

**Carthusian Rules and Sermons for Visitation**  
**In Latin and Italian, decorated manuscript on parchment**  
**Northern Italy (Venice?), ca. 1500-1525, with later additions ca. 1534**

*i* (unnumbered parchment flyleaf) + 51 + *i* (unnumbered flyleaf) folios on very fine parchment, prepared in the manner of Southern Europe (collation, *i-iv*<sup>8</sup> *v*<sup>10</sup> *vi*<sup>10</sup> [1, f. 43, loose, single; -10, following f. 51, cancelled with no loss of text]), horizontal catchwords, quires 1-3, written below the top line in a formal round southern gothic bookhand by two scribes (first hand, ff. 1-30v; second hand, ff. 31-51) in sixteen long lines, ruled very lightly in ink with single full-length vertical bounding lines (justification, 115-112 x 72-70 mm.), majuscules within text brushed with pale yellow, first majuscule after a painted initial with decorative flourishes, alternately red and blue paragraph marks, one-line initials within the text, alternately red and blue with pen decoration in violet or red respectively, nineteen polished gold initials on parted grounds of red and blue, or red, blue and green, with white tracery, with fine pen scrolls in black ink and gold balls, one three-line green initial, f. 1, infilled with pink and blue acanthus on a polished gold ground, with blue and red acanthus, and flowers in red, green and brushed gold extending into the margin. The last quire is loose and almost detached, f. 43 is detached, some staining on the first folio, nonetheless, the manuscript is in general in very fine condition. Bound, likely in Venice, in its original brown leather binding over pasteboard, blindtooled with a central rectangular panel stamped with three small knots of interlace, surrounded by a frame of fleurons, sewn on three bands, spine is now mostly uncovered, with only fragments of leather remaining, damage to the top and bottom covers have left the pasteboards exposed. The interlace-stamps used in this binding are similar to those found on a number of Venetian bindings; see Tammaro De Marinis, *La legatura artistica in Italia nei secoli XV e XVI*, Florence, 1960-, volume 2, no. 1623, plate CCLXXVIII, Venice, 1495, no. 1824, plate CCCXLVI, Venice, 1531, and no. 2035, plate CCCLXVI, Venice, 1525. Dimensions 155 x 109.

This intact manuscript its original binding includes the Carthusian Rules for the Visitation of Monasteries, together with sermons for Visitations. The formality of this copy of the Statutes reflects how fundamental the system of Visitations was to the success of the Carthusian Order. Historians of the Order will be particularly interested in the apparently unedited and uncommon Visitation sermons as well as by the record of a Visitation of the Charterhouse of St. John the Evangelist at Calci near Pisa in 1534. Such manuscripts survive as customized records of a particular moment in a foundation's history.

## PROVENANCE

1. Based on the decoration and the binding, it is likely that the manuscript was made in Venice, probably in two stages. The script and decoration found in the earlier portion of the manuscript, ff. 1-30v, suggest a date of c. 1500-1525. The second portion of the manuscript includes the results of a Visitation, dated 1534, from the Carthusian Monastery near Pisa (see f. 51), and we can assume ff. 31-51 were added to the manuscript around this date.
2. The manuscript may have been made for the Charterhouse of St. John the Evangelist at Calci near Pisa, which was founded in 1367. Although it was suppressed and became

state property in 1808, monks continued to live there until 1972 (see A. Gruys, *Cartusiana*, Paris, 1976-1978, 3: 341). The foundation flourished from the start, and was especially important in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Today the surviving monastic buildings house a museum. Alternatively, since the Priors mentioned in the Visitation record were from Venice and Florence, the manuscript may have been made for the Charterhouse of S. Andrea de Lido in Venice (see Gruys, *Cartusiana*, 3:384), which was founded in 1422, and flourished in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; it was suppressed in 1810.

3. Inside front cover, in pencil: AV425, 4 [juin] 2002, 530.

## TEXT

ff. 1-6v, *Modus uisitandi domos ordinis Cartusensis*. "Eliguntur a domibus ordinis aut ordinantur et mutuntur per capitulum generale duo priores ad uisitaciones faciendum ... et hoc dictio sequuntur legere et legent capitulum xxx<sup>m</sup> secunde parties dicendo"; f. 2, *Capitulum xxx secunde partis consuetudinum ordinis Cartusensis de uisitationibus generalibus et priuatis et discordia inter domos ordinis terminanda*. "In nomine sancte et indiuidue trinitatis ob statum Cartusensis ordinis ... [followed by Psalms and Prayers] ...," *Deinde sequitur*, "Congregatis ut diximus monachis domus que uisitatur ... quod sibi uidebitur exortationem." *Hic fit sermo. Quo finito dicitur. Lecta deinde forma uisitationis etc. Hic leguntur ille ordinationes que scripte sunt in uulgari sermone. Quedam ordinatio facta in capitulo generali anno 1417 pro uisitationibus fiendis. "Cum propter priorum nostri ordinis ... Inter noua statua conscribatur"*;

