

CONRADUS DE SAXONIA [CONRAD HOLTNICKER OF SAXONY], *Sermones de sanctis et de communi sanctorum* and *Speculum Beatae Virginis Mariae* [Mirror of the Blessed Virgin Mary]; with Sermons by ALDOBRANDINUS DE CAVALCANTIBUS, ANTONIUS AZARO OF PARMA, MARTINUS POLONUS and unidentified authors  
In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment  
Austria (Vienna?) or Southern Germany, c. 1275-1300

i (parchment) + 190 folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, top outer recto, 1-61, 61bis, 62-72, 72bis, 73-188 (collation, i-xix<sup>10</sup>), quires i-xviii signed in Roman numerals j<sup>us</sup>-xiiij<sup>us</sup> in center lower margin of final verso, ff. 1-98, 109-117 ruled very faintly with full-length vertical bounding lines, ff. 98v-108v, 117v-188v ruled in brown ink with full-length horizontal and vertical bounding lines, prickings visible in upper, lower, and outer margins (justification, 141-143 x 96-100 mm.), text written in a rapid Gothic hand with cursive influence in two columns of thirty-two to thirty-seven lines, ff. 1-40v written in pale brown ink, ff. 41-188 written in dark brown ink, guide notes for rubrication partially visible in lower margin (ff. 119, 122, 125, 128v), red rubrics, majuscules and names of cited authorities stroked in red, rhymed phrases underlined in red, red paraphs, 2- and 3-line plain red initials, 2-line red initial on f. 131v has some flourishing in red, corrections in scribe's hand, partially cropped in the outer margin of f. 79, medieval marginal notes in several hands with some notes cropped in the outer margin of f. 89, pointing hands, narrow gap in parchment along outer margin of f. 72bis stitched with green thread, rust stain in outer margin of ff. 184-188 from nail protruding from inside of the lower board, on ff. 187-188 the rust has begun to eat away at the parchment at this location. Bound in fifteenth-century red calf blind-tooled with intersecting diagonal triple fillets within a rectangular triple fillet frame, forming four lozenges stamped with five-petalled rosettes and eight triangles stamped with beaded edge stamps, and with scrolls stamped below and, on the upper board, above the fillet frame, over wooden boards with three double bands, with eight engraved and bossed cornerpieces, fore-edge clasp, back to front, chain hasp at the top of the lower board with chain intact and terminating in a ring, stamp partially visible in the inside of the lower board in the lower outer corner, front flyleaf is a parchment bifolium on which psalms have been copied in a late fourteenth- or early fifteenth-century gothic bookhand, rotated so that the fold runs horizontally across the leaf and the outer side of the bifolium serves as the recto, cropped along one outer edge (now the bottom edge), with red wax seal with coat of arms on its present outer edge, pastedown on lower board is a parchment manuscript leaf containing a passage from Deuteronomy, copied in a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century gothic bookhand, cropped on its left side and pasted upside down. Dimensions 182 x 127 mm.

This collection of some of the most important works by the early Franciscan writer, Conrad of Saxony, was copied not long after their composition. In spite of its wide circulation, there are only four copies of the *Speculum beatae Mariae virginis* recorded in the United States and it is rare on the market (only one copy recorded as sold in the last century). It survives in a handsome fifteenth-century binding in a remarkably fine state of preservation, including a chain attached to its lower board attesting to its use in a late medieval chained reference library.

## PROVENANCE

1. Evidence of script – particularly the straight, horned ‘r’ – and spelling – the use of ‘w’ and ‘k’ in, eg., “ewangelii” and “karissimi” – suggest that this book was copied in Germany or Austria, as does its decoration. Several conservative features in the script, including the near consistent use of tall ‘s’ at the ends of words and the “est”

abbreviation, and its general simplicity of aspect suggest that the scribe was working in the late thirteenth or very early fourteenth century.

2. Evidence of the binding stamps indicates that the manuscript was likely bound in the second half of the fifteenth century. Similar rosette and edge stamps appear in several bindings dating within this period (Rosette: *Einbanddatenbank* s016777 [Vienna, c. 1466-83], s017942 [Ptuj, second half of the fifteenth century], s025007 [Krakow, c. 1483]; Kopfstempel: *Einbanddatenbank* s020977 [c. 1478-1523]). Judging from the partial cropping of marginal annotations by the scribe and in later hands, the leaves of the manuscript were trimmed for binding.

