Litteralis intellectus verbi secundo propositi sumpto ex Gen. 44 est, quod Joseph praecepit dispensatori suo ... Venite benedicti";

Schneyer 5:558, no. 23 (*in commemoratione omnium fidelium defunctorum*); All Souls, celebrated 2 November.

ff. 126v-132, *In festo omnium sanctorum*, incipit, "In ipso vivimus movemur et sumus (Act. 17-28). Vives gladio et fratri tuo servies. Gen. 27. Verbum istud secundo propositum est Isaac patriarche Esau filium suum alloquentis, quem subjugaverat Jacob fratri suo ... clericum ex paupere divitem factum";

Schneyer 5:558, no. 24 (*in omnibus sanctis* and with a different theme, "Vives in gladio [Gen. 27:40]"); All Saints, celebrated 1 November.

ff. 132-134v, *In sancta Catharina*, incipit, "Generositatem illius glorificat, contubernium habens Dei sed et omnium Dominus dilexit illam Sap. 8. Stirpe regia in purpura educata beata Catharina, sed domini [nostri ihesu christi] consortio generosior facta. In huius verbi serie triformiter commendatur. Commendatur namque nitore virginalis pudicitiae ... septem vitia capitalia";

Schneyer 5:558-9, no. 25; celebrated 25 November.

ff. 134v-138, *In sancto Andrea*, incipit, "Modicum habuisti antequam venire ad te et nunc dives effectus es. Ge. 30. Qui sicut veniat and qui vult, accipiat aquam vite ... ita de ipso auxilio explicere poterit";

Celebrated 30 November.

ff. 138-144v, *In natali Domini*, incipit, "Candor est lucis aeternae et speculum sine macula Dei maiestatis et imago bonitatis illius. Sap. 8. *Nubes spargunt lumen suum quocumque eas voluntas gubernantis duxerit* (Job 37:11). In hoc secundo verbo declarantur tria, quae habent in omni praedicatione concurrere, scilicet qualis debeat esse praedicatoris persona ... videre solem scil. justitiae natum";

Schneyer 5:559, no. 26; Christmas.

ff. 144v-150v, *In circumcissione Domini*, incipit, "Vocabitur tibi novum (sic) novum, quod os Domini nominabit. Ys. 62. Afferte mihi vas novum, et mittite in illud sal (2 Kng. 2:20). Omnes praedicationes qui a mundi primordio facte sunt...";

Celebrated 1 January.

ff. 150v-150v, *De Martino*, incipit, "Amplificatus est Elias in mirabilibus suis. Eccl. 17. De Elia tria notantur ai litteram et de beato Dominico tria ...";

Schneyer 5:558; celebrated November 11.

ff. 150v-152v, *In purificatio[ne] Virginis*, incipit, "Columba venit ad Noe portans ramum olivae virentibus foliis (Gen. 8:11). Ego ero in ore tuo doceboque te quid loquaris. Ex. 4. In verbo secundo proposito predicatorem Moysen et in eo quemlibet alium praedikatorem Dominus confortat, ne excuset se de verbo sacri eloquii ... simplices sicut columbae";

Celebrated 2 February.

ff. 152v-154, *De sancto Blasio*, incipit, "Vir sapiens si cum stulto contenderit sive irascatur sive rideat non inveniet requiem (Prov. 29:9). *Quasi ad vos clamito* (Prov. 8:4). Tria sunt in verbis propositis declarata a Salomone, quae requiruntur in quolibet auditore et doctore ... Melior ergo est sapiens quam fortis";

Schneyer 5:559, no. 31; celebrated 3 February.

ff. 154-155v, *De sancta Agatha*, incipit, "Misit ancillas suas ut vocarent ad arcem et ad moenia civitatis (Prov. 9:3). Cunctorum Dominus et auctor omnis creaturae sicut in caelo habet sanctos angelos sive substantias separatas ... patriae liberatorem procuravit. Rogemus ergo ..";

Schneyer 5:559, no. 32; celebrated 5 February.

ff. 155v-157v, *In Domine (sic) circumcissione*, incipit, "Cuius vestrum bos aut asinus in voveam cadet dominus extrahet illum die sabbati. Luc. 14. Semen cecidit in terram bonam (Luc. 8:8) — Sub metaphora seminis et telluris et fructus tria declarantur, quae debent occurrere in sermone scilicet divini sermonis proprietates, idonei auditoris qualitas, fructus convenientis utilitas ... per opprobrium malarum mentium";

Schneyer 5:559, no. 33; celebrated 1 January.

