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BONAVENTURE, *Soliloquium de quatuor mentalibus exercitiis* (Soliloquium on the Four Spiritual Exercises); [ANONYMOUS], *Pianti e le lamentatione della nostra dona* (The Tears and Lamentations of Our Lady), in Italian; PS.-BERNARD of CLAIRVAUX, *De contemplatione* (On Contemplation); [ANONYMOUS], *De religio* (On Religion)

In Latin and Italian, decorated manuscript on parchment
Italy (Northern?), c. 1400-1430

i (paper) + 163 + *i* (paper) folios on parchment (very fine), lacking leaves at the end (collation *i*-xiii¹⁰ xiv¹⁰ [-10, probably cancelled blank] xv-xvi¹⁰ xvii⁴ [original structure uncertain, but lacking leaves at the end]), some leaf and quire signatures remain very bottom outer corner with a letter designating the quire and an Arabic numeral the leaf, horizontal catchwords center lower margin, usually flourished, ruled lightly in ink with single full-length vertical bounding lines (written space 90 x 72-71 mm.), copied in twenty-seven long lines in a very regular southern Gothic bookhand by several scribes, majuscules within the text touched with pale yellow, red rubrics, two- to four-line alternately red and blue initials with pen flourishes in the opposite color, in excellent condition apart from a few folios with very slight powdering of the ink. Bound in eighteenth-century parchment over pasteboard, smooth spine lettered in ink "Sermones/ S. Augustini/ Episc. delin/gua dolosa," with "C" (a shelfmark), below, in excellent condition. Dimensions 144 x 106 mm.

This small-format miscellany contains texts to nourish the religious life, both practically and spiritually. The *Sermons to the Brothers in the Desert* (attributed to Augustine, but composed many centuries after his death), and the *Soliloquy* by St. Bonaventure were medieval bestsellers. The Italian text on the Sorrows of the Virgin Mary in contrast appears to be uncommon. This is an excellent manuscript for teaching, both for its interest as physical artifact (for its parchment, signatures, catchwords, and *maniculae*), and as a macaronic collection illustrating the religious sensibilities of its era.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in Italy, likely in Northern Italy, in the first half of the fifteenth century, probably c. 1400-1430, based on the evidence of the script and decoration. It was certainly written by more than one scribe (changes of hand for example at ff. 101 and 103), but the uniformity of the script and format is striking. This is an example of a high-quality, formal, professionally produced manuscript, copied on exquisite parchment by well-trained scribes.

Occasional scribal corrections throughout; added but contemporary correction (supplying omission), lower margin f. 85v. Numerous *maniculae* or pointing hands, many very elaborate, with long pointing fingers and frilled cuffs, highlighted in pale yellow (ff. 56v, 60v, 61v, 62, 68v, 86, 90v, 91, 92v); f. 61, a nota mark.

2. In an institutional library by the sixteenth or seventeenth century; ownership inscription f. 139v, lower margin, "Iste liber pertinet ad locum ville" (possibly La Villa, Alta Badia, Italy?). Franciscan ownership inscriptions sometimes use "locus" (Latin for "place") to

refer to their friaries (see Les Enluminures, TM 770 on this site). The shelfmark on the eighteenth-century binding suggests it was still in an institutional library then.

3. Lower margin, f. 1, notary mark(?), with date, partially erased: "1 < 5? > 16"; upper margin, f. 100v, "Cart. No 129"
4. Front flyleaf, ownership inscription of Wolfgang Maximilian von Goethe (1820-1883), grandson of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, dated Rome 1854 (his manuscript C.II.35), stating that he acquired the manuscript from the library of the lawyer, Luigi Pani of Rimini (1775-1850). Goethe served as the Prussian legate in Rome from 1852. Much of his library today is now in the Thüringer Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Jena.
5. No. 1077 in a German catalogue (description laid in), beginning: "Renaissance-Handschrift aus dem Besitz des Goethes-Enkels."
6. Offered by Forum/Les Enluminures in 1998 (Schoenberg Database).
7. Owners's and dealers's notes: front flyleaf in pencil "15/2267/1"; back flyleaf, verso, "2529/121."

