



# The Reception of St Jerome in a Late-Medieval Sermon Collection by Johannes Herolt

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## INTRODUCTION

St. Jerome became one of the most significant authorities in the Middle Ages.<sup>1</sup> He was an *auctoritas* in the truest sense whose extracts, quotations and name were widespread in many sermon books. One of them is *Sermones Discipuli de tempore et de sanctis cum Promptuario exemplorum et de miraculis Beatae Mariae Virginis*. It was written in the 15th century by Johannes Herolt (d. 1468),<sup>2</sup> a German Dominican who spent most of his life in the convent of Saint Catherine in Nuremberg as confessor, prior, and general vicar. Herolt's employ-

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- 1 During his lifetime, Jerome did not have as much influence as he did in the Middle Ages; not even close, according to Cain, *The Letters of Jerome*, 3. Jerome's popularity increased in the Carolingian times in the 8th–9th centuries with a growing interest in biblical commentaries. In addition to Jerome's works on Scripture, many of his other texts were considered a guide for leading a monastic life. A significant role in the widespread use of Jerome's quotations in the late Middle Ages was played by Pope Boniface VIII, who in 1295 gave "official recognition when he instructed the faithful to celebrate Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory the Great and Jerome as preeminent Fathers of the Church"; see Kaczynski, "The Authority of the Fathers," 2–3; "Edition, Translation, and Exegesis," 171–85.
- 2 Cruel, *Geschichte der deutschen Predigt in Mittelalter*; "Herolt, Johannes," in *Deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters*, 425–29; Kaeppli, "Iohannes Herolt (Herold)," 450–56.

ment of Jerome's<sup>3</sup> texts, especially those regarding attitude toward women, is connected with his activity in the monastic reform and spiritual revival of the Nuremberg convent in which he participated with Dominican Johannes Nider (d. 1438), his spiritual teacher, and the convent's previous confessor.

His popular collection *Sermones Discipuli*,<sup>4</sup> which was primarily composed to be used by lower clergy and less educated audience, contains quotations from different works of St. Jerome: *Commentarii in Isaiam*, *Commentarii in Ezechielem*, *Commentarii in evangelium Matthaei*. Others come from his polemical texts such as *Contra Rufinum*, *Ad Jovinianum*, and *De viris illustribus*, but mostly from his letters: *Ep. 22 ad Eustochium*, *Ep. 45 ad Asellam*, *Ep. 130 to Demetrium*, *Ep. 53 ad Paulinam*, *Ep. 54 ad Furiam*; the exegetical *Ep. 140 ad Cyprianum Presbyterum* and *Ep. 69 ad Oceanum* as well the consolatory *Ep. 118 ad Julianum*, *Ep. 60 ad Heliodorum*, *Ep. 66 ad Pammachium* and *Ep. 68 ad Castricianum* and finally some letters about monastic life: *Ep. 125 ad Rusticum*, and *Ep. 52 ad Nepotianum*.

The primacy in giving moral teaching in medieval Dominican sermon collections was often accomplished by introducing diverse *auctoritates*.<sup>5</sup> Thus, one of this paper's goals is to determine the function of the extracts from Jerome's texts in this collection and to determine occasions in which they were employed frequently. Despite emphasizing the sentences from those texts St Jerome wrote himself, the research includes extracts from so-called Pseudo-Jerome. Such attribution was common in the Middle Ages, especially regarding Church Fathers. Moreover, as will be shown, frequent usage of a Pseudo-Jerome text in particular sermons (especially those dedicated to the Virgin Mary) is far from a coincidence.

## RECEPTION OF SAINT JEROME IN HEROLT'S *SERMONES DISCIPULI*

Herolt is promoting ascetic life as an exemplary Christian model. He was one of the preachers who vigorously attacked "comfortable living,

3 In the German-speaking lands, Jerome's popularity reached its peak in the 16th century; Pabel, "Reading Jerome in the Renaissance," 470–97.

4 It was one of the most frequently printed sermon collections between 1450 and 1520; Thayer, *Penitence, Preaching*, 17.

5 Ziolkowski, "Cultures of Authority," 426–27. According to Delcorno, "proofs and truths seemed most important to the Dominicans"; Delcorno, "Medieval Preaching in Italy," 474.

fine clothes, pleasure, and luxuries.”<sup>6</sup> He often highlighted the idea that the riches of this world are nothing compared to spiritual wealth. This could be one of the reasons for introducing Jerome’s quotations from his texts about monasticism, priesthood, and virginity, in which he glorified the importance of leading immaterial religious living. As expected, there are quotations from his exhorting letters, such as *Ep. 130 ad Demetrium*, *Ep. 52 ad Nepotianum*, and *Ep. 22 ad Eustochium*, more precisely from those Jerome addressed to a broader audience.

