

GASPARE VERONESE, *Regulae de constructione (Rules of Construction)*; GUARINO VERONESE [GUARINO GUARINI], *De diphthongis (On Diphthongs)*

In Latin with some Greek, illuminated manuscript on parchment

Central Italy (Florence?), c. 1460-1470

48 folios on parchment, modern foliation in pencil, upper outer rectos, 1-48, complete (collation i-iv¹⁰ v¹⁰ [lacking 9 and 10, two leaves after f. 48 cancelled with no loss of text]), trace of one quire and leaf signature, otherwise they are cropped away, qq. i-iv have vertical catchwords, lower inner versos, ruled in ink with full-length vertical bounding lines, prickings visible in outer margin (justification 147-148 x 85-86 mm.), written above top line in a slightly slanting Humanist minuscule hand on twenty-five to twenty-six long lines, rubrics written in Roman capitals, guide letters for initials, two- to three-line blue initials, sometimes followed by a word or part of a word written in Roman capitals, two-line gold initial on a ground of blue, green, and pink adorned with white pen decoration (f. 1), two three-line gold initials, one with green foliate decoration, blue and pink blossoms, and gold bezants (f. 20v) and one with green, blue, and gold foliate extensions extending halfway down the page, decorated with pink and blue blossoms, yellow globes, and gold bezants (f. 1), both followed by a word in Roman capitals, painted arms of gold and blue (now mostly rubbed away) in the lower margin of f. 1, surrounded by green and gold foliate decorations with blue and pink blossoms and gold bezants, also somewhat rubbed and faded, fifteenth- or sixteenth-century marginal annotations (eg., f. 23v), slight damp-staining and rubbing of some pages, especially ff. 1-2, 9v-11, but with little loss of legibility, otherwise in very fine condition. CONTEMPORARY BINDING of brown leather, blind-tooled with three concentric rectangular frames of three fillets, the innermost filled lozenges formed from diagonal tooling of six fillets, the next innermost stamped with interlocking rope designs, all over wooden boards, spine with three raised bands (rebacked), bands separated from upper board, paper label on spine with cursive inscription, "N. 2 / Antichi [. . . ?] / Grammaticali / della Lingua / Latina / carta[. . . ?]," traces from a single fore-edge clasp on upper and lower boards, four bosses each on upper and lower boards (two now lacking from upper board), wear to the leather of both boards, particularly at the corners, upper board scratched, lower board punctured near spine, parchment pastedowns with later pen trials and inscriptions. Dimensions 212 x 142-143 mm.

The study of grammar was fundamental to the educational goals of the Italian humanists. The two treatises in this manuscript, both complete, unedited, and quite rare on the market, offer insights into the humanist desire to recover the Latin of ancient Rome. This handsome manuscript, still in its original binding, was not a simple copy made for school use. It is instead an elegant illuminated manuscript probably made for a Florentine nobleman whose arms, now undecipherable, are still visible on the first page.

PROVENANCE

1. Evidence of script and decoration suggests that this manuscript was produced in Central Italy, possibly Florence; the artist's foliate designs and palette of pink, bright green, and a rich dark blue are consistent with Florentine manuscript painting of the middle of the fifteenth century, c. 1460-1470. The arms on f. 1, unfortunately too damaged to be identified, point to this book having been produced for a member of the aristocracy, very likely to aid in his studies of Latin.
2. A fifteenth- or sixteenth-century inscription, smeared and partially lost, on the front pastedown also points to a Florentine connection: "Questo libro e di chorso[?] <...> mars. Fa firenze che lot[?] <...> st lorendo al luj C<?><...> discrestione."

3. A fifteenth- or sixteenth-century Latin alphabet written in full on the front pastedown may indicate that this book was being used at this time by a student of Latin. Other additions by owners/or users include pen trials and large outline drawings of Gothic letters on the front pastedown and the beginnings of some kind of diagram or chart on the back pastedown.
4. Dealer's mark "BA442" penciled in upper corner of front pastedown.

TEXT

ff. 1-44, [*Regulae de constructione*] incipit, "ACTIVVM verbum est quod in 'o' finitum format passium in 'or' vt lego legor amo amor ... Reperies etiam ficus secunde declinationis masculini generis pro fructu. FINIS. ΤΕΛΟΣ ΘΕΩ ΚΑΡΗΝ[sic]";

Rules of Construction was written by Gaspare Veronese around the middle of the fifteenth century, in or before 1463. There is no modern critical edition of the text. It survives in at least twelve other manuscripts; Bursill-Hall (1981) lists ten manuscripts in Italian repositories containing the text (under the title *Grammatica latina*) and there are two copies in North American libraries (New Haven, Beinecke Library, Marston MS 262 and Bryn Mawr, