

Conservation of Johannes Herolt's *Sermones de tempore*, c. 1450

Recently acquired by The Ohio State University Libraries (OSUL) Rare Books and Manuscripts Department, Herolt's *Sermones* is a mid-15th century bound manuscript on paper. Herolt (ca. 1386–1468) was a Dominican friar of Nuremberg, vicar of the Katharinekloster, and one of late-medieval Germany's most prolific sermon writers and preachers. This volume includes Herolt's collection of model sermons on topics and themes related to the liturgical year and cycle of saints' festivals. This sermon collection proved to be exceptionally popular, both during Herolt's lifetime and afterwards. It has been estimated that at least 500 manuscript copies of the collected sermons survive today (both complete and fragmentary), and as many as 186 separate editions of them were printed by the year 1500, with another 60 editions printed from the 16th–18th centuries.

OSU's copy had been re-covered sometime in the 20th century in quarter leather and paste paper over thick mill board. Also, at some time(s) in the past 50 years a number of pages had been reinforced with various clear plastic tapes to support areas where the acidic iron gall ink was corroding the paper. In many of these areas tape had been applied to both sides of the leaves. Originally, at least two scribes worked on this manuscript (one working on the temporal cycle, and the other on the Lenten sequence), and the condition of the various inks used ranges from near pristine to extensively corroded. The acidic and deteriorating ink was present on approximately 70 leaves in the last quarter of the text block.

In the summer of 2011 the Rare Books and Manuscripts Department requested that this book be conserved, including treatment of the text for tape removal and stabilization of the ink and paper, and rebinding in 15th century German period style with leather spine and exposed wooden boards. In September 2011 conservators in the OSUL Conservation Unit began treatment that included dis-binding, tape, adhesive residue, and stain removal; mending pages; re-sewing and binding in period style as requested by the curator,

using wooden boards, alum-tawed leather for the spine, metal fore-edge clasps and creation of a custom box to house the book and earlier binding components—some of which were from the original 15th century binding structure. The most significant part of the treatment was the difficult and time-consuming removal of tape and adhesives, followed by reassembly of areas of text where much ink had been lost, leaving only the paper fragments between the lines of writing.

Another interesting aspect of this project, and this presentation, is the collaboration between the conservator and a land owner in southern Ohio for the "harvesting" of the beech wood used for the boards, which was cut from a storm-damaged 150 year-old American Beech tree by the property owner who donated the wood, the milling, drying, delivery and stacking to the Libraries specifically for this project, and for potential use on future binding projects.

HARRY CAMPBELL
Book and Paper Conservator
The Ohio State University Libraries
Columbus, OH
campbell.12@osu.edu