TEXT

ff. 1-100v, *Incipiunt sermones beati augustini episcopi ad heremitas de lingua dolosa, sermo primus, incipit, "Cupio uos fratres karissimi scire que sit lingua dolosa ...; ... f. 98v, De obitu [corrected to: recessu] sancti Augustini. Sermo xlvii, incipit, "Fratres mei et letitia cordis mei tempus est ... uos salutare in osculo, amen," Explicit Sermones Sancti Augustini doctoris episcopi yponensis eiusdemque Auctoris;*

Pseudo-Augustine, *Sermones ad fratres in eremo* (also known as the *Sermones ad heremitas*); printed in Migne, *Patrologia latina*, vol. 40, col. 1233-1358; this manuscript includes the following forty-seven sermons in the Migne edition: 29-42, 1-4, 6-13, 43, 5, 26, 44, 14-18, 21, ff. 79-80v, *De penitentibus sermo xxxvii*, incipit, "Penitentes penitentes et non eritis deridentes ..." [Augustine, *Sermo dubii*, sermo cccxciii, *De poenitentibus*, Migne, *PL*, vol. 39, col. 1713-1715], 23-25, 27, 19, 20, 28, 46, 47, 22.

This collection of sermons circulated in manuscripts and in early printed editions as a work by the Church Father, St. Augustine (354-430), bishop of Hippo, and author of the *Confessions* and the *City of God* (as well as other works). The story of the actual origin of these sermons is complex; many questions remain, and continue to be the subject of debate. The traditional explanation that these were the work of a twelfth-century preacher, Geoffroy Babion (Bonnes, 1945-46) is no longer accepted; subsequent scholars dated their origin to the fourteenth century (Rano, 1987; Walsh, 1988-1990). Probably closer to the truth is that this collection includes sermons that may have been written by more than one author over a long period of time with some dating as early as the twelfth, but others certainly later, from the thirteenth century and fourteenth centuries (Elm, 2002, pp. 528-89 and Saak, 2012, 86-87). Recent scholarship has emphasized their importance in the debates between the Augustinian Hermits and the Augustinian Canons in the fourteenth century (Saak, 2012).

The sermons survive in at least 424 extant manuscripts (Elm, 2002; FAMA, Online Resources). As Saak observed, this text "is not some quaint and curious oddity ... , but ... a major text influencing the religious life as such of late medieval and Renaissance Europe (Saak, 2012, p. 82). Addressed to monks, their focus on practical virtues no doubt contributed to their popularity.

There is considerable variation in the number of sermons and their order from manuscript to manuscript. The edition printed in Migne includes 76 sermons, and was based on the 1685 edition published by the Maurists, which in turn is based on Erasmus's edition, Froben, 1528/9. The Amerbach 1495 edition of Augustine's sermons was the first edition to include all 76 sermons. Earlier fourteenth-century collections were much smaller, including 22 or 23 sermons.

ff. 100v-139v, *Incipit prologus venerabilis doctoris beati Bonaurenture super imago vite*, incipit, "Flecto genua mea ad patrem domini nostri ... finis et complementum; [f. 102], *Anima*, incipit, "Dic queso o homo si post deuotam ... benedictus in secula deus," *Explicit liber dyalogi anime uel hominis. Seu liber ymagis vite*;

St. Bonaventura, *Soliloquium*; critical edition, *Opera Omnia* (Quaracchi, 1882-1902), vol. 8, pp. 28-67, and pp. xxv-xxxviii, listing 257 manuscripts; see also FAMA (Online Resources), and Cardelle de Hartmann, 2007, n. R27; English translation, Coughlin, 2006, beginning on p. 211. There were at least eight editions in Latin in the fifteenth century, as well as many in Dutch, and one in Spanish

The *Soliloquium* is one of St. Bonaventure's most popular spiritual works (written c. 1255-1260). Written as a dialogue between man and the soul, it includes many citations from the spiritual teachings of the Church Fathers. The title varies, and it can be called a *Soliloquy*, *Libellus de quatuor exercitiis* (Little Book of four exercises), *Meditations*, or as here, *On the image of life*; it is a practical guide to the mystical life of prayer and union with God, written in the form of a dialogue for – in the author's words – less sophisticated souls.

