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WERNER ROLEVINCK, *Tractatus de fraterna correctione* (Treatise on fraternal correction); and *Tractatulus de forma visitationum monasticarum* (A little treatise on the protocols for monastic visitations).

In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper
Rhineland or Low Countries (Utrecht?), mid-1480s

39 folios on paper, watermark a flagon with a single handle mounted on a foot and with a cover surmounted by a cross, similar to Piccard 31331, Cologne 1480 (also Picard 31340, Cologne 1482, and Picard 31341, Cologne 1482; cf. Briquet 12496, Cologne 1485), modern penciled foliation 1-39 upper right corner rectos, complete (collation i-iii^{io} iv^{io} [-10, cancelled with no loss of text]), folds not visible owing to tight binding, but collation confirmed by distribution of watermarks, no catchwords or signatures, ruled in pale red, prickings visible in outer margins, single full-length bounding lines and double horizontal bounding lines ruled in pale red (justification: 205 x 135 mm.), written in *hybrida formata* by two closely similar hands (ff. 1-30v, 31-39) in two columns of 31 lines, rubrics in red, red paragraph signs and initial strokes in text, intermittent red underlines in text, 2-line red Lombard initials in text, one 4-line (f. 1) and one 3-line (f. 31) red Lombard initials with reserved decoration and red flourishing, extreme blank margins of text block frayed and discolored, especially ff. 1, 31, and 39, closed tear to f. 31, slight discoloration to lower margins throughout, otherwise in excellent condition. Modern binding of brown leather over pasteboards. Dimensions 295 x 215 mm.

Manuscripts of texts that post-date printed versions of the same text help disentangle the complex phenomenon of book production in the post-Gutenberg era. Here is an example. This copy of a book by Werner Rolevinck – an author who straddles the generation of scribal and print culture – bears a remarkable resemblance to the incunable editions printed in Cologne in the 1470s. Study of the textual traditions of these two works, both in manuscript and printed form, sheds new light on the interaction of manuscript and print copies of works produced in the later fifteenth century.

PROVENANCE

1. Evidence of the script, watermark, and style of the initials suggest that this manuscript was very likely copied in the Rhineland or Low Countries (possibly Utrecht) in the mid-1480s. The first work is signed after the colophon (f. 30v) by “S. Gruter,” possibly the scribe or illuminator, but otherwise there are no inscriptions or other marks of provenance. The motif of the watermark (see above) was widespread in northern France, the Low Countries, and the Rhineland in the later 15th and early 16th centuries. *Hybrida* scripts were developed in the schools of the diocese of Cologne in the fifteenth century and spread to the Low Countries, especially Carthusian and Crosier houses and the Windesheim Congregation (Lieftinck, 1953, p. 24; Marks, 1974, pp. 58-60). The penwork of the two flourished initials closely resembles one of the simpler styles of flourishing practiced in the Charterhouse at Utrecht (CMD-NL; Korteweg, pp. 42-55).

From an early time, the Carthusian Order emphasized learning and writing; since the monks did not go out to engage in pastoral care, they preached not with their tongues,

but with their hands as they wrote texts for the edification of the order and of others (Marks, 1974, quoting the statutes of the order). This led to the development of influential scriptoria, such as St. Barbara in Cologne (Marks, 1974) and the Charterhouse of Nieuwlicht (Nova Lux), founded in 1391 just north of Utrecht in the Netherlands.

TEXT

ff. 1-30v, *Incipit tractatus de fraterna correctione*, incipit, "Corripiet me iustus in misericordia et increpabit me, oleum autem peccatoris non impinguet caput meum, scribitur psalmo centesimo xl°. Item proverbiorum ix°. Merito beati sunt servi illi quos cum venerit dominus invenerit ita facientes eodem ipso cooperante. Cui laus est et potestas per eterna secula. Amen." *Explicit quidam tractatus de correctione fraterna intitulatus, cuius exemplar quidam religiosus pater ordinis carthusiensis conventus coloniensis divina coadiuvante sapientia perfecit, necnon propriis manibus scriptum correxit. S. gruter.*