Herolt’s *contemptus mundi*, his constant reproof of even the slightest enjoyment of any bodily pleasures, considered such pleasures the manifestation of carnal sins.<sup>7</sup> This doubtless brought him closer to Jerome’s texts about virginity, in which purity of both body and soul is strongly emphasized. As a confessor of Nuremberg nuns, Herolt “focused on comparisons between marriage and chastity and praised the religious life over the ephemeral luxuries and pleasures of the world.”<sup>8</sup> Jerome’s view on virgins as proper symbols of pure soul and finally as “consecrated brides of Christ,” in the words of Bernard of Clairvaux,<sup>9</sup> is perfectly summarized in the sentence about vanity in preserving exclusively the carnal virginity, which appears several times in Herolt’s collection. For example, by introducing the quotation from *Adversus Jovinianum* to the sermon *De Virginibus*, Herolt strengthens the argument that serving Christ implies taking care of the soul, not the body:

Sextum, quod Christus requirit, et sine quo praedicta non sufficiunt est, quod sponsa Christi sit fidelis in amore sui sponsi, sic quod nulli placere desideret, nisi soli Christo ... Unde Hieron.<sup>10</sup> *Nonnullae sunt virgines carne, non spiritu, quarum corpus est integrum, sed anima corrupta* sed illa virginitas hostia est Christi, cuius nec mentem maculat cogitatio, nec carnem libido.

The sixth thing that Christ requires, and without which the aforementioned is insufficient, is that the bride of Christ be faithful in the love of her spouse so that she desires to please none other than Christ alone. Hence, Jerome says, “There are some virgins in the flesh,

6 Dahmus, “Late Medieval Preachers,” 124.

7 His viewpoint on the carnal sins is also manifested in the choice of *exempla* in which the protagonists die while sinning (drinking man, dancing girl), as is the case in the sermon *Dominica secunda post octavas Pasche*.

8 Clark Walter, *Profession of Widowhood*, 288.

9 Jussen, “Virgins – Widows – Spouses,” 20.

10 Hieronymus, *Adversus Jovinianum*, PL 23, col. 241–42.

not in spirit, whose body is intact, but the soul is corrupted. But that virginity is a sacrifice to Christ, of which neither the thought stains the mind nor lust corrupts the flesh.”<sup>11</sup>

In *De Virginibus*, faithfulness is mentioned as the last sixth thing that every virgin should fulfill to become the bride of Christ. That Herolt's employment of Jerome's text, when speaking about the purity of the soul, is not necessarily addressed only to women can be seen in the sermon *De Apostolis*. Here, a quotation from *Ep.* 22 appears as a confirmation of the first thing that everyone should do to gain merit for the soul:

Pro quo sciendum quod tribus modis meremur cum corpore nostro augmentum gloria in vita aeterna. Primo, resistendo peccatis suis ad quae corpus nostrum inclinatum est ... Unde et Hier. in epistola quadam [*Ep.* 22.39]. *Sine certamine nullus sanctorum coronatus est.*

Regarding this, it must be known that we merit an increase in glory in eternal life with our bodies in three ways. First, by resisting the sins to which our body is inclined ... Hence, Jerome also says in a certain letter [*Ep.* 22.39], “Without struggle, none of the saints has been crowned.”<sup>12</sup>

As could be expected, many of Jerome's sentences in Herolt's sermons are dedicated to the Virgin Mary (*De Annunciatione Beatae Mariae*, *Communis sermo de Beata Virgine*), virgins (*De Virginibus*), and widows (*De Viduis*). Many are in sermons where particular sins are connected to women (*De Luxuria*). There are quotations from the *Adversus Jovinianum*, *Ep.* 22, from other Jerome's texts, and Pseudo-Jerome's *Ep.* 9 *ad Paulam et Eustochium*. For example, the first part of *De Virginibus* begins with the statement that married women are blessed, widows are more blessed, and virgins are most blessed among all. This comes from Jerome's text *Adversus Jovinianum*:<sup>13</sup> “Quantum ad primum, notandum quod beatae sunt coniugate, beatiores viduae, beatissimae sunt virgines.”<sup>14</sup> A similar choice of quotations appears in another sermon, *De Luxuria*, where Herolt repeats the things that

11 Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 589.

12 Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 565.

