

The confraternity of Saint Jerome and Saint Francis was founded in Siena (Tuscany) on 26 October 1427, modeled on Florence's confraternity of San Niccolò del Ceppo. As in the case of many similar lay fraternities of the Middle Ages, its primary objective was the assistance within a religious framework to the poor of the city. The activity of the confraternity was connected to Siena's hospitals, first the *Spedale di santa Croce nella Castellaccia*, then the *Ospedale di santa Maria della Scala*.

The ordinances were formulated at some unspecified time ("doppo alcuno spatio di tempo", f. 2) after the foundation. The material writing of this manuscript happened after 1434, because it is written that the ordinances were first approved by the bishop of Siena, Carlo da Gnoimo (1427–1444), and then, "eight years later", by Pope Eugenius IV (1431–1447) during a stay in Florence. The manuscript was physically handled at every meeting of the confraternity, as one or more *capitoli* (rules) were read aloud.

ff. 1–3: presentation of the fraternity, with its three pillars (*vita contemplativa, vita activa, vita morale*, ff. 1v-2) and the concise description of the circumstances that brought to the fraternity's foundation (ff. 1r-v) and regulation (ff. 2-3). "Al nome della sanctissi / ma et individua / trinità ... concessione / alloro facta si manife / starà".

ff. 3–20v: ordinances, divided in 12 chapters (*capitoli*), regarding the mores of the confraternity's members; the acceptance of novices; the modalities of meetings; the visits to the sick members of the confraternity; the election of the *rettore* (a cleric supervisor) and of the confraternity's officials; the collection and distribution of alms. All brothers were bound by a vow of secrecy, and every year each one of them could be excluded from the confraternity if at least two-thirds of the brothers agreed. "Capitolo primo. / Dell'onestà et buono co / stume ... sca / ndalo alla compagnia, o / vero ad alcuni dela com / pagnia".

ff. 20v–21: transcription of supplication for licence to elect a confessor, and papal approval. "Supplicant Sanctitatis / vestre Beatissime / pater ... In pre / sentia domini nostri pape. C. Anniven."

ff. 21r–v: Model for the administration of the last rites. "La forma della absolu / tione al ponto della mor / te ordinata in concistoro ... In nomine pa+ / tris et fi+lii et spiritui+ / sancti amen.

ff. 21v–24: evening office. "Offitio della sera ... si vada / a posare per infino all'o / ra del matutino con si / lenzio".

ff. 24–25: morning office. "Offitio del / la mattina ... compar sit laudatio. / Amen".

ff. 25v–27: originally left blank. 25v, 26, 27r-v still blank. On 26v: inventory of some possessions of the fraternity, dated 1548.

Parchment, i+27 leaves (contemporary foliation on the top right corner of each folio, modern foliation on the bottom right corner); 280 X 195 (170 X 125) mm. Collation: i-2⁸-1⁶-1⁵, with catchwords in the centre of the lower margin of the page. 2 columns of 27 lines, pale pencil ruling. Damaged by wormholes, especially in the initial and final leaves.

Written by one gothic hand. 2-line initials, alternately in red and blue penwork, with ornament of the other color (supplication initial at f. 20v is 3-line). Capital letters in the text filled with yellow. Titles of rules, absolution, evening- and morning office written in red. In the absolution, three red-ink crosses interval the words of the benedictions. In the offices, a number of capital letters is colored in red/blue, and written in red are the words describing the liturgy to be performed. Pencil *maniculae* at f. 4, 8, 9v. Corrections and additions by the scribe at ff. 7, 13v, 18; by other hands at ff. 4, 11.

Contemporary binding of wooden boards covered with brown leather; four bands; ten bosses, five for each cover, five of them missing; of two strap-and-pin fastenings, only the pins remain on the lower cover.

Written at Siena after 1434. Bought by Birkbeck College in the first half of 1959, probably at an auction.

Secundo folio: [mille CCCC] XXVII la nocte preceden[te]

Two records relating to this item are to be found in the *Schoenberg Database of Manuscripts*: Schoenberg_4088 and Schoenberg_11883.

Dr Giacomo Giudici, June 2017

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