

HENDRIK HERP, *Sermones de tribus partibus penitentiae* [Sermons on the Three Parts of Penitence] and *Sermones de adventu domini* [Sermons for Advent]

In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper

The Low Countries, Antwerp, Mechelen, c. 1470-1490

*i + 162 + ii folios on paper, watermarks similar to Briquet no. 1744, "Armoiries": Troyes, 1470, Mézières, 1468, Châlons-sur-Marne, 1470, Cologne, 1473, Bar-le-Duc, 1473, Gaillon, 1473, Beauvais, 1474, Colmar, 1475, Carden, 1475, Leiden, 1475, Holland, 1476, Eppelsheim, 1478, Amsterdam, 1482; Briquet no. 8659, "Lettre P": Troyes, 1473, Avalon, 1473, Colmar, 1475, Bern, 1476, Fribourg, 1476-77, Solothurn, 1477-79, Cologne, 1478; Briquet no. 14196, "Tête de Bœuf": Dôle, 1475, Utrecht, 1476, modern foliation in pencil, upper outer rectos, 1-162, complete (collation i<sup>6</sup> [+12; structure uncertain] ii-xiii<sup>12</sup> xiv-xv<sup>4</sup> xvi<sup>4</sup> [-42; structure uncertain]), horizontal catchwords, inner lower verso, for quires v, xiii-xiv, occasional traces of quire signatures in red in lower margin, now largely cropped away, faint ruling in lead with full-length horizontal and vertical bounding lines, prickings visible in the lower margins (justification 167-168 x 100 mm.), written above top line in brown ink in a very small, compact hybrida script on thirty-eight to forty-one long lines, sermon headings written in a slightly larger, more formal version of the script, rubrics written or underlined in red, capitals highlighted in red, running titles and marginal textual subdivisions written in red, with some guide letters visible, one-line red paraps, two- to three-line red initials throughout, four-line red initial at the opening of the main text (f. 8), marginal additions and cancellations by the scribe, correction and marginal annotation in a contemporary hand, pointing hand added in the margin in pencil on f. 30v, fifteenth-century inscription on f. 1 and eighteenth-century inscriptions on ff. 2 and 161, slight rust staining on ff. 1-3 and slight damp-staining at the edges of leaves, with no loss of text, otherwise in very fine condition. Bound in early twentieth-century green morocco over pasteboards, gilt along the inner edges, spine with five raised bands, marbled pastedowns, thin green ribbon bookmark sewn into upper headband. Dimensions 205 x 137 mm.*

This manuscript appears to be the only extant copy of the friar Hendrik Herp's sermons. The text blends the traditions of two influential religious reform movements in the fifteenth-century Low Countries, the Brethren of the Common Life and the Observant Franciscans. The sermons await scholarly attention, and this volume, which includes two complete collections (with a total of sixty-eight sermons), presents a valuable opportunity for editing and study. Copied during or shortly after the author's lifetime perhaps at the convent where the author lived, this manuscript may reflect the version of the text approved by Herp himself.

## PROVENANCE

1. Evidence of script and watermarks indicates that the manuscript originated in the Low Countries late in the fifteenth century, probably c. 1470-1490. Based on this information and a fifteenth-century inscription (see below), this volume was almost certainly copied at the Franciscan convent in Mechelen (in the province of Antwerp) where Hendrik Herp died in 1477. Given the date of this book's production, it could well have been copied during his lifetime, perhaps even with his supervision. Closer examination of how it compares to incunable editions of these sermons will shed light on the place of this manuscript in their transmission.

The Franciscan convent at Mechelen was founded in 1231 by Walter Berthoud, a gentleman of Brabant. In 1447, with the encouragement of Philip the Good of

Burgundy, the pope ordered the friars at Mechelen to adopt the Observant discipline. The convent is perhaps best known for its association with Margaret of York, duchess of Burgundy, who was a great patron of the house. She contributed, among other things, to the rebuilding of the friars' library in 1497, and, following the stipulations of her will, was buried there in a Franciscan habit in 1503.