13 Pabel, *Reading Jerome*, 476.

14 Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 586.

refer to virgins, for example, about the inability of God to raise a virgin after she has fallen:

Cum omnia possit Deus, suscitare virginem non potest post ruinam.  
Valet quidem liberare de poena, sed non vult coronare corruptam.

While God can do all things, He cannot raise a virgin after her fall. Indeed, He is able to deliver from punishment, but He is unwilling to crown the corrupted.<sup>15</sup>

Two stand out in frequency among many texts circulating under Jerome's name in the Middle Ages. The first is *Ep. 9 ad Paulam et Eustochium*,<sup>16</sup> and the second is *Ep. ad Mauritii filiam laus virginittatis*. In *Alius sermo de beata virgine Maria*, the quotation from Pseudo-Jerome's *Ep. 9* is used as the sermon foundation, together with the *thema*:

Fecit mihi magna qui potens est et sanctum nomen eius. Luc. 1. Hieron.<sup>17</sup> de beatissima et gloriosissima virgine Maria loqui me indignum fateor. *Sed puto quod nemo sit qui praesumat, nisi qui quanta sint quae panduntur, penitus ignorat.*

"He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name." (Luke 1) Jerome says: I confess my unworthiness to speak of the most blessed and glorious Virgin Mary. But I believe that no one presumes otherwise unless they completely ignore the greatness of the things that are revealed.<sup>18</sup>

Quotations from this letter appear in all sermons dedicated to the Virgin Mary, frequently in the first part of the sermon.

What draws Herolt closer to Jerome is the "repetition of the tripartite formulation concerning widows' inferiority to virgins."<sup>19</sup> In *De Viduis*, Herolt partially follows Jerome by concluding that it is better to remain widowed than remarry. The argument is that a widow has greater spiritual freedom to serve God and greater chastity. In *De*

<sup>15</sup> *Ep. 22.5.*

<sup>16</sup> "In great monasteries like Cluny and Corbie, it was read even in place of the Gospel and Homily, which should have formed the lessons for the third nocturn of the feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin." Agius, "On Pseudo-Jerome, Epistle 9," 176.

<sup>17</sup> Pseudo-Hieronymus, *Epistolae*, PL 30, col. 127.

<sup>18</sup> Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 608.

<sup>19</sup> Clark Walter, *Profession of Widowhood*, 288.

*Viduis*, Herolt introduces Jerome's statement from *Ep. 125*, which frequently appeared in medieval treatises:

Tertium, quod viduae non debent esse otiosae, sed semper se in aliquo bono opere occupare ... Ideo, *dicit Hieron. [Ep. 125.11] Semper aliquid boni facito ut diabolus semper inueniat te occupatum.*

Third, widows should not be idle but always engage in some good work ... Therefore, Jerome says [*Ep. 125.11*], "Always do something good so that the devil may always find you occupied."<sup>20</sup>

It refers to avoiding leisure by constantly being preoccupied with different obligations (prayer, handwork, or other activities of the monastic life) to escape the devil's temptations.<sup>21</sup> The exact quotation was also used in the sermon about preparing the heart (*De Preparatione Cordis*) and the sermon about work (*De Laboribus*).

A thematic similarity between the preaching of Herolt and Jerome can also be found when considering the topic of detraction. On the one hand, detraction was one of Herolt's most despised manifestations of sins. On the other hand, Jerome used his texts to defend himself against different accusations. One of his most famous apologetic letters is *Ep. 45 Ad Asellam*, in which he, as Cain said, "defends his integrity against critics."<sup>22</sup> A quotation from this particular letter that to "speak evil of the righteous is a sin not easily pardoned" is quite widespread in Herolt's book. It is the first argument of the third type of detraction in the sermon *De Detractione* that refers to the false accusation of the neighbor, which is in Herolt's collection considered a grave sin:

Tertio detractio cum quis crimina falsa imponit proximo et illa manifestat aliis, qui sic false finxit super proximum, et hoc gravissimum peccatum inter peccata detractionis, et vix remittitur tale peccatum. Unde Hier. [*Ep. 45.1*] *Non facilis venia prava dixisse de rectis.*

Third, detraction occurs when someone falsely imposes crimes on their neighbor and reveals them to others, thus falsely inventing things about their neighbor. This sin of detraction is most serious among the sins, and such a sin is scarcely forgiven. Hence, Jerome

20 Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 438.