Tractatus de correctione fraterna, printed by Arnold ter Hoernen in Cologne in an undated edition that can be assigned to 1477-1484, the years during which Ter Horenen printed texts with even line endings and with printed signatures (BMC, I, p. 201); ISTC adopts this span of years but adds "about 1477" (ISTC ir00252000). No evidence is known as to when the text was composed, and there seem to have been no later editions. The last paragraph in the manuscript (transcribed here following the explicit) is identical to the colophon in ter Hoernen's edition, the only exception being the addition of S. Gruter's name. This is written in red ink; perhaps he was the scribe or rubricator of this copy.

ff. 31-39, *Incipit tractatulus de forma visitationum monasticarum*, *Incipit feliciter*, incipit, "Venerando in christo patri ac domino H. provinciali etc. Exilis frater W. quem satis in vinea domini fideliter agere et fructum plurimum afferre In dulci ihesu christi nomine Amen. Venerabilis dilecte pater recepi ac litteram vestram in qua tangitis quemdam modum fraterne correctionis in monasterio vestro consuetum ... [f. 38v] Si vero crimen per ora omnium intus et foris volat, tunc locum habet quod in lege scriptum est, scilicet ut talis sic puniatur, ut omnis israel audiat et timeat et nemo talia facere presumat. *Sequitur subscriptiones doctorum pro autorizatione predictorum* ... Jacobo de stralen sacre theologie professori minimo ... Lambertus de monte professor minimus sacre theologie ... Henricus de Kerpena decretorum doctor licet minimus ... [f.39] Henricus Vredeman minimus decretorum doctor decanus sancti Andree Coloniensis ... frater Gerhardus de Elten ordinis praedicatorum sacre theologie professor minimus" *Explicit tractatus de forma visitationum monasticarum* ; [f. 39v, blank but ruled].

Werner Rolevinck, *Tractatulus de forma visitationum monasticarum*, printed by Arnold ter Hoernen in Cologne in an undated edition which ISTC assigns to "about 1475," although Ter Hoernen printed this text, like *De fraterna correctione*, with even line endings and printed signatures (ISTC ir00282500). There appear to be no later editions. The official character of the text is witnessed by the salutation: perhaps the person addressed is Henricus de Piro (Heinrich von Birnbaum, 1403-1473), originally of the Cologne Charterhouse and later prior in several other houses, who wrote a treatise on monastic visitation (Rüthing, 1983, p. 178). In addition, the text is followed by statements of approbation credited to seven named professors of theology or canon law at the university of Cologne, as quoted in the transcription above. These attestations appear in identical form both in the printed edition and in the manuscript, with similar layout and spacing between paragraphs to allow for the insertion of manuscript signatures ("*manu propria*"), although

no signatures appear in copies of the printed edition that could be examined or in this manuscript. Henricus de Piro, if the text referred to is his, died in 1473, the same year in which Lambertus de Monte became a professor of theology, thus narrowing the potential time span for the composition of Rolevinck's work.

Manuscripts of *De fraterna correctione* are recorded in Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, MS theol. lat. qu. 357, and in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 28301; no manuscripts of either work are recorded in the Stadtarchiv of Cologne, which holds some other Rolevinck manuscripts. It is said that there are few surviving manuscripts of works by Rolevinck, perhaps because he wrote for printing, and none are located in North American institutions.

The most important question posed by this manuscript is whether the two works in it were copied from the printed editions. This is something that happened not infrequently in the early decades after the invention of printing (Bühler, pp. 34-39). The layout of the present manuscript including rubrication, two-line Lombard initials, use and position of paragraph signs, capital letters with red strokes, the placement of punctuation to divide phrases in the text, and the spacing of the attestations at the end of *De forma visitationum monasticarum*, all suggest that these features were modelled on printed antecedents. Richard Marks's study of printed copies of several of Rolevinck's works from the reformed Crosier convent of Marienfrede (now in the Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf) revealed that manuscript corrections in these incunables were taken up in subsequent copies of the treatises (Marks, 1977; see also Ford, 1999). Marienfrede also owned copies of Ter Hoernen's editions of *De fraterna correctione* and *De forma visitationum monasticarum* (now also in Düsseldorf) and the available digital images (Online Resources) show occasional manuscript corrections that to some extent appear to have been incorporated into the text of our manuscript. There are, however, discrepancies. The latter part of *De fraterna correctione* omits the chapter titles found in the printed edition, and the printed copy of *De forma visitationum monasticarum* in Düsseldorf contains a lengthy marginal addition that does not appear to be reflected in the printed text or taken up in this manuscript. Further study of the textual tradition of these works in manuscript and print will shed new light on the relationship between printed and manuscript texts in the early decades of printing.