One of the most interesting features of this binding is its survival complete with a chain that once firmly attached this book to its shelf in a library (a few such libraries survive; see Online Resources). Chained libraries were a late medieval solution to the problem of providing access to needed books in an institution, while at the same time preventing theft, and we can assume many late medieval volumes were once chained. Most, however, have been rebound, or survive without the chain and other metalwork, and intact chained bindings such as this one are certainly not common.

Belonged to the Dominican house attached to the Church of St. Maria Rotunda in Vienna. Two fifteenth-century inscriptions are partially visible in the lower margins of ff. 2 and 88: "Iste liber est conuentus wiennensis ordinis predicatorum" (both with the reference to Vienna scraped away, most likely by a later institutional owner). A similar inscription in the same hand partially visible in the upper margin of f.188, "Iste liber est conuentus ... ordinis predicatorum et est emptus pro ..." indicates that the book was most likely purchased, possibly by the house or by a novice entering the house.

Founded in 1226 by Duke Leopold VI of Austria and rebuilt in 1302 after a series of fires, this Dominican house accrued a large collection of books in the late Middle Ages, with at least 985 manuscripts and printed books listed in the 1513 by Michael Pürlwasser (ed. in Gottlieb, 1915). Though the presence of a chain hasp and chain as part of this manuscript's binding points to institutional ownership, and many of manuscripts in this library were bound in-house, especially around the end of the fifteenth century (see Gottlieb, 1915, p. 285; Mittendorfer, 1995, p. 50), this manuscript does not appear to have been one of them (the characteristic library mark employed by the house's bindery is lacking, and the binding stamps used differ from those in other house bindings). Three sixteenth-century library inventories reveal that a number of books left the library after Pürlwasser's 1531 catalogue as gifts or unreturned loans, or in sales or exchanges. About three hundred manuscripts remain in the library today (see Gottlieb, 1915, pp. 288-89 for a list of the monastery's manuscripts now in other libraries).

There is no specific indication in Pürlwasser, Gottlieb, or Mittendorfer that the Dominican house had a chained library, but three manuscripts that do survive in the library's in-house bindings (London, British Library, Add. MSS 18315, 18374, and 18375) exhibit traces suggesting that chain hasps were once attached to their lower boards (with thanks to Jeff Kattenhorn at the British Library for this information). This evidence indicates the strong likelihood that the Dominican house library in Vienna did chain its manuscripts, and that this manuscript's binding and chain date back to its time in this library, even if it was not bound in-house.

3. In the inscription on f. 188 "Cass..." has been written in a sixteenth-century(?) hand between "conuentus" and "ordinis." This may be the shortened form of "Cassoviensis," and its insertion in this inscription may suggest that the manuscript eventually came to the Dominican house attached to the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Košice and founded around 1290. In a preliminary search we found another two manuscripts from a Dominican convent at Kosiče: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár, MS lat. 534 (early fifteenth-century motets) and pastedowns in Univerzita Komenského, Knizica, Inc-318-I (motets copied at the end of the fifteenth-century).
4. Arthur Lauria, Parisian bookseller. Stickers in lower outer corner of f. 188: "Lauria 1938" and "...? X. CC."
5. Ex libris of Maurice Burrus on the front pastedown: "Maurice Burrus. Député du Haut-Rhin. 1937." Burrus (1882-1959) was an Alsatian politician and tobacco magnate. He is known as an avid philatelist and he amassed a vast and famous collection of stamps.

## TEXT

ff. 1-19v, [Conradus de Saxonia, *Sermones de sanctis et de communi sanctorum*; Schneyer 1.765-77: nos. 257-68, 272-76, 279-80, S75, 281-82], *In festo beati Andree apostoli*, incipit, "Extendam palmas meas ad dominum. Exo. [Exodus 9:29] Hoc verbum Moysi beatus Andreas dicere potuit ...";

ff. 19v-21, [Anonymous sermon], *Item*, incipit, "Philippe qui videt me et cetera. Joh. [John 14:9] Videtur dominus per fidem in mundo videtur per spem in celo ... ipsi in contemplando lucidissimi fuerunt";