21 Clark Walter, *Profession of Widowhood*, 288.

22 Cain, *Letters of Jerome*, 209.

says [Ep. 45.1], "It is not easy to obtain forgiveness for speaking evil of the upright."<sup>23</sup>

Jerome is also an authority to confirm the statement about detractors, the sort of people whose confession is not fruitful, as in the second part of *De Annunciatione Beatae Mariae Virginis*. Jerome's words also appear in the sermon *De Signis Veri Christiani*. They come as the allegorical exegesis of the Old Testament phrase *lingua vetus*, referring to false faith that true Christians should abandon:

Secundum signum fidei necessarium est, ut nova lingua loquatur ... Item lingua vetus est adulari et verba fraudulenta loqui. Unde Hier. *Nihil est quod tam facile corrumpat mentes hominum sicut adulatio* ... Item lingua vetus est, loqui verba detractoria et denigrare famam proximi. Unde Hier. [Ep. 45.1] *Non facilis venia, prava dixisse de rectis*.

As a second sign of faith, it is necessary to speak a new language ... Likewise, the old language is to flatter and speak deceitful words. Hence, Jerome says, "There is nothing that corrupts the minds of men so easily as flattery ..." Likewise, the old language is to speak detracting words and blacken the reputation of one's neighbor. Hence, Jerome [Ep. 45.1] says, "It is not easy to obtain forgiveness for speaking evil of the upright."<sup>24</sup>

After explaining the primary meaning of *lingua vetus* as a synonym for living in sin, there is an enumeration of different manifestations of *lingua vetus*. Herolt refers to Jerome twice: when he inserts a sentence from his Ep. 45 in the description of detraction and when quoting from Pseudo-Jerome Ep. 148 *Ad Celantiam Matronam* during his interpretation of the word *adulatio*. This second sentence is probably introduced from Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*,<sup>25</sup> where it is also used as a confirmation of *adulatio*.

Unlike the occasions mentioned above when Herolt used the same Jerome quotation in different sermons but still interpreted the same or similar message, there are also cases in which he used the exact quotation when interpreting different teachings. One example is

23 Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 346.

24 Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 253.

25 "Et Hieronymus dicit quod nihil est quod tam facile corrumpat mentes hominum quam adulatio." Aquinas, quaestio 115.2.

consolatory *Ep. 118*, important in the Christian consolation tradition.<sup>26</sup> Jerome points out the impossibility of being materially and spiritually fulfilled simultaneously. This quotation's far more interesting use is in *Dominica I in adventu*, about rising from sleep, mentally and spiritually. The connection between the sermon and Jerome's quotation from *Ep. 118.6* reflects syntactic similarities. The starting point of the allegorical exegesis of rising from sleep is a widespread antithesis. The events that occur in dreams are contrasted with those in reality. Gathering richness and joyful living on earth is in Herolt's sermon interpreted as sinful oversleeping that could only bring the opposite, sadness, and pains in the afterlife:

Quarto sicut somnia somniantibus debent per oppositum exponi, sic qui habent hic honores mundanos, divitias temporales et delicias corporis et gaudia mundi, ista omnia sunt quasi quaedam somnia, et vertuntur per oppositum in tribulationem et paupertatem et amaritudinem maximam ... Unde Hiero. *In quadam epistola* [*Ep. 118.6*]. *Difficile, imo impossibile est ut et praesentibus quis et futuris fruatur bonis: ut et hic ventrem, et ibi mentem impleat; ut de deliciis transeat ad delicias; ut in utroque saeculo primus sit; ut et in coelo et in terra appareat gloriosus.*

Fourth, just as dreams should be interpreted by those who dream according to the opposite, so should those who possess worldly honors, temporal riches, bodily pleasures, and the joys of the world consider all these like a kind of dreams, and they turn into the opposite, leading to tribulation, poverty, and utmost bitterness ... Hence, Jerome, in a certain letter [*Ep. 118.6*] says, "It is difficult, indeed impossible, for someone to enjoy both present and future goods: to fill the belly here and the mind there, to pass from delights to delights, to be first in both worlds, to appear glorious both in heaven and on earth."<sup>27</sup>

This impossibility of simultaneously feeding our souls and bodies is relatively connected with the statement that "pains and tribulations of life in a defective body are the soul's opportunity to acquire merits."<sup>28</sup> In *De Infirmis*, during the interpretation of the seventh reason, Herolt points to their direct link. He introduces a quotation from *Ep. 118* pointing to those hoping to deserve an afterlife in the Kingdom of

26 Cain, *Letters of Jerome*, 211–12.

27 Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 7.