ff. 157v-159v, *De sancta Mathia*, incipit, "Ego enim redditus sum officio meo, et ille suspensus est in patibulo. Gen. 41. Omnis populus suspensus erat, ut audiat illum (Luc. 19:48). Summi et pii doctoris et praedicatoris Dei audita declarantur triformiter scilicet communiter quia dator universalis ... ipsis a Domino inferatur";

Schneyer 5:559, no. 34; celebrated 24 February.

ff. 159v-162v, *In coena Domini*, incipit, "Venite, comedite panem meum, et bibite vinum quod miscui vobis. Prv. 9" Sermo meus et praedicatio mea (1. Cor. 2:4). Divinus apostolus Paulus et praedicator egregius in verbis propositis, quae quilibet debet observare in sua praedicatione aliquid exponit, aliquid excludit ... ministrat tibi ad salutis meritum";

Schneyer 5:559, no. 35; Maundy Thursday.

ff. 162v-163, *In synodo*, incipit, "Vocate synodum congregare senes et clamate ad Dominum (Joel. 1:14). Videtur ad invocandum synodi ... debet attendere quo ventum vocanditur";

ff. 163-163v, *Ad synodum*, incipit, "Attendite vobis, et universo gregi, in quo vos episcopus posuit Spiritus Sanctus regere ecclesiam Dei, quam acquisivit sanguine suo. Acc. 20. Verbum fuit <...> in Actis...";

ff. 163v-168, *De mortuis*, incipit, "Comparatus sum luto et assimilatus sum faville et cineri. Job. 30. Quibus verbis proponit Job...";

ff. 168-219v, *Ad religiosos...*; *In ascensione...*; *In precisamente...*; *De sancto Luca...*; *De sanctis Petro et Paulo...*; *De natali Domini...*; *De sanctis incognitis...*; *De sancto Francisco...*; *De annunciatione Virginis Mariae...*; *In natali Virginis Mariae...*; *De assumptione Virginis Mariae...*; *et al.*;

ff. 217-219v, *De sancto Dominico*, incipit, "Non potest civitas abscondi supra montem posita. Mt. Ex fructu arbor cognoscitur. Paret fructus metaphoram...";

ff. 219v-220v, *De sacramentis*, incipit, "Et domus mea domus orationis vocabitur. Mt. 21. Ecclesia conferenda, hic describit ad nobis"

The last sermon in the collection; incomplete (the last page illegible).

This collection of sixty-four sermons (some very short, and probably abbreviated), can be attributed to a preacher, probably thirteenth century, known only as "Thomas." Schneyer, 1969-1990, volume 5, pp. 557 ff. describes two sermon collections attributed to him, both found in a single manuscript. Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. Burghes. 80 is the largest and best preserved manuscript (383 folios; 13th-14th centuries; see Maier, 1952, pp. 97-98), and apparently the only manuscript that mentions his name (f. 376). The manuscript described here is closely related to this collection, and includes many of the same sermons as the Vatican manuscript. A shorter sermon cycle for Lent is also attributed to Thomas by Schneyer, found in Naples, Naz. MS VIII A 30 (a single sermon by Thomas is found in Oxford, MS Bodl. Laud. Misc. 453, f. 142v). Neither of these sermon collections have been printed, and there has been no modern scholarly study of their content or author.

In total, Schneyer's *Repertorium* lists 371 sermons in these two cycles attributed to Thomas. The new evidence in the manuscript described here, however, suggests that additional sermons may possibly be attributed to him, since many sermons in our manuscripts are not found in the manuscripts described by Schneyer (e.g., *De sancto Dominico*, *De mortuis*, *In synodo*, among others). The matter certainly calls for further research. Schneyer's comment that many of the sermons included in Vatican manuscript are by other thirteenth-century preachers, including Nicolaus de Biard (probably a Franciscan, d. c. 1261), Guibertus de Tornaco (Franciscan, Paris university theologian, c. 1200-1284), Peter of Rheims (Dominican, d. 1247), and Nicholas of Gorran (Dominican, 1232-1295), all famous thirteenth-century preachers (Schneyer, 5:557), also calls for closer study.

