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## ST DOMINIC'S LETTER TO THE NUNS IN MADRID

BY  
SIMON TUGWELL OP

Until the discovery, in a Paris manuscript, of the Latin text of St Dominic's letter to the nuns in Madrid, Dominican historians were dependent on two Spanish texts of the letter: one printed by Serafin Miguel and subsequently reproduced, for instance, in Mamachi's *Annales*<sup>1</sup>, the other published by Hernando de Castillo<sup>2</sup>. Hernando's text was translated into Latin by Tomás Malvenda, and this Latin retroversion was adopted universally<sup>3</sup> until Balme edited a genuine Latin text from Paris, *Bibliothèque Nationale lat.* 4348<sup>4</sup>. Since then, not surprisingly, the Spanish tradition has been largely ignored. There is little doubt that the letter was originally written in Latin; we have the formal testimony of Hernando to this effect, and there is no reason to dispute it<sup>5</sup>. However, as I have shown in my study of *The Nine Ways of Prayer*<sup>6</sup>, the Spanish tradition can sometimes shed light on the Latin text of early Dominican documents, and I believe that such is the case with regard to St Dominic's letter.

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<sup>1</sup> Serafin Miguel, *Historia de Santo Domingo, Valencia 1705*, p. 294; T. M. Mamachi, *Annales O.P.*, Rome 1756, Appendix 60 (doc. 43).

<sup>2</sup> *Primera Parte de la Historia General de Santo Domingo, Valencia 1587*, p. 95. I have not been able to use the first edition of this work.

<sup>3</sup> T. Malvenda, *Annales O.P.*, Naples 1627, p. 295; Mamachi, *op. cit.* Appendix 60-1. For other reproductions of Malvenda's retroversion, see V. J. Koudelka, *Monumenta Diplomatica S. Dominici (MOPH XXV)*, Rome 1966, p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> PP. Balme and Collomb, *Cartulaire de St Dominique III, Paris 1901*, pp. 79-80 (document 99).

<sup>5</sup> H. de Castillo, *loc. cit.* Cf. M. H. Vicaire, *Histoire de St Dominique*, 2nd ed. Paris 1982, II p. 122<sup>91</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> "The Nine Ways of Prayer of St Dominic: A Textual Study and Critical Edition", *Mediaeval Studies* 47 (1985) pp. 1-124.

Three manuscripts of the Latin text are known:

A Paris, B.N. lat. 4348 ff. 155<sup>v</sup>-156<sup>r</sup> (saec. xiv)

B Rome, AGOP XIV lib. LII f. 87 (saec. xviii)

C Rome, AGOP XI 13080 (saec. xviii).

Both B and C are copied from the compilation made for Nicholas Rosell in 1357. B is expressly taken from f. 248 of an original belonging to the convent of Barcelona (B ff. 76<sup>v</sup>, 78<sup>v</sup>). C claims to be taken 'ex autographis', also from f. 248. The manuscript was not Rosell's autograph, but it seems certain that both B and C derive directly from the manuscript written on Rosell's behalf in Avignon and then taken to Barcelona.

A forms part of a collection which is very similar to and obviously related to that of Rosell. The manuscript itself belonged to the convent of Aix-en-Provence<sup>7</sup>.

It is clear, then, that our three Latin manuscripts are all closely connected, and in fact the text they give of St Dominic's letter is almost identical — there are in reality even fewer divergences than one would infer from the apparatus criticus to the edition in V.J. Koudelka's valuable *Monumenta Diplomatica*<sup>8</sup>.

I give here the text as found in A, with all the variants in B and C:

Litera beati Dominici missa monialibus de Maiorico in Yspania. Frater Dominicus magister predicatorum dilecte priorisse totique conuentui monialium de Maiorico salutem et de die in diem melioratum<sup>9</sup> Multum gaudemus et gratias deo agimus propter fauorem uestre sancte conuersationis et quod deus  
 5 de huius mundi fetore uos liberauit. Pugnate filie cum antiquo aduersario  
 ieiuniis instanter quia non coronabitur nisi qui legitime certauerit. Quia  
 usque modo locum non habuistis in quo uestram religionem seruaretis, modo  
 non potestis excusari quod non habeatis per dei gratiam satis ydonea edificia  
 in quibus religio conseruetur. Volo de cetero ut in locis interdictis, scilicet  
 10 in refectorio, in dormitorio et oratorio silentium teneatur et in omnibus aliis  
 ordo uester custodiatur. Nulla egrediatur portam<sup>10</sup> et nullus ingrediatur nisi

<sup>7</sup> On the Latin manuscripts, see T. Käppeli, "Cronache Domenicane di Giacomo Domenech OP in una Raccolta Miscellanea del Card. Niccolò Rosell", AFP 14 (1944) pp. 5-42; Koudelka, op. cit. p. xxvii.