2. A fifteenth-century inscription indicates that the book was in use early on by one Henrick de Maerselaer, a friar at Mechelen: "Pro conuentu Mechliniensi ad vsum fratris Henricj de Maerselaer vsque ad reuocacionem prelatorum suorum [On the behalf of the convent of Mechelen for the use of brother Henrick de Maerselaer continuously until its recalling by his prelates]" (f. 1).
3. Belonged to Giuseppe Storck (1766-1836), a print dealer who was born in Seckingen and worked in Milan (Lugt 2318-2319); his inscription "G. Storck a Milano 1798. In N<sup>o</sup> 8568" on ff. 2, 8, and 161.

## TEXT

f. 1, incipit, "Pro conuentu Mechliniensi ad vsum fratris Henricj de Maerselaer vsque ad reuocacionem prelatorum suorum"; [f. 1v, blank];

Inscription added in a fifteenth-century hand.

ff. 2-114v, *Incipit tabula materiarum[?] super sermonibus de tribus partibus penitentiae*, incipit, "Adulacio perniciose facta qualiter[?] obligat ad restitutionem 17c ... Vxorem ex cupiditate ducere male fine terminare solet 31a. *Et sic est finis istius tabule*"; [f. 7rv, blank but ruled]; f. 8, *Incipiunt sermones De tribus partibus penitentiae Et primo de curribus dei et dyaboli quibus nemo simul adherere vel deseruire potest*, incipit, "Nemo potest duobus dominis seruire ... [Matthew 6:24] Que verba saluatoris in confusionem multorum religiosorum et fide penitentium ... Vnde quartum est in muliere zelotipa flagellum lingue omnibus communicans. Vide gloriam[?] si placet. *Ad laudem dei. Amen*";

The *Sermones de tribus partibus penitentiae*, a collection of forty-eight sermons by Hendrik Herp. Neither the contents of this collection nor its manuscript circulation has received much scholarly attention (see Roest, 2005, pp. 419-420), and there is no modern edition. The manuscript tradition of these sermons is still completely un-researched, and this is currently the only manuscript copy we have been able to identify (the relationship, if any, between these sermons and a different collection of Herp sermons that did circulate in a limited number of manuscripts, his *Sermones XXI*, also needs investigation). Roest (Online Resources) lists no manuscripts, and Hödl and Knoch (2001, Online Resources) also list only the printed editions. It was first printed in 1481 as part of a collection of 282 sermons by Herp, *Sermones de Tempore, de Sanctis, de Tribus partibus Poenitentiae, de Adventu* (Nuremberg, A. Koburger). This collection was reissued in print very soon thereafter, first in 1484 (Speyer, P. Drach) and then in 1509 (Hagenau, H. Grau per J. Rynman de Oringau). A brief collation of the sermons against the 1509 edition reveals some minor variations in wording, but in general the printed text – and its presentation on the page (see below) – follows this manuscript closely.

ff. 114v-161, *Incipiunt sermones eiusdem patris de aduentu domini, Et primo de aduentu domini ad iudicium quod precedet triplex discessio ab imperio ab ecclesiam a fide*, incipit, "Aduentus christi in carnem vt dominus[?]"

agnus sponsus ad sermones[?] 12a ... Voluntas dampnatorum vnum semper est mala ad sermonem 10c"; [f. 116v, blank]; f. 117, *Incipiunt sermones eiusdem venerandi patris de aduentu, Et primo de aduentu domini ad iudicium quod precedet triplex Discessio Ab imperio Ab ecclesia A fide*, incipit, "QVis poterit cogitare diem aduentus eius et quis stabit ad videndum eum Mal. 3°. [Malachias 3:2] Malachias prophetam in spiritum preuidens dominum venturum ... sicut beato paulo beato francisco et similibus. *Ad laudem dei. Amen. Ad laudem dei. Amen*"; [ff. 161v-162v, blank].