28 Siggins, *Harvest of Medieval Preaching*, 50.



Heaven without suffering and tribulation. Again, fulfilling the body as one part of Jerome's quotation served as a connection with another sermon, *De Septem Generibus Divitum*, this time on the allegorical level:

Secundi sunt qui suis divitiis damnantur, qui iustas res retinent et possident eo animo, ut contra Deum cum eisdem pro libito vivere velint ... Hier. [Ep. 118.6] *Impossibile enim ...*

The second group comprises those condemned by their wealth, retaining and possessing legitimate things to use them freely against God ... Jerome [Ep. 118.6] says, "For it is impossible ..."<sup>29</sup>

Herolt also used this quotation on a relatively literal level when interpreting the fifth manifestation of gluttony at the very end of the second part of the sermon *De Sancto Mathia*<sup>30</sup> about those sinners who prefer food over God:

Quantum ad secundum partem istius sermonis, sciendum est, quod ex quo illud festum, occurrit communiter circa carnisprivium, quo tempore solent homines *gulse vivere*. Unde pro nostra informatione et simplicium quaeritur, quot modis *homo bibendo et comedendo peccat moraliter* ... Quinto peccat quis comedendo et bibendo quando principaliter quaerit delectationem ... Et talem delectationem homines voluptuosi quaerunt, qui solum secundum carnem vivunt ... *Unde etiam Hier. [Ep. 118.6] Impossibile est hic implere ventrem et illic mentem.*

Regarding the second part of this sermon, it should be known that this feast commonly occurs around Shrove Tuesday, when people are accustomed to living indulgently. Therefore, for our information and that of the simple, it is asked in how many ways a person morally sins by eating and drinking ... Fifthly, one sins by eating and drinking when one primarily seeks pleasure ... And such pleasure is sought by voluptuous individuals who live solely according to the flesh ... Hence, also, Jerome [Ep. 118.6] says, "It is impossible to fill the belly here and the mind there."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 308.

<sup>30</sup> In several *sermones de sanctis*, especially those performed during Lent like the one on St. Matthew, Herolt introduced topics by which he exhorted the listeners about the true confession, different forms of sins, *imitatio Christi*, and other Christian teachings.

<sup>31</sup> De sancto Mathia; Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 32.

Passages from Jerome's consolatory letters in Herolt's book appeared on different occasions. Quotation from his *Ep. 66 ad Pammachium*, which according to Cain<sup>32</sup> "provides a very early example of alms and suffrages for the dead," is found in the sermon *De Septem Generibus Pauperum*:

Similiter etiam nostris temporibus religiosi sic faciunt qui omnia propter Deum sic resignant ... *Unde Hier. super Mat. [Ep. 66.12] Apostoli quantum ad divitias, nihil vel modicum; sed quantum ad voluntatem totum mundum reliquerunt.*

Similarly, even in our times, the religious who renounce everything for the sake of God do the same ... Hence, Jerome, in his commentary on Matthew [Ep. 66.12] says, "As for wealth, the apostles left nothing or very little; but as for their will, they left the whole world."<sup>33</sup>

In the sermon *In Epiphania Domini*,<sup>34</sup> Herolt introduced Jerome's consolatory letter *Ep. 60 ad Heliodorum Epitaphium Nepotiani*. As Schaff said, he "tries to smooth his friend's grief by contrasting pagan despair or resignation with Christian hope, by a eulogy of the departed both as man and presbyter and by a review of the evils which then beset the Empire."<sup>35</sup> It is not surprising that we also find a quotation from *Ep. 68 Ad Castrutium* about suffering torments and resulting future glory in the sermons *De Infirmis*, *De Credentibus a Deo*, and the sermon *De Operibus quae fiunt in Peccato Mortali*. A quotation from the consolatory letter *Ep. 68.1 (Libens nunc tormenta patior ut futura mihi gloria servetur)* is in *De Infirmis*, as well as a quotation from *Ep. 118*. It is used as instruction and warning about the desirable behavior and attitude that leads to eternal life in heaven. In the sermon *De Uno Confessore*, a quotation, more precisely, the closing sentence of *Ep. 53*, is employed as an argument for describing the third service that every sinner should fulfill to please God. In several sermons, echoes of *memento mori* are exposed by *Ep. 140 Ad Cyprianum Presbyterum* and *Ep. 53 Ad Paulinam*, representing scriptural study and appeal to become or stay Christian. Both of the quotations appear in the sermon *Quod Morienti Septem Contingunt*

32 Cain, *Letters of Jerome*, 102–103.

33 Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 306.

34 "Sciendum quod nos Christiani exemplo illorum trium regum debemus Deum in vera fide veraciter cognoscere. Unde Hiero. *Absque notitia creatoris sui omnis homo pecus est* [Ep. 60.4]." Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 76.