ff. 6v-14, *Questa sie el quarto capitulo de la secunda parte de le consuetudine del nostro sancto ordine de la certosa de la reprehensione*, "Per che el nostro signor deo ...";

ff. 14v-18, *Questo sequente sie el primo capitulo de la secunda parte de le nostre constitutione de la reprehensione*, "Caduno chi portara calzari tagliati ... la facultate deseruiere al donno de certosa o al capitulo generale";

ff. 18-22v, [Confession and Absolution] "Lecta forma uisitationis dei et summi pontificis ...," *Quia in multiloquio non de est peccatum dicemus simul Confiteor, Sicut in fine nostri capituli generalis fieri consuerit ... sic incipit*, "Confiteor in deo ... dicat unam letaniam";

ff. 22v-23v [Final farewell], "O presenti Patres et Fratres sicut uidetis nos dominos dei altissimi nostri ... Et pax domini semper uobiscum sit. Reseruantes nobis auctoritatem nostram quoadusque fuerimus reuersi ad domos nostras";

ff. 23v-30v, *In actu Uisitationis Sermo*, "Apprehendite disciplinam nequando irascatur dominus et pereatis de uia iusta. [Psalm 2:12]. Cum propter fragilitatem humane corruptionis quam et primo parente contraximus ... Apprehendite disciplinam ubi supra. In qua auctoritate tria nobis per ordinem .... Quam nobis concedere dignetur dominus noster yhesus christus. Qui est benedictus in secula seculorum. Amen." [ends mid f. 30v, remainder blank];

This same sermon is found in Leeds, University Library, Brotherton Collection 13 (see N. R. Ker. *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, Oxford, 1969-2002, 3:49-50).

ff. 31-42v, *Sermo in uisitationibus*, "[U]isitatio tua custodiuit spiritu meum. Job x capitulo. In uerbis propositis fratres charissimi. Tria nobis occurrunt ... ab eo qui nos uisitat in secula seculorum. Amen";

ff. 42v-44, *Ante recitationem scrutinii hec pauca possunt preponi*, "[I]udivimus venerabiles patres deo dante scrutinium conuersationis vestre ... quia uobis pie confitentibus et penitentibus maneret sol iusticie." [Ends mid f. 44, remainder blank];

ff. 44v-47v, *Sermo in recessu uisitatorum*, "[V]enerabiles patres. Reecessuri a uobis functi officio nostro ut aliis fratribus exhibeamus ... bene uolentes conservari. Valete et gaudete in domino semper. Amen." [Ends top f. 47v, remainder blank].;

ff. 48-51, "Fratres N et N priores domorum Sancti N prope florentiam. Et sancti N prope uenetias sacri ordinis Cartusiensis ... Data et lecta in domo Cartusie pisarum in cella prioris ipsius domus coram ipso priore et partibus, nec non conuentualibus dicte domus N die XXII mensis Iunii MD XXXIII cum impressione sigillorum domorum nostrarum in fidem et testimonium omnium premissorum." [Ends top f. 51, remainder and f. 51v blank].

The results of a Visitation by the priors of the Carthusian Charterhouses near Florence and Venice, settling a dispute between the Prior of the Charterhouse of St. John the Evangelist at Calci near Pisa and one of his monks, dated June 22, 1534. The names are not included, but are represented by the letter "N."

This manuscript includes the Order for the visitation of Carthusian Houses, followed by Sermons for Visitations, and the results of a Visitation dated 1534. (Hogg, 1989, Vol 2, pp. 223-229, reprinting the Basel 1510 edition of the *Statuta antiqua*, pars 2, ch. 30). Of particular interest is the fact that the statutes concerning reprehension are in Italian (*Statuta antiqua* I, cap. iv, see above, f. 6v, and *Statuta noua* ii, cap. i, see above, f. 14v).