<sup>8</sup> Op. cit. pp. 126-7 (document 125).

<sup>9</sup> Balme, followed by Koudelka, reads melioramentum. The MS clearly has meliora<sup>m</sup>; the letter beneath the superscript M is not clear, but it looks like a badly formed T. In any case, it is likely that melioratum was intended.

<sup>10</sup> Koudelka prints per portam, without noting any variants. In A there is a stroke before portam, but it is certainly not intended to represent per; and there is no trace of per in B or C. Balme read A, as I do, as having only portam.

episcopus uel aliquis prelatus causa predicandi uel uisitandi. Non disciplinis  
 et uigiliis parcatis. Sitis priorisse uestre obedientes. Nolite adinuicem con-  
 15 fabulari nec tempus uestrum in fabulationibus expendatur. Et quia uobis  
 fratrū recipiendi uel intromittendi mulieres aliquas habeat potestatem nisi  
 priorissa tantum cum consilio sui conuentus. Preterea fratri karissimo nostro,  
 scilicet fratri Mameti, precipimus qui multum laborauit et ad istum sanctis-  
 20 simum statum uos copulauit quod disponat uos et ordinet ut uidebitur ei  
 expedire in omnibus, ut religiosissime et sanctissime uos habeatis. Tamen  
 damus ei potestatem uos uisitandi corrigendique et priorissam remouendi  
 si opus fuerit cum maioris partis consensu monialium et licentiam ei conce-  
 dimus ut possit uobiscum in aliquibus si ei uisum fuerit dispensare.

- 1 beati: sancti B
- 3 melioratum: meliorari BC
- 4 fauorem: fauorem (feruorem) C
- 6 ieiuniis: ieiuniis et orationibus Ccorr  
 instanter: instantes BC
- 10 teneatur: teneatis BC
- 12 aliquis: alias BC
- 14 expendatur: expendatis BC

Of the medieval Spanish translation of this letter three manuscripts are known to me:

- X Montserrat cod. 1118 f. 1 (c. 1500)<sup>11</sup>
- Y Caleruega, Monastero de S. Domingo, cajón 12 no. 59<sup>12</sup>
- Z Valencia, Bibl. Univ. 821 (2382) pp. 125-6 (sacc. xviii).

Z is explicitly a copy made from Y by the prior of Aranda de Duero, Baltasar de Quintana, for the use of Serafín Miguel (who printed the text in his *Historia*). Y contains the comment: 'fue sacada en Madrid para las dichosas religiosas de Caliruega día de las onze mill virgines 1551'. The provenance of X is obscure, but the translation is in all essentials the same. Since X is our oldest witness, I give here the text of X, noting the variants from Y:

<sup>11</sup> I am grateful to Hilarius Barth OP for drawing my attention to this manuscript and to Bernabé Dalmau OSB of Montserrat for sending me a photocopy of the relevant page and for checking my transcript against the rather faded original.

<sup>12</sup> Printed in Eduardo Martínez, *Collección Diplomática del Real Convento de Santo Domingo de Caleruega, Vergara 1931*, pp. 279-80 (document 215). I am grateful to the archivist of Caleruega, Sor M. Carmen González OP, for sending me two photocopies of the manuscript.