35 Schaff, *Jerome*, 314.

and the sermon *De Divitiis non Appetendis*, in which the passage about avarice imitates chapter *De Remediis contra Avaritiam* from Peraldus *Summa de Virtutibus et Vitiis*:

Secundo, dicendum est de remediis contra avaritiam, quorum primum est mortis consideratio. Unde Hier. [Ep. 53.10] *Facile contemnit omnia qui semper moriturum cogitat* sicut iumenta defendunt se ab importunitate muscarum causa sua, et sicut aves et pisces cum cauda regunt se, sic homo consideratione finis et mortis propriae defendit se ab avaritia et caeteris vitiis. Unde. Interroga iumenta et docebunt te; volatilia coeli, et indicabunt tibi. Job 12.7. Mors indicat ad oculum tibi, con temptibilia esse omnia, quae quaeruntur in hoc mundo, scilicet delitias, divitias et sic de singulis mundi vanitatibus. Unde Hier. [Ep. 140.16]. *Qui quotidie recordatur se moriturum contemnit temporalia et ad futura festinat.*

Second, one should speak about remedies against avarice, the first of which is the consideration of death. Hence, Jerome [Ep. 53.10] says, "He who always thinks of himself as one who is about to die easily despises all things, just as beasts defend themselves from the annoyance of flies due to their nature, and as birds and fish guide themselves with their tails. So, a person, by considering the end and his own death, defends himself against avarice and other vices. Therefore, ask the animals, and they will teach you; the birds of the air, and they will tell you" (Job 12:7). Death points out to you that all things sought in this world, namely pleasures, wealth, and so on concerning each of the world's vanities, are contemptible. Hence, Jerome [Ep. 140.16] says, "He who daily remembers that he is going to die despises temporal things and hastens towards the future."<sup>36</sup>

## USING JEROME'S AUTHORITY

Since Herolt<sup>37</sup> inherited the main procedures of scholastic sermons, which reflects from the form and amplification of the text, let us continue by analyzing the function of the sentences that appear under Jerome's name in Herolt's *ars praedicandi*.<sup>38</sup>

36 Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 446.

37 Radošević, "Signale der Mündlichkeit," 23.

38 See Wenzel, *Medieval Artes Praedicandi*.

### Confirmation

The subdivision in the first part of the 21st sermon on Epiphany ends with a quotation from Jerome's consolatory letter *Ep. 60.4 Ad Heliodorum* (*Absque notitia enim creatoris sui omnis homo pecus est*). The appearance of this sentence as the final confirmation could be motivated by Jerome's similar elaboration on the ability to recognize the Savoir, found in *Ep. 60*. In the sermon, the quotation is introduced to highlight the antithesis between elements from the world of nature (sky, earth, sea, stones) that recognized the Savoir and the humans who reject recognition: "Iudaeorum vero corda saxis duriora, eum confiteri nolunt quem elementa testantur."<sup>39</sup>

In the sermon *De Malis Cogitationibus*, the quotation from Pseudo-Jerome's text *De Virginitate ad Demetriadem* appears as the last confirmation introduced from the church authorities in the fifth subdivision. It finishes with the exemplum as a final proof that clarifies and embellishes the question about banishing evil thoughts:

Hieron.<sup>40</sup> *Quicquid pudet dicere pudeat etiam cogitare. Quod diabolus delectatur in malis cogitationibus patet per tale exemplum. Legitur, quod quidam habuit malas cogitationes et delectationes.*

Jerome says: "Let whatever it is shameful to say also be shameful to think. It is evident how the devil delights in evil thoughts through such an example. It is read that someone had evil thoughts and pleasures."<sup>41</sup>

### Closing formula

(division, subdivision, central parts of the sermon)

The elaboration on the second class of the rich in the sermon *De Septem Generibus Divitum*, those who indulge in using their justly gained riches and do not care about the poor, is built on several authorities. However, the final warning sentence closing this part is from Jerome's *Ep. 118*. As a closing sentence of the whole sermon appears Pseudo-Jerome's quotation, as is the case in *Dominica II in Adventu*:

<sup>39</sup> Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 76.

<sup>40</sup> PL 30, col. 37.

<sup>41</sup> Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 517.