ff. 21-96, [Conradus de Saxonia, *Sermones*; Schneyer 1.765-77: nos. 283-85, 295-97, 299-300, 303-8, 312-14, 309-11, 324-29, 333-41, 345-65, 368-76, 380-82], *In inventione sancte [crucis indicated by a cross]*, incipit, "Requiescite sub arbore. Gen. [Genesis 18:4] Karissimi quia hodie festum arboris colimus merito hodie sub arbore ...";

ff. 96-98, [Martinus Polonus, *Sermones de sanctis*; Schneyer 4.124-49: nos. 301-3], *Item*, incipit, "Nolumus vos ignorare de dormientibus. Apostolus. [1 Thessalonians 4:12] Quinque sunt que non vult Apostolus nos ignorare de dormientibus ...";

ff. 98-108v, [Conradus de Saxonia, *Sermones*; Schneyer 1.765-77: nos. S80, C2-C7, C9, 386-87, 377-78, C11], incipit, "Miseremini mei miseramine mei saltem vos amici mei et cetera. Job 19. [Job 19:21] Quomodo misericordia ...";

f. 109, [Anonymous sermon], *In dedicatione*, incipit, "Et dixit qui sedebat in throno. Ecce noua facio omnia. [Apocalypse 21:5] Si quis sciret vetera facere noua multi a deum conuenirent ...";

f. 109r-v, [Anonymous sermon], *Item de eodem*, incipit, "Letificabo eos in domo orationis mee. Ysa. [Isaiah 56:7] Libenter letanter et ardenter veniret quis ad locum vbi omnem voluntatem suam fieri speraret ...";

ff. 109v-111, [Anonymous sermon], *Item*, incipit, "Ingressus ihesus perambulabat iericho. Luc. [Luke 19:1] Iericho interpretatur luna et signat mundum et mundi amatores qui admodum lune mutantur ...";

This sermon shares a common incipit with anonymous sermons found in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 5998 (Schneyer 7.566-70, 8.606-11: no. 2), Stuttgart, Landesbibliothek, theol. fol. 332 (Schneyer 9.532-27: no. 86), and Vorau, Stiftsbibliothek, 161 (Schneyer 9.829-30: no. 13).

ff. 111-112, *Item*, incipit, "Vidi ciuitatem sanctam ierusalem nouam et cetera, Apoc. [Apocalypse 21:2] Augustinus dicit quod duplex est ciuitas secundum differentiam duplicem ciuium ...";

This sermon shares a common incipit with a sermon attributed to Martinus Polonus (Schneyer 4.124-49: no. 317) and an anonymous sermon found in Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly, F. 60a (Schneyer 9.414-20: no. 73).

ff. 112-113v, [Anonymous sermon], *Item in dedicatione*, incipit, "At ille festinans descendit et cetera. [Luke 19:6] In hiis verbis et in sequentibus huius ewangelii tria notantur ...";

This sermon shares a common incipit with an anonymous sermon found in Prague, Knihovna metropolitní kapituly, F. 60a (Schneyer 9.414-20: no. 72).

ff. 113v-114, *Item*, incipit, "Hodie salus domui huic facta est. [Luke 19:9] Triplex domus dei tangitur in hodierno ewangelio et officio cui salus facta est ...";

This sermon shares a common incipit with sermons attributed to Aldobrandinus de Cavalcantibus (Schneyer 1.190-212: no. 835) and Martinus Polonus (Schneyer 4.124-49: no. 321) and an anonymous sermon in Trier, Stadtbibliothek 245/1380 (Schneyer 9.618-25: no. 36).

ff. 114-116, [Anonymous sermon], *Item de eodem*, incipit, "Terribilis est locus iste. [Genesis 28:17] Vere terribilis est locus ecclesie demonibus ...";

ff. 116-117, [Anonymous sermon], incipit, "Zachee festinans descende quia in domo tua et cetera. [Luke 19:5] Arbor ista a qua dominus zacheum fecit descendere ...";

ff. 117-131v, [Conradus de Saxonia, *Sermones*, Schneyer 1.765-77: nos. 379, 269-71, 277-78, 319-21, 323, 322, 330-32], *Item*, incipit, "Dixit qui sedebat in throno. Ecce noua facio omnia. Apoc. 22. [Apocalypse 21:5] Inuenimus in scripturis thronum saphirinum ...";

ff. 131v-182v, *Incipit speculum beate virginis*, incipit, "Qvoniā vt ait Jeronimus. Nulli dubium est quin totium ad gloriam laudis dei pertineat ... Qui cum patre et spiritu sancto uiuit et regnat deus per omnia secula seculorum. AMEN";