Many sermon collections during the Middle Ages were organized according to the liturgical year. *Sermones de tempore* include sermons for the Proper of Time (the Sundays and Feasts celebrating the life of Christ, including the moveable feasts associated with Easter); *Sermones de sanctis* include sermons for the feasts of the saints and the Virgin Mary. The sermons in this manuscript, however, include sermons from both these cycles (numerous sermons for feasts of the saints, with a few sermons from the Proper of Time), together with sermons for various occasions (for example, for a synod, and the dedication of an altar). Most sermon manuscripts begin in November with feasts for Advent, and then continue through the calendar year. Since

this manuscript now begins on f. 74, we cannot determine how it originally began, but the overall arrangement is notably haphazard. Small groups of sermons do follow each other in calendar order, but the rationale for the arrangement of each of these groups is difficult to discern, and there are many feasts out of order. A number of feasts have more than one sermon (for example, there are two sermons for St. Blaise), but they are not copied together. Perhaps the arrangement here reflects a collection made for a particular preacher for his own use, where he copied down sermons he preached himself, or sermons he heard – as well as sermons he found in other manuscripts. Further study, and comparison with the Vatican copy is needed (the sermons in the Vatican manuscript are arranged in a different order).

The saints included here are for the most part saints that were widely venerated across Europe. This is instructive, since it indicates that the author's choice of saints was not limited to the specific area or diocese where he resided, but was instead governed by his aim of reaching an international clerical and university audience (Ferzoco, 2002, 262). Many of these sermons have distinctively scholastic, philosophical and even mystical characteristics. The sermon for the feast of St. Elizabeth, for example, refers to the angelic hierarchy, first described by Dionysius the Areopagite in *Hierarchia* 6:7. Later the hierarchy was elaborated by Thomas Aquinas (*Summa Theologica*, 1:108), who gave it its final shape officially recognized by the church (Gregory I). There were three angelic orders (differing by their proximity to God), each subdivided into three categories: 1. Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones; 2. Dominations, Virtues, and Powers; and 3. Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. The author of sermons compares human virtues to this hierarchy, implying their different values. In the sermon on the feast of St. Paul, *De sancto Paulo*, Thomas discusses the well-known Platonic doctrine of panentheism (see *Timaeus*), the divine presence in all living things, adapted by Augustine in his *De civitate dei*. Several sermons address the role of preaching (e.g., f. 138, Christmas, f. 144v, the Feast of the Circumcision, and f. 150v, the feast of the Purification).

The structure used for many of these sermons is also sophisticated. Many not only start with a Bible verse (*theme*), providing a leitmotif for the sermon, but also add a secondary quotation (*protheme*), thus constructing a subtopic. This is a distinctive feature of sermons beginning in the second half of the thirteenth century (Roberts, 2002, 44).

The late medieval "boom" in devotion to saints, with feasts in their honor increased by about a quarter from the tenth to fourteenth centuries, also coincided with the explosion of sermon literature. Maurice de Sully (1120-96), a famous preacher and theoretician of the preaching art (*ars praedicandi*) advised his colleagues how to exploit this coincidence: "...It is not solely by the authority of the Scriptures or by the reasons of divine precepts that we must inform the people entrusted to us by God for their instruction In proclaiming the life and virtues of the saints within and beyond the Church, it is necessary for us to encourage the people carefully. Some people are more easily led to act by way of examples rather than reason" (quoted from Ferzoco, 2002, 281). And indeed, many preachers followed his advice: while Anthony of Padua and Bonaventure wrote only a few such sermons, Peter of Reins (in the 1230s) wrote two separate collections consisting solely of *sermones de sanctis*. Similar but smaller collections were composed by Jacques de Vitry (143 out of 440 sermons) and Jacopo da Varazze (James of Voragine). With these numbers in mind, the output of Thomas is very significant.

At the moment, we can safely conclude that it is likely that the sermon cycle in our manuscript and in the Vatican manuscript was written (Schneyer even suggests that "compiled" may be a more accurate term) by a writer known as Thomas, most likely a Franciscan, in the thirteenth century. Questions as to his identify, the sources of his collection, and the relationship between

this manuscript and Vatican MS Borghes. 80, all call for further study. Nonetheless, there can be little doubt that with the current manuscript at hand, a study of a preacher as prolific as Thomas will result in an important contribution to our knowledge of Franciscan preaching.

LITERATURE

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Schneyer, Johann Baptist. *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150–1350*, Münster, 1969–1990.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Sermones.net: Electronic edition of a corpus of medieval sermons in Latin

<http://www.sermones.net>

Medieval Sermons and Homilies; Bibliography, by Professor Charles Wright, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

<https://netfiles.uiuc.edu/cdwright/www/sermons.html>

A History of Medieval Preaching and the Structure of Sermons

http://hcl.harvard.edu/libraries/houghton/collections/early_manuscripts/preaching/structure.cfm

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