Unde verificatum est et dictum beati Hiero.<sup>42</sup> qui dixit in quadam epistola ad Nepotianum. *Non memini me legisse, mala morte mortuum, qui libenter opera pietatis exercuit, habet enim multos intercessores et impossibile est preces multorum non exaudiri.*

Therefore, even the saying of blessed Jerome in a certain letter to Nepotianus has been verified. He said, “I do not remember reading about someone who, having willingly engaged in works of piety, died a bad death. For he has many intercessors, and it is impossible that the prayers of many should not be heard.”<sup>43</sup>

By introducing Jerome’s name at the end of the Advent sermon, Herolt has highlighted the point of the exempla and the spiritual message of the whole sermon.

#### *Question/answer form*

The central theme of the second part of the sermon *Dominica II in Adventu* is why everyone should be afraid of the Last Judgment. The examination of the second reason refers to our responsibility for all the words spoken throughout our entire lifetime. It begins with the phrase “idle words” from the Gospel of Matthew. Further development of the sermon is based on what these idle words are. To this, Herolt responds by using Jerome’s sentence from his commentary on the same Gospel (Matt 2:36–37) as a first confirmation: “Quid est verbum otiosum? Respondeo Hiero.<sup>44</sup> *Verbum otiosum est, quod sine utilitate loquentis dicitur et audientis proferetur.*”<sup>45</sup> In this example, his quotation represents the general interpretation of the Scripture, unlike the sentences of the following authorities, which have a much narrower meaning, conveying useless, harmful, and sinful speech.

#### *Stating the opposite*

Herolt’s quotation from the exhorting *Ep. 125*, which Cain called the “epistolary manifesto on monastic life,”<sup>46</sup> appears as a contrast to the

42 Pseudo-Augustinus, *Sermones ad fratres in eremo commorantes*, PL 40, col. 1319.

43 Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 13.

44 Hieronymus, *Commentarii in Evangelium secundum Matthaeum*, PL 26, col. 81.

45 Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 9.

46 Cain, *Letters of Jerome*, 151.

belief that the moral basis for a living should be the behavior of the majority, or worse, exempla of the evildoers:

Multi faciunt hoc, et iam consuetudo est, et sic volunt se excusare contra quos dicit *Hier ad. Rusticum*. [Ep. 125.16–17] *Nequaquam consideres quid alii mali faciant, sed quid tu boni facere debeas, neque peccantium ducaris multitudine, et te pereuntium turba sollicitet.*

Many do this, and now it has become a habit, and thus, they want to excuse themselves. Against them, Jerome says to Rusticus [Ep. 125.16–17], “By no means consider what evil others may do, but consider what good you ought to do. Do not be led by the multitude of sinners, and do not let the crowd of the perishing trouble you.”<sup>47</sup>

In this letter, Jerome advises Rusticus on living in a monastic community where he will undoubtedly share a place with bad monks. Jerome’s sentence is used to underscore the contrast between good and bad Christians who are forced into coexistence in everyday life.

### *Rhetorical question*

Herolt’s promotion of the ascetic life is manifested in the sermon about the spiritual advent, in which he develops the exegetical allegory on the words *vesta aspera* that refer to the clothes of John the Baptist:

Sed quantum ad tertium sciendum circa hoc, quod Christus in hodierno evangelio commendat Ioannem Baptistam de asperitate vestium dicens: Quid existis in desertum videre? Hominem molli-bus vestium? Quasi dicat: Vestis Ioannis est pellis camelorum. Ubi notandum, quod vestis aspera confert homini quinq̃ bona. Primo, vitia carnis domat ... Secundo, vestis aspera hominem ab imminente tribulatione liberat ... Tertio, vestis aspera facit orationem exaudiri ... Unde Hier. in Epistola [Ep. 54.7]: *quia fiducia erigas ad coelum vultum, quem cognitor non agnoscit?*

But as for the third point, it should be known that in today’s Gospel, Christ commends John the Baptist for the roughness of his clothing, saying: “What did you go out to see in the desert? A man clothed in soft garments?” As if to say that John’s clothing is made of camel hair. It should be noted here that rough clothing contributes five goods to

47 Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 116.

a person. Firstly, it subdues the vices of the flesh ... Second, rough clothing liberates a person from imminent tribulation ... Third, rough clothing causes prayers to be heard ... Hence, Jerome, in his letter [*Ep.* 54.7] says, "With what confidence do you lift up to heaven your face, which the all-knowing does not recognize?"<sup>48</sup>

The third of the five good things that *vesta aspera* brings to people (hearing prayers) is strengthened by introducing Jerome's quotation from *Ep.* 54 to widow Furia, more precisely from one of his letters about the ascetic life.<sup>49</sup> His retaining the quotation in its original form (rhetorical question) certainly contributed to the strength of the argument.