Conradus de Saxonia, *Speculum beatae Mariae virginis* (discussed below).

ff. 182v-184v, [Antonius Azaro de Parma, *Sermo de tempore*, Schneyer 1.303-13: no. 279], *Item de sancta Maria*, incipit, "Ego sum lux mundi. Joh. 8. Si secundum beatum Augustinum tanta est unitas capitis ad membra et membrorum ad caput ...";

ff. 184v-186v, [Anonymous sermon], *De Prelatis et presbiteris*, incipit, "Merito hec patimur quia peccauimus in fratrem nostrum. Gen. 42. [Genesis 42:21] Quanta mala clerum nunc inuoluant [sic] ...";

Schneyer has identified a similar, anonymous sermon in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 5998 (Schneyer 8.606-11: no. 31).

ff. 186v-188, [Conradus de Saxonia, *Sermo de communi sanctorum*; Schneyer 1.765-77: no. 388), *Item*, incipit, "Qvi bene presunt presbiteri duplici honore digni habeantur. Thim 6. [1 Timothy 5:17] In verbis ab apostolo propositis commendatur rectorum circa subditos diligentia ... Rogemus dominum. Amen. *Expliciunt sermones fratris Chvnradini de ordine minorum fratrum de sanctis per circulum anni. Amen*"; f. 188v, ruled but blank.

Included in this extensive collection are more than one hundred sermons from the *Sermones de sanctis et de communi sanctorum* of Conradus de Saxonia, together with his very popular text, the *Speculum beatae Mariae virginis*. This is, however, not simply a copy of Conrad's sermon cycle, since some of his sermons are omitted, and six sermons by contemporary Dominican authors (Martinus Polonus, Aldobrandinus de Calvacantibus, and Antonius Azaro de Parma), as well as eight sermons by unidentified authors were also included. It seems likely this is an example of a re-working of Conrad's texts for a Dominican audience (see also below).

There is a modern critical edition of the *Speculum* (Petrus de Alcántara Martínez, 1975), listing 247 manuscripts, more than half in German and Austrian repositories. It was first printed in Augsburg, 1476 (Hain 3566; *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke* 04817), and circulated in at least two additional editions before 1500 (Hain 3567; *Gesamtkatalog* 04818-19). Schneyer (1969-1990), lists 86 manuscripts of Conrad's *Sermones de sanctis et de communi sanctorum*, all in European repositories, and most in Germany and Austria. (Based on a sampling of catalogue descriptions, the majority of these manuscripts date to the fourteenth century.) They were printed under Bonaventure's name in Paris, 1521, but there is no modern critical edition of the entire sermon collection. The Marian sermons on the Annunciation, Assumption, and Nativity (Schneyer nos. 319-21, 323, 322, 330-32) are edited in Alcántara Martínez's edition of the *Speculum*.

Conrad was born in Braunschweig in Saxony in the early thirteenth century and died in Bologna in 1279. A master of theology (he probably studied at Paris) and member of the Franciscan order, he was serving as a lector in theology at the Franciscan convent school in Hildesheim when he was elected Minister Provincial of Saxony in 1247. He served twice in this position, first from 1247 to 1262, then from 1272 to his death in 1279. A preacher and ascetical writer, his literary output saw an immense popularity during the Middle Ages. He produced several large and popular collections of sermons, drawing, no doubt, on his experience at Hildesheim training qualified friars for the preaching ministry. He most likely produced these sermon cycles between his two stints as Minister Provincial. Conrad is known as well for his *Speculum beatae Mariae virginis*, though early publishers mistakenly attributed it to his Franciscan contemporary and superior in the order, Bonaventure.

The *Speculum beatae Mariae virginis* takes the form of a substantial commentary on the "Ave Maria," with eighteen sections offering expansive interpretations of the prayer and its parts. Conrad of Saxony draws on the Bible, patristic writers, and the more recent writings of theologians like Anselm of Canterbury and Bernard of Clairvaux to fashion an extensive and dogmatic work of Mariology. The ascetic and mystical character of the work – present in Conrad's sermons as well – may also have contributed to its immense popularity in the later Middle Ages, which is evident in its extensive manuscript circulation. That the Carthusian Ludwig Moser (d. 1510) translated it into German at the end of the fifteenth-century also attests to its enduring status as a devotional classic.



