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MISCELLANEA

I

HENRY OF PROVINS, O.P. 'S COMPARISON OF THE DOMINICAN AND FRANCISCAN ORDERS WITH THE "ORDER" OF MATRIMONY*

BY

NICOLE BÉRIOU AND DAVID L. D'AVRAY

Sermons on the text *Nuptiae factae sunt in Chana Galilaeae* (Joh. 2, 1) are a rich source for the history of medieval marriage doctrines, and an example of the genre is a sermon by Henry of Provins, O.P., preserved on fols. 82^{ra}-83^{vb} of MS. B.N. lat. 16481, a collection of Paris sermons of the year 1272-3¹. The sermon was preached at the church of Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois, on Sunday 15th January 1273 (second Sunday after Epiphany,—a favourite occasion for sermons dealing with mar-

* On Henry of Provins O.P., see Th. Kaeppli O.P., *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi*, II, 213. — We have adopted several suggestions of Père L.-J. Bataillon, whom we thank.

¹ The manuscript belonged to Pierre de Limoges, who compiled the sermons. Detailed studies of this collection (in the context of a *thèse* on preaching in Paris at the end of the thirteenth century), and of marriage preaching, are being prepared by Nicole Bériou and David L. d'Avray respectively. For B. N. Lat. 16481, see too N. Bériou, *La prédication au béguinage de Paris pendant l'année liturgique 1272-1273*, *Recherches Augustiniennes*, vol. XIII, 1978, p. 105-229. For the incipits and authors in this manuscript, see J.-B. Schneyer, *Repertorium der lateinischen Sermones des Mittelalters für die Zeit von 1150-1350*, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters*, XLIII, Heft 4 (1972), p. 665 and 686-694. The sermon in question is number 61 in Schneyer's list. (We wish to acknowledge that we would not have considered this sermon in the context of marriage preaching without the help of Professor Schneyer, who most generously made his magnificent alphabetical collection of sermon *initia* available).

riage), "post prandium"². It is an instance of the positive treatment which marriage tends to receive in this genre of sermons. The passage to which we wish to draw attention in this note is particularly interesting in that it directly compares the « order » of marriage with the Dominican and Franciscan orders. Furthermore the comparison, so far as it goes, is in favour of marriage. Coming from a Dominican preacher this may well strike us a considerable concession. The passage is worth quoting in full and in context. The italics are ours.

Pauci sunt hic coniugati, ideo breviter transibo, licet cogitassem profundius loqui de nuptiis; tamen ad presens tantum videamus. Tria sunt genera nuptiarum³. Prime sunt gaudiose, « ioioses »⁴; secunde gratiose; tertie gloriose. Primo dico sunt « ioioses », et iste sunt quas videtis tota die per istos vicos. Ibi enim sunt cantilene et viellatores, et invitant amicos suos, et faciunt magnum festum. Unde dicitur de Laban, quod fecit nuptias et vocavit amicos; et hoc est bonum dum tamen non fiat ad superbiam, vel pompam diaboli seculi (*sic pro* diaboli vel seculi?) sed propter honorem tanti sacramenti, quia multum magnum est sacramentum huius matrimonii, et hoc est unus ordo [et hoc est unus ordo] qui modo non est statutus, sed a principio mundi. *Vos videtis quod noster ordo et fratrum minorum non est diu quod incepit; et similiter alii ordines post incarnationem inceperunt; sed iste ordo incepit a principio mundi. Plus, quidam homo mortalis de Hyspania fecit nostrum ordinem; quidam (fol. 82^{va}) homo de Lumbardia ordinem fratrum minorum; sed istum ordinem fecit ipse deus, et non de novo, sed a principio mundi...*

MS. B. N. Lat. 16481 fol. 82^{rb}-82^{va}.

² See the rubric on fol. 82^{ra}: « Sermo fratris Henrici de Provinis Predicatorum ad Sanctum-Germanum eodem die post prandium » (« eodem die », i. e. the same day as the precedent sermon, fol. 80^{vb}; « dominica secunda post Epiphaniam ad beginas in mane »). It is one of the 9 sermons delivered by various preachers at Saint-Germain-l'Auxerrois in the liturgical year of 1272-1273, and preserved in Lat. 16481. The same manuscript (fol. 85^{va}-87^{vb}) contains another sermon preached on the same day by André « de Caro Loco », at Saint-Leufroi, in which a similar point is made (He speaks of matrimony as « hanc religionem vel ordinem », fol. 87^{ra}).

³ *Pauci ... nuptiarum*. It would be possible to punctuate this passage differently. *Pauci sunt hic coniugati*: this proves that the preacher had prepared his sermon with married couples in mind. It may be noted that a little further on in the sermon he uses the words: « Modo respicite vos qui iam diu fuistis in matrimonio... » (fol. 82^{va}).

⁴ The *reportator* had the habit of noting, when he heard the sermon, certain French words which he might or might not retain in his final version. In any case this sermon was delivered in French.

In spite of the gallicised latin it is an intriguing passage. Nevertheless the basing idea is not unique. It seems, indeed, to have been something of a *topos*, at least in the thirteenth century. There is for instance the following passage from MS. B.N. Lat. 16482. Like Lat. 16481, this manuscript belonged to Pierre de Limoges⁵, and the passage comes from *distinctiones* which he himself compiled⁶. The passage makes it even clearer than it is in the passage from Henry of Provins that "ordo" in this context means "religious order" in the modern sense, not "order" in the weaker or more general sense of "a regular way of life"⁷.