The *Sermones de adventu domini*, a collection of twenty sermons by Hendrik Herp. As with the *Sermones de tribus partibus penitentiae*, neither the contents of this collection nor its manuscript circulation has received much scholarly attention (see Roest, 2005, pp. 419-420), and there is no modern edition; we have identified no other manuscript copies (see the discussion above). It was first printed in the 1481 collection of Herp's sermons (see above), and a brief collation of the sermons here against the 1509 edition reveals only minor variations in wording.

A mystical writer and a renowned preacher, Hendrik Herp (c. 1400-1477) was probably born in Erp, near Brabant, and he studied at the University of Louvain. He served as Rector of the Brethren of the Common Life at Delft (1440-1446) and Gouda (1446-1450) before joining the Observant branch of the Franciscan Order in 1450 on a pilgrimage to Rome. He would go on to hold several administrative positions in the Cologne province of the Order, including provincial and guardian of convents in Mechelen and Antwerp. He died in 1477 at the Franciscan convent in Mechelen. Herp was a prolific writer. In addition to his sermons, he produced ascetical and mystical works in Latin and Dutch, notably his very influential *Spiegel der Volcomenheit* (*Mirror of Perfection*), written ca. 1455-1460 at the request of a "spiritual daughter" and translated into Latin and a number of vernaculars by the beginning of the sixteenth century.

Herp's sermons appear to have circulated in print beyond his immediate locality at an early date as well, with a copy of the 1484 edition listed, for example in the library catalogue of Syon Abbey, in England. Written in Latin and using scholastic forms of argumentation, they presume a well-educated audience. The sermons draw widely on biblical and theological authorities, including Thomas Aquinas, Alexander of Hales, and Bernard of Clairvaux, and range in subject matter from the many sins of speech that render prayer unclean (Sermon 48 of the *Sermones de tribus partibus penitentiae*) to the deceit of the Antichrist and the four ways of subverting that deceit by faith (Sermon 2 of the *Sermones de adventu domini*).

Preachers would have used the alphabetical tables of topics that precede both collections (see below) to explore Herp's coverage of particular subjects as they crafted their own sermons. In the table preceding the *Sermones de tribus partibus penitentiae*, for example, the alphabetization tends to highlight particular virtues and vices. A reader interested in Herp's coverage of adultery or harmony could find entries addressing these subjects by searching for entries beginning with the word "adulterium" or "concordia" in the tables (eg. on f. 1, "Adulterium cur pati meretur diuorcium 38b" or "Concordia quid est et unde oritur 25c").

Indeed, the volume's apparatus stands out as a particularly striking feature. The scribe has made both sermon collections easily searchable by numbering sermons sequentially in the margin and subdividing each into sections, marked with letters a, b, c, and so on. Running headings identify the sermon collection and number at the top of each page. The alphabetical tables of topics preceding the sermons refer to passages by sermon number and lettered subsection. These

methods of subdivision carry over into print, with tables of topics referring to sections within numbered and subdivided sermons and with the letters marking these subdivisions placed within the printed text block rather than in the margins. These reference practices may have originated with Herp himself or with early copyists.

Fifteenth-century sermon collections coming out of the Low Countries still need careful study. Bert Roest wrote in 2005 of the need for more research on Franciscan literary production in the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Low Countries, asserting that "this production can compare with the much celebrated writings of Italian Observant preachers [including Bernardino of Siena and Cherubino da Spoleto], who have frequently figured in important studies on religious life in quattrocento Italy" (2005, pp. 411-412). These two sermon collections, impeccably preserved in this early (and quite possibly unique) manuscript witness, provide an excellent and rare opportunity to engage in such study of Hendrik Herp's contributions to late medieval religious thought and practice in the Low Countries and to make his work more widely available in a modern scholarly edition.

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