Other Latin manuscripts with these statutes in Italian include Keeble College Oxford, MS 34, Italy, s. XV (see M. B. Parkes. *The Medieval Manuscripts of Keble College Oxford*, London, 1979, 127-128), and Partridge Green, Sussex, England, St. Hugh's Charterhouse, Parkminster, MS ee.30 (B.76), from the Genoa Charterhouse, first half of the fifteenth century (see N. R. Ker. *Medieval Manuscripts in British Libraries*, Oxford, 1969-2002, 4:133-136).

As noted above (see f. 23v), Leeds, University Library, Brotherton Collection 13, Italy, s. XV<sup>2</sup>, with the Carthusian Order for Visitation, also includes the sermon, "Apprehendite disciplinam ... Cum propter fragilitatem ..." found in our manuscript. The remaining sermons have not been identified in other manuscripts, and are not included in Johannes Baptist Schneyer. *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für Zeit von 1150-1350*. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters 43, Münster, 1969-80, or in the electronic database, *In Principio: Incipit Index of Latin Texts*, Turnhout, Belgium, Brepols. It appears that these sermons have never been edited.

The Carthusian Order, founded by St. Bruno c. 1084, and celebrated for the purity and austerity of its version of the Religious life, is characterized by a unique combination of the eremetical and cenobitic life. Each Carthusian monk spends most of his life living as a hermit in

his own cell, but at the same time lives under the rule and discipline of a community, and participates in the communal liturgy of the monastery. The success of the Carthusians at creating a balanced life, and maintaining this life through their statutes and the guidance of the Prior of the Grande Chartreuse and the Order's General Chapter, allows the Order to make the famous claim, "numquam reformata, quia numquam deformata" (never reformed, because never deformed). The system of Visitations, where Visitors, appointed by the General Chapter, visited each Charterhouse every two years, was key to the success of the Order.

There are many copies of the Statutes (catalogued under various names), though each copy seems different in terms of exactly what was included, making the compiling of a definitive edition difficult. The texts in Italian in the present manuscript are noteworthy, and even if they are not unique, they certainly appear to be uncommon. Most Carthusian monasteries must have had copies of the records of Visitation, so integral a part was this practice for the Order, but there does not appear to be a census of such texts, which must, in any event, have differed one from another. The present manuscript thus emerges as a unique combination of works, a customized record of a historical moment for a particular foundation and an important document for the more general history of the Carthusian Order.

## ILLUSTRATION

One three-line bright green modeled initial, f. 1, infilled with delicate rose and blue acanthus on a polished gold square ground, with blue acanthus with touches of rose extending from the corners, and with flowers in rose, green and blue on brushed blue stems forming a half-length border in the inner margin;

Nineteen secondary initials are polished gold on parted grounds of orange-red and blue, or orange-red, blue and green, with white tracery, with fine pen scrolls in black ink and gold leaves and balls sprouting short rays.

The brightly colored acanthus decoration, and the black-ink scrolls interspersed with gold rayed shapes are similar to manuscripts produced in and around Venice and Padua at the end of the fifteenth century; for example, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Canon. Liturg. 343 in Otto Pächt and J. J. G. Alexander. *Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library Oxford. Volume 2, Italian School*, Oxford, 1970, no. 593, plate LVI, and Free Library of Philadelphia, Rare Book Department, Lewis E M 69.20 in *Leaves of Gold. Manuscript Illumination from Philadelphia Collections*, ed. James Tanis and Jennifer Thompson, Philadelphia, 2001, no. 64, pp. 184-186.

## LITERATURE

Brooke, Christopher. *The Age of the Cloister: The Story of Monastic Life in the Middle Ages*, New Jersey, 2003.

Gruys, Albert. *Cartusiana*. Paris, CNRS, 1976-1978.

Hogg, James. *The Evolution of the Carthusian Statutes from The Consuetudines Guigonis to the Tertia Compilatio*, *Analecta Cartusiana* 99 (1989), volumes 1 and 2.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

The Charterhouse of St. John at Calci, near Pisa: see Certosa di Calci (Toscana Viva)

[http://www.toscanaviva.com/Calci/the\\_certosa\\_of\\_calci.htm](http://www.toscanaviva.com/Calci/the_certosa_of_calci.htm)

Analecta Cartusiana:

<http://monsite.wanadoo.fr/AnalectaCartusiana/>

Official Website of the Carthusian Order:

<http://www.chartreux.org/>

(which includes an English translation of excerpts from the Carthusian Statutes:

<http://www.chartreux.org/en/frame.html>)

Webster, Douglas Raymund. "The Carthusian Order," *The Catholic Encyclopedia* 3, New York, 1908:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03388a.htm>

TM 333