Hic loquendo de matrimonio, nota primo exemplum de burgensi cui [***]⁸ et quem monachum vocavit, ostendens ei quod esset monachus de ordine matrimonii. Sic igitur matrimonium ordo est. Et notandum est quod matrimonium est ordo sanctus bene observantibus. Secundo dicendum est de punctis huius ordinis. Ordo matrimonii est venerabilis primo ratione instituentis. Si enim ordo predicatorum venerabilis est quia fuit institutus a beato Dominico, ergo multo fortius ordo matrimonii, quia institutus est a deo...

MS B. N. Lat. 16482 fol. 102^v^b

Once more, then, we have an explicit comparison between the Order of Preachers and the Order of Matrimony. There are other passages which, without singling out the Dominicans, convey the same general

⁵ See L. Delisle, *Le Cabinet des manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, tome II (Paris, 1874), pp. 167-168, and M. Mabille, *Pierre de Limoges, copiste de manuscrits*, *Scriptorium* 24 (1970), p. 45-47.

⁶ Cf. Schneyer, *Repertorium*, Heft 4, no. 68 in the "Petrus de Limoges" list, p. 697; and Heft 2, no. 43 under Gerardus de Remis, p. 183 (note that there appears to be a printer's error in the reference given for no. 43: for "f. 103" read "f. 102" (recto b)). The passage in question belongs to a separate *distinctio* in the section devoted to "Matrimonium". Pierre de Limoges, as is his habit, has indicated the beginning of a new text by putting the scriptural incipit of the sermon from which it is taken in larger and thicker minuscules than the rest of the text. There is no reason to think that this text is by G. de Reims, the author of the text before it (fols. 102^{rb}-102^{va}: «Nuptie. G. de Remis. Collatio facta in scolis»). *En passant*, one may note here that P. de Limoges had an original way of compiling *Distinctiones*, in that he used extracts from contemporary sermons which had actually been preached. See N. Bériou, art. cit.

⁷ Cf. D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England* (Cambridge, 1940), p. 28, n. 1.

⁸ A blank space is left after *cui* in ms.

message. There are remarks in Robert de Sorbon's delightful sermon or treatise on marriage which closely parallel the passage just quoted (and indeed give us the gist of the passage which has dropped out of the latter's text):

Et est exemplum de burgense maritato qui stultum reputavit illum qui dixit ei: « Salve monache », non advertens quod ille intelligeret de ordine matrimonii (...). Honorabile est conjugium propter septem. Primo ratione instituentis ordinem conjugii, sicut sunt alii ordines ratione sanctorum ipsos instituentium, sicut ordo nigrorum monachorum propter beatum Benedictum, qui instituit illum, ordo Cisterciensis propter beatum Bernardum et sic de aliis. Sed Dominus, qui instituit hunc ordinem, nobilior est omni creatura, imo tota Trinitas instituit⁹.

The comparison is made in more general terms by Guibert de Tournai, in one of his sermons *ad conjugatas*:

Non intelligunt multi honorem conjugii, quod dominus per se ipsum et in paradyso constituit, et sua presentia nuptis voluit honorare, cum alii ordines [extra sensus] sive status extra paradysum voluptatis et per homines fuerint instituti...

MS. B. N. Lat. 15943 fol. CXLIII^{ra}

Here, as so often, Guibert is probably following Jacques de Vitry, who uses much the same wording in his second *ad conjugatos* sermon:

Quantus sit honor coniugii seu matrimonialis sacramenti patet ex hoc quod dominus ordinem coniugalem per se in paradiso instituit, cum alii ordines per homines et extra paradysum voluptatis postmodum fuerint instituti.

MS. B. N. Lat. 17509 fol. 137^{va}

When these passages are taken together, they lead us to think that the idea of matrimony as the oldest "religious" order, founded not by a saint but by God himself, deserves to be called of the commonplaces of thirteenth-century marriage preaching. It is to be expected that more examples of this *topos* will be found in marriage sermons of the period (though cases of dominicans who stress the seniority of matrimony to

⁹ B. Hauréau, *Notices et extraits de quelques manuscrits latins de la Bibliothèque Nationale*, tome I (Paris, 1890), p. 189. (A close textual comparison of Robert of Sorbon's sermon/treatise on marriage with the text from which the passage beginning « Hic loquendo de matrimonio » ... (*v. sup.*) was taken, might yield interesting results).

their own order are probably not so numerous). The history of medieval marriage preaching¹⁰ is to a great extent the history of its *topoi*, and this particular *topos* harmonizes with the general tone of the others, which convey an attitude to marriage that was on the whole benign. It fits well with the commonplaces which give other reasons for commending marriage, or explain the different functions it performs, or even set out the ways in which woman is more noble than man. It is true that the marriage sermons also lay down strict norms for the behaviour of husband and wife, but they exalted them as an order of Christian society. In fact the antithesis is false: the exaltation of marriage and the emphasis on the rules that bound it were complementary. The notion of marriage as an "order" expressed this rather neatly. When the preachers spoke of marriage as a religious order in the strict sense they did not perhaps mean to be taken *au pied de la lettre*, but the passages we have quoted must nevertheless have been flattering and encouraging to laymen and women.

¹⁰ It may be noted in passing that marriage sermons were not necessarily and probably not normally sermons preached at marriages.