Fray Domingo maestro de los predicadores, a la madre priora y a todo el convento de las sorores de Madrid, salud y meioramiento de la vida de dia en dia vos de nuestro señor dios. Mucho nos gozamos y le damos gracias por el fauor de vuestra sancta conuersacion, por que dios vos libro del hedor de  
 5 aqueste mundo. Hijas pelead con el adversario antigo con ayunos, con orationes continuada mente, por que no sera coronado sy no aquel que legitima mente pelear. Y por que asta qui no teniades lugar de guardar vuestra religion, ya no podreys aver escusacion que no teneys por gracia de dios hedeficios en los quales la religion sea guardada. Quiero que de aqui adelante el silencio  
 10 sea guardado en los lugares entredichos, conuiene a saber, en el refectorio y en el dormitorio y en el oratorio y en todas las otras cosas que la nuestra orden sea guardada. Nynguna no salga fuera de la puerta e nynguno entre dentro, sy no obispo o algun prelado por causa de predicar o de visitar. No perdoneys las disciplinas ny las vigiliyas, y sed obedientes a la vuestra priora. No querays  
 15 ablar las vnas de las otras, ny el tiempo vuestro sea despendido en ablar ny en conseios. Por quanto no vos podemos acorrer en las cosas temporales, no queremos encargarvos ny agrauaros que algun frayle tenga poderio de rrecebir ny de meter dentro algunas mugeres, sy no la priora tan sola mente con conseio de vuestro convento. Y mas mandamos a nuestro hermano mucho amado  
 20 fray Mamerto que trabaie mucho por ayuntarvos a este santo estado, que ordene a vos otras e disponga y dispense asy como viere que cumple en todas las cosas, por que muy religiosa mente vos ayays. Pero damosle poderio de visitarvos y de corregirvos y aun de quitar la priora sy fuere menester, con consentimiento de la mayor parte de las sorores, y otorgamosle licencia que pueda con vos otras dispensar algunas cosas, sy viere que pertenecen.

2 la vida: vida Y

7 qui: aqui Y

11 y<sup>1</sup>: om. Y

dormitorio: dormitorio y claostra Y

en el<sup>2</sup>: om. Y

12 nynguna no salga: no salga ninguna Y

e: om. Y

14 las<sup>2</sup>: a las Y

15 las vnas de las otras: vnas de otras

16 conseios: consejas Y (*recte*)

20 que<sup>2</sup>: y Y

21 a: con Y

At line 16 Y's *consejas* is clearly preferable to X's *conseios*: it corresponds better to the Latin *fabulationibus* and it makes better sense. Otherwise X seems to be closer to the Latin. In line 11 Y's *y claostra* looks like an interpolation, and the insertion is presumably responsible for the mild rewording of the rest of the sentence. In line 12 X agrees with the word-order of the Latin, while Y offers a more idiomatic

Spanish phrase. In lines 20-1 the substitution of *y* for *que* and *con* for *a* takes the text even further away from the Latin than that of X.

There is at least one place where the Spanish text can only be regarded as a mistranslation: at line 20 *que trabaie* gives a much less plausible sense than *qui laborauit*, and the further changes in Y show that the initial mistranslation left a text which was felt to be unsatisfactory. This is confirmation that the Latin text that we have is at least closer to the original than the Spanish text.

The most interesting variant is at line 5 of the Spanish: *con orationes* is attested in X and Y, but in the Latin tradition it is found only in the words added by the corrector in C, *et orationibus*. This suggests that the variants noted in C may derive from some other manuscript of the letter, in which case they ought to be taken seriously.

The Spanish text otherwise supports A consistently against BC. It does not support C's other recorded variant: *feruorem* in line 4 of the Latin.

Finally there is the evidence of Hernando de Castillo, who claims to have made his new Spanish translation on the basis of the original Latin text, still preserved in his day in the monastery in Madrid<sup>18</sup>:

Fray Domingo maestro de los frayles Predicadores, a nuestra amada Priora y a todo el conuento de las Sorores de Madrid, salud y aumento de virtud. Mucho nos alegramos, y damos gracias a Dios por el feruor de vuestra santa conuersacion, y porque el Señor os saco del hedor deste mundo. Pelead hijas  
5 contra vuestro enemigo antiguo con oraciones y ayunos sin cesar: Porque no sera coronado sino quien bien pelear. Hasta agora no auia casa acomodada para guardar las cosas de vuestra religion: mas ya no podeys pretender escusa, pues por la gracia de Dios teneys muy bastantes edificios donde puede auer toda obseruancia. Y assi quiero que de aqui adelante se guarde mucho el  
10 silencio en los lugares que de orden estan reseruados, como es el choro el refetorio y dormitorio, y en todas las otras cosas se viua conforme a vuestra constitucion. Ninguna salga de la puerta, ni persona seglar entre dentro sino fuere Obispo o algun prelado, a predicar, o para la visita. No dexeys las disciplinas, ni las vigiliass: y sed obedientes a vuestra Priora. No os ocupeys en  
15 hablar vnas con otras, ni perdays el tiempo en platicas escusadas. Y pues no os podemos socorrer en vuestras necessidades temporales, no queremos agrauaros, ni consentir que ningun frayle tenga autoridad para recibir nouicias,

<sup>18</sup> Dominic "escruiuo a las monjas vna carta que hasta en nuestros tiempos se guardaua originalmente en aquella sancta casa, y el traslado della para si alguno desseare leerla me parecio poner aqui, fielmente sacada del latin en que se escruiuo": H. de Castillo, loc. cit.