### *Metaphor*

In *Sermones Discipuli*, there are some of the popular medieval metaphors ascribed to Jerome. One refers to the perfection of David's sanctity and Samson's strength. It is used in *Communis Sermo de Beata Virgine* when emphasizing perfection in persistently keeping from the carnal sins of the former sinner. It refers to Mary Magdalene and her purity of the body, forever lost due to her past sins. She is very much unlike the Virgin Mary, the only one with triple virginity. In this form, the sentence is found in the treatise *Summa de Virtutibus et Vitiis* written by Guillaume Peraldus,<sup>50</sup> a Dominican whose texts noticeably inspired Herolt. In Jerome's work, more precisely in *Ep.* 52, a similar phrase appears in which perfection is described by mentioning David's holiness and Solomon's wisdom.<sup>51</sup>

## CONCLUSION

This research has shown that Herolt used Jerome on different occasions to shape and embellish the moral message: when enumerating the points of a particular subdivision, interpreting the *thema*, or closing the chapter. One of the main reasons for the frequent employment

48 Herolt, *Sermones Discipuli*, 26.

49 Cain, *Letters of Jerome*, 159.

50 "In the *Summa* of Peraldus, the examples appear in a different order: ... dicit Hieronymus ... nec in preterita castitate confidas. Nec David sanctior, nec Sampson fortior, nec Salomone potes esse sapientior." See Friend, "Sampson, David, and Salomon," 120. According to Friend, the reference to Jerome could also refer to *Ep.* 79.

51 "Jerome's citation of David and Salomon as implied models for chaste conduct and discretion around women." Cain, *Jerome and the Monastic Clergy*, 137.

of Jerome's texts about monasticism, priesthood, and virginity is Herolt's explicit promotion of the ascetic life as an exemplary model for Christians. The use of Jerome's name is also connected with his reliance on the crucial theological texts written by Thomas of Aquinas and William Peraldus, in which we can find the same Jerome's sentences when the authors are interpreting a particular Christian teaching. The reception of Jerome in Herolt's book goes further than the mere reception of the texts he wrote, as Herolt echoes texts that are no longer included in Jerome's opus today.

Nevertheless, they are a clear signal of the strength that Jerome's authority had in the late-medieval sermons written for the instruction of a wider audience. Although this paper emphasizes the reception of texts that Jerome wrote, Herolt's frequent referring to his name when inserting the Pseudo-Jerome's sentences was not ignored. Moreover, they all indicate how Herolt and his contemporaries frequently invoked the persuasive power and the authority of St. Jerome.



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## ABSTRACT

Church fathers were among the most cited authorities in the medieval sermons, right after the Bible. Their quotations were used in different ways – as an exegesis of the reading, as a commentary of a moral lesson, or as a strong argument for a particular statement. Jerome was considered one of the key authorities, and his passages can be found in numerous books of sermons. The paper examines the reception of St. Jerome in the 15th-century sermon collection known as *Sermones Discipuli de tempore et de sanctis cum Promptuario exemplorum et de miraculis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, written by a German Dominican, Johannes Herolt (†1468). The collection includes quotations from different works of Jerome, mostly from his letters. Despite the emphasis on sentences from the texts written by Jerome, the analysis also includes extracts from the so-called Pseudo-Jerome.

KEYWORDS: St. Jerome, Johannes Herolt, reception, medieval sermons, authority

Recepcija svetega Hieronima  
v poznosrednjeveški zbirki pridig Johannessa Herolta

## IZVLEČEK

Cerkveni očetje so bili v srednjeveških pridigah med najbolj pogosto navajanimi avtoritetami, takoj za Svetim pismom. Citati so se uporabljali na različne načine: kot eksegeza prebranega, kot komentar moralnega nauka ali kot močan argument za določeno izjavo. Hieronim je sodil v srednjem veku med najpomembnejše avtoritete, njegove odlomke in citate je najti v številnih zbirkah pridig. Prispevek predstavi recepcijo svetega Hieronima v zbirki pridig iz 15. stoletja, znani kot *Sermones Discipuli de tempore et de sanctis cum Promptuario exemplorum et de miraculis Beatae Mariae Virginis*, ki jo je napisal nemški dominikanec Johannes Herolt (†1468). V tej zbirki so citati iz različnih Hieronimovih del, večinoma iz njegovih pisem. Kljub poudarku Hieronimovih besedilih analiza vključuje tudi odlomke iz t. i. psevdo-Hieronima.

KLJUČNE BESEDE: Hieronim, Johannes Herolt, recepcija, srednjeveške pridige, avtoriteta