Werner Rolevinck [Rolewinck] (1425-1502), a Carthusian monk of St. Barbara in Cologne, is best known as the author of the *Fasciculus temporum* (A Bundle of Times), a history of the world from the creation to his own time, told in a sequence of textual vignettes organized chronologically along a graphic timeline. First published in 1474 in Cologne by Arnold ter Hoernen, it proved extremely popular and was printed in no fewer than thirty-three incunable editions in Latin and vernacular translations (ISTC; Stillwell). It is less well known that Rolevinck wrote on a variety of other subjects, including a history of his native Westphalia and commentaries on contemporary social issues (Kammann, 2010, pp. 179-186; Henn, 1991). The majority of the more than fifty works attributed to him are religious: commentaries on the Scriptures, works on spirituality, sermons, lives of saints, discussions of various theological questions, and works concerning canon law and ecclesiastical and monastic discipline. It is these works that the noted Benedictine abbot and author Johannes Trithemius praised, when he described Rolevinck as "a man most diligent in the study of the divine scriptures, greatly learned, acute in reasoning, and devout in his life and conversation" (Trithemius, 1601, pp. 170, 392). Some of Rolevinck's works were printed in early editions by Cologne's second printer Arnold ter Hoernen, but many remain unpublished, and only a few have been studied in

any detail. There is no comprehensive bibliography of his writings (modern overviews include Wolffgram, 1890-1892, Autore, 1937, Holzapfel, 1959, Colberg, 1992).

The two treatises in the present manuscript relate directly to a fundamental aspect of life in the Carthusian order. The Carthusians are the one religious order in the Catholic Church that has never been reformed or needed reform, a distinction attributed to the semi-eremical nature of their way of life and to its strict administration both at the level of the order and in the individual monasteries. Discipline was maintained by a system of semi-annual visitations, in which two visitors appointed by the General Chapter of the order visited each monastery in a province every two years. There they interviewed individual monks and lay brothers, who were asked to name any offenses they had noted against the letter or spirit of the order's statutes. The accused were then interviewed individually, and recommendations made for correction, or in cases of serious offense, punishment. It is in this context that Rolevinck's two treatises are to be read. He provides guidelines for the conduct of visitors, and advice on modes and manners of correction. He is clear that visitation is a judicial act, but counsels leniency regarding minor faults, indicating that the ultimate intention to promote the good of the community as a whole (Rüthing, 1983; see also TM 1072 on this site, a Carthusian manuscript with Visitation statutes and sermons).

Werner Rolevinck not only contributed to this program as an author, he also early recognized the significance of printing for presenting his works to larger audiences. Already in his first dated publication, a sermon on the feast of the presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, he commented that he had exerted great diligence in gathering information about the feast, taking special care to make it useful to many preachers, and concluding "therefore it has been multiplied by printing" (ISTC ir00303000). This publication of 1470 is the earliest work by Rolevinck to be printed by Arnold ter Hoernen, Cologne's second printer, active from c. 1468 until his death, probably in 1482 or 1483 (Geldner, 1968). During this time he printed, in addition to the *Fasciculus temporarum*, no fewer than 48 editions of other works by Rolevinck. It is probable that many of these were written for printing.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Briquet Online

<https://briquet-online.at>

GW : Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke

<https://www.gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/>

ISTC: Incunabula Short Title Catalogue

https://data.cerl.org/istc/_search

Piccard Online

<https://www.piccard-online.de>

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[Electronic facsimile: Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf](#)

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[Electronic facsimile: Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Düsseldorf](#)

Utrecht, library of the Charterhouse

<https://repertorium.library.uu.nl/collectie/bibliotheek-van-het-kartuizerklooster-nieuwlicht/>

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