Drawing chiefly on the Bible and patristic writings, Conrad's sermons are scholastically structured, spiritual exegetical readings of biblical themes and motifs. In both the *Speculum* and his sermons, Conrad shows a predilection for organizing his interpretations around emblematic comparisons. The schematic character of his sermons and Conrad's own background as a lector at Hildesheim suggest that these sermons would have been used by other friars as preaching aids. His *Sermones de tempore et de sanctis* served as a foundational source for the anonymous thirteenth-century 'Schwarzwald preacher,' who translated material in Conrad's sermons in two senses – into Middle High German and for lay audiences.

Marginal annotations attest to the early use of the sermons. There appear to be at least three or four hands annotating the sermons and at least one hand annotating *Speculum*. Notes in the manuscript include one-word identifications of subject matter, numerical references to the chapters of biblical citations within the text (the text generally only cites the book), *notae*, pointing hands, and sporadic numerations or identifications of the sections within the *Speculum*. At least two annotators occasionally wrote at greater length, but these longer annotations are relatively infrequent. Given that some sermons are heavily annotated in multiple hands, while others go completely unannotated, it would be interesting to track which sermons get the most attention from annotators.

Though Conrad's writings predominate within this volume, there is some evidence that the manuscript was crafted for a Dominican audience, who would have prized it as a preaching aid and for its pronounced Marian focus. None of the three sermons Conrad wrote for the feast of St. Francis have been included here, nor does this manuscript include any of the three sermons Conrad wrote for the feast of St. Clare. Among the sermons in this volume that Schneyer does not attribute to Conrad, the six sermons whose authors are known are all Dominicans: Aldobrandinus de Cavalcantibus, Antonius Azaro of Parma, and Martinus Polonus, were rough contemporaries of Conrad and, like him, probably produced their sermon cycles in the second half of the thirteenth century. The Dominican order claimed a particular affinity with Mary and was active in promoting Marian devotion among the laity in the late Middle Ages. Between sermons for Marian feast days and the *Speculum*, a sizeable and continuous portion of the manuscript is devoted to Mary. Though the manuscript's presentation of Conrad's sermons largely follows their cyclical order, his sermons on Mary are presented separately and in a group (ff. 119-131v) immediately preceding the *Speculum*, which is followed by a Marian sermon by Antonius Azaro. The manuscript contains eight anonymous sermons, four of which bear no resemblance to any sermons listed by Schneyer.

## BINDING

Of significant interest is the intact medieval chained binding of this manuscript. The custom of fastening books to their shelves was common at an early period. When a book was given to a medieval library, it was often necessary to install a chain and a pair of clasps. A great number of these medieval chained libraries have been dispersed, and often the chains have been removed from the books, so that now very few examples are extant. Chained bindings are of enduring interest as testimonies to the dichotomy of medieval libraries with their conflicting interests in value and accessibility of books.

Examples of fifteenth-century German chained bindings on the market in recent years include a Peter Lombard of 1491, sold at Christie's, New York, 22 October 1987, lot 53 (\$110,000), a manuscript of Aquinas sold at Sotheby's, 1 December 1998, lot 85 (£58,000), and finally Nicolas de Lyra's *Postillae super Prophetas* sold in London, Sotheby's, 6 December 2001, lot 58.

## LITERATURE

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

(Pseudo-)Bonaventura, *Sermones de sanctis de quibus et eorum* (Paris: Jodocus Badius Ascensius, 1521); includes the *Speculum beatae Mariae virginis* at the end:

[http://books.google.com/books?id=qoJCAAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs\\_ge\\_summary\\_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false](http://books.google.com/books?id=qoJCAAAAcAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false)

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<http://users.bart.nl/~roestb/franciscan/>

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<http://www.intratext.com/ixt/ENG0025/>

Einbanddatenbank (EBDB - Database of Book Bindings)

<http://www.bsb-muenchen.de/index.php?id=177&type=0&L=3>

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Jenny Weston, "The Last of the Great Chained Libraries"

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