20 sino sola la priora con consejo de su conuento. Tambien mandamos a nuestro carissimo hermano que en essa casa ha trabajado mucho, y os ha juntado en esse sanctissimo estado, que lo disponga, concierte y ordene, como le pareciere que mas cumple para que viuays sanctissima y religiosamente. Y damosle poder y facultad para visitaros y corregiros, y para remouer a la priora, (si fuere necesario) con consentimiento de la mayor parte de las monjas: y para dispensar en algunas cosas si le pareciere. Valet in Christo.

In line 2 of Hernando (= H) *augmento de virtud* is a rather meagre rendering of *de die in diem melioratum* or *meliorari*, and cannot be used to decide between the two Latin readings. But H does elsewhere occasionally reduce his original in this way<sup>14</sup>, and we have no reason to suppose that the Latin manuscript in Madrid offered a text radically different from that of ABC, and the support given by XY to A is not in any way counteracted by H.

In line 3 H supports C's alternative reading, *feruorem*, against the united testimony of ABCXY. There is nothing implausible about this reading, and indeed it is in itself surely preferable to *fauorem*. If it is the correct reading, then ABCXY attest a corruption which must have arisen early in the transmission of the letter, and they are also shown to derive from a common original. Conversely the alternative reading in C is found to be authoritative, which raises the question whether the scribe of C and its corrector did not have access to the original manuscript in Madrid as well as to Rosell's compilation.

In line 5 H supports XY's addition of *con orationes*. There is no indication that H used the medieval Spanish version of the letter, so we may infer that the extra words were present in the original Latin, which once again reveals the authority of the correction in C, which can be regarded therefore as preserving the Latin which underlies the Spanish text in XY. This shows that the tradition underlying ABC (apart from the corrections in C) is more corrupt than that underlying XY. The fact that H has *con oraciones y ayunos*, where XY have *con ayunos, con oraciones*, need not bother us, as H characteristically reverses the order of such pairs of nouns<sup>15</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. the translation of the Bull Cum qui recipit (K o u d e l k a, op. cit. pp. 151-2) in Castillo, ed. cit. p. 139: predicandi officium ad quod deputatus est is reduced to predicar.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. ed. cit. p. 125: in the translation of the spurious Bull of Confirmation (K o u d e l k a, op. cit. p. 186) gubernatione et protectione becomes protection y gouierno; p. 148: in Cum qui recipit (K o u d e l k a p. 151) fructum et finem be-



Also in line 5 H clearly supports *instanter* AXY against *instantes* BC.

In line 9 H's *se garde* appears to support *teneatur* AXY against *teneatis* BC; but before we attach too much significance to this we must note that in line 15 his *perdays* seems to support *expendatis* BC against *expendatur* AXY. H does sometimes change verbal forms like this<sup>16</sup>, so his version would not be surprising whichever reading his original had in both places. It is perhaps fair to suggest that there is more reason for rewriting in line 15 (where we have already had one closely connected verb in the second person plural) than in line 9, but the matter really has to be settled more on the authority of the other manuscripts. The agreement of AXY surely outweighs the other evidence.

In lines 10-11 H has rearranged the nouns once again, which need not disturb us. But it is clear that he does not support Y's addition of *y claostra*.

In line 13 H backs *aliquis* AXY against *alias* BC.

In line 15 H shows that the XY translation *ablar(las)vnas de(las) otras* is a misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the Latin *adinuicem confabulari*, not a genuine variant.

In line 19 H does not give the name of Dominic's *frater karissimus*. The presence of the name in ABCXY shows that it at least entered the tradition early on. XY in fact have the name wrong (*Mamerto*), but it presumably derives from the correct form of the name given in ABC (*Mameti*); there is little reason to suppose that the name got into the Spanish and Latin traditions independently. However there is no imaginable reason why H should omit the name, whereas it is not unlikely that someone should feel the need to insert it; and there is no inherent difficulty in St Dominic referring to his brother without naming him. So it seems reasonably safe to follow H on this point.