Bonaventura da Bagnoreggio (ca. 1217- 1274), or St. Bonaventure, was born Bagnorea near Orvieto, Italy. He studied at the University of Paris, earning his Master of Arts in 1242, and entered the Franciscan Order in 1243. He continued his studies in the Theology faculty, and in 1257 he became Regent Master of theology, and shortly thereafter, also in 1257, Minister General of the Franciscans. He was appointed cardinal-bishop of Albano in 1273. He was the author of numerous works, including lives of St. Francis, a Commentary on the *Sentences* of Peter the Lombard, biblical commentaries, sermons, and mystical treatises.

ff. 140-156, *Incomincia i pianti e le lamentatione della nostra dona*, incipit, "O anime nobile e devote corrite de amore a de schorere a quello paese che ue guida allo pietoso porto de salute. O anime desiderose ... Accio che da poy questa misera uita <nui?> gaudiamo con lus in secula seculorum, Amen";

Argelati and Villa, 1767, vol. 2, p. 131, listing what is likely another copy of this text in a manuscript in the Turin library as Jacobus de Voragine, *Passio christi domini* (but noting that the attribution is doubtful and that no text like this is found in Quetif and Eccard). The long tradition of texts on the sufferings of the Virgin in Latin in the Middle Ages inspired numerous works in Italian, including one often attributed to Bernard of Clairvaux, and the well-known

verse composition by Enselmino da Montebelluna. The text in this manuscript does not appear to have circulated widely.

ff. 156-163v, *Incomincia una diuota meditatione de sancto Bernardo abbate. Capitulo primo*, incipit, "Quam uehementi amore amplexasti me o bone yhesu/ quando sanguis exiuit de corde tuo/ aqua de latere/ anima de corpore. O amantissime inuenis quid ... [f. 163] *Capitulo xxi*, incipit, "Scribe domine yhesu uulnera tua in corde meo ... et largiri digneris christe dulcissime uita mea. Qui uiuis et regnas benedicens in secula seculorum. Amen";

This text, a popular meditation on the Passion of Christ, is often attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux in the manuscripts, as it is here; it also circulated with the title, *De contemplatione* (On Contemplation). There is no modern critical edition, and it has apparently never been printed. See Bestul, 1996, p. 190, who suggests a German origin and fourteenth-century date; and for the opening verses, Walther, 1959, no. 3479.

f. 163v, incipit, "Religio dicitur regis uisio quia in ea et per eam uidetur rex regum ... Audiant pauperes et letentur mediocres et hortentur"//

Short text, without a rubric, on "religion," appears to be incomplete; also found in a theological compendium in Uppsala, Universitetsbibliotek, MS C212, Prague, s. XIV2/2, ff. 52v-56.

This texts in this small miscellany all aimed to nourish the religious life, both practically and spiritually. The range of texts included here makes it a particularly interesting collection for historians studying medieval religious life and devotional practice. The first two texts were medieval bestsellers that shaped the religious worldview of their age, the *Sermons to the Brothers in the Desert* (attributed to Augustine, but composed many centuries after his death), and the great *Soliloquy* by St. Bonaventure. The Pseudo-Augustinian sermons, addressed to monks, focus on practical virtues. St. Bonaventure's *Soliloquy* is a beginner's guide to the mystical life, instructing the soul on the path from worldly things to the contemplation of the divine. The two texts that follow complement each other. Both the Italian text on the Sorrow of the Virgin and the Latin contemplation of the Passion of Christ are examples of the affective piety of the later Middle Ages that encouraged the devout believer to identify with the humanity of Christ, and in particular to meditate on His Passion.

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