In lines 19-20 H confirms our suspicion that the Spanish version in XY is due to mistranslation rather than to an authentic variant.

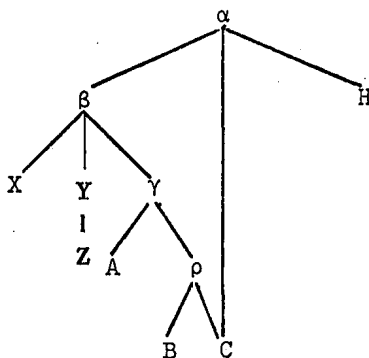
In line 24 H again has a unique reading: he ends the letter with the formula, *Valete in Christo*, which is not found in any of the surviving manuscripts. There is no reason why it should not be genuine.

Our survey of the evidence reveals a completely coherent picture of the transmission of St Dominic's letter, which can be displayed in a stemma:

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comes fin y fruto; p. 200: in Bl. Jordan's Prayer misere et infelici becomes infeliz y miserable and uiuificare et sanare becomes sanarla y viuificarla.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. ed. cit. p. 200: in Jordan's Prayer gaudemus becomes es grande gozo.



There seems good reason to believe that  $\alpha$  is in fact the original letter, sent by St Dominic to the nuns.  $\beta$  must already have suffered the corruption of *feruorem* to *fauorem* and the addition of the name of Mames.  $\gamma$  must already have lost *et orationibus*.  $\rho$  is the lost manuscript of Rosell.

On this basis it is possible to re-edit the text of the letter; if we take the Spanish evidence into account, we have to opt for several readings not espoused by Koudelka in his edition. This does not, of course, make any vast difference. But, since this letter is the sole personal document we possess from St Dominic, Dominican *pietas* may perhaps be forgiven a certain fussiness in its regard.

#### LETTER TO THE NUNS IN MADRID: CRITICAL EDITION

Frater Dominicus magister predicatorum dilecte priorisse totique conuentui monialium de Maiorico salutem et de die in diem melioratum.

Multum gaudemus et gratias deo agimus propter feruorem uestre sancte conuersationis et quod deus de huius mundi fetore uos liberauit. Pugnate  
 5 filie cum antiquo aduersario ieiuniis et orationibus instanter, quia non coronabitur nisi qui legitime certauerit.

Quia usque modo locum non habuistis in quo uestram religionem serua-  
 retis, modo non potestis excusari quod non habeatis per dei gratiam satis  
 ydonea edificia in quibus religio conseruetur. Volo de cetero ut in locis interd-  
 10 dictis, scilicet in refectorio, in dormitorio et oratorio silentium teneatur, et  
 in omnibus aliis ordo uester custodiatur. Nulla egrediatur portam et nullus  
 ingrediatur nisi episcopus uel aliquis prelatus causa predicandi uel uisitandi.  
 Non disciplinis et uigiliis parcatis. Sitis priorisse uestre obedientes. Nolite  
 adinuicem confabulari nec tempus uestrum in fabulationibus expendatur.

15 Et quia uobis subuenire in temporalibus non possumus, nolumus uos

onerare quod aliquis fratrum recipiendi uel intromittendi mulieres aliquas habeat potestatem nisi priorissa tantum cum consilio conuentus.

20 Preterea fratri karissimo nostro precipimus, qui multum laborauit et ad istum sanctissimum statum uos copulauit, quod disponat uos et ordinet ut uidebitur ei expedire in omnibus, ut religiosissime et sanctissime uos habeatis. Tamen damus ei potestatem uos uisitandi corrigendique et priorissam remouendi, si opus fuerit, cum maioris partis consensu monialium. Et licentiam ei concedimus ut possit uobiscum in aliquibus si ei uisum fuerit dispensare.

Valete in Christo.

#### APPARATUS CRITICUS

- 2 melioratum AXY: meliorari BC, H = ?
- 3 feruorem H: fauorem ABXY, fauorem (feruorem) C
- 5 et orationibus C<sup>corr</sup> XYH: *om.* ABC  
instanter AXYH: instantes BC
- 10 dormitorio ABCXH: dormitorio y claostra Y  
teneatur AXY(H): teneatis BC
- 12 aliquis AXYH: alias BC
- 14 expendatur AXY: expendatis BC(H)
- 18 karissimo H: karissimo scilicet fratri Mameti ABCXY
- 24 ualete in Christo H: *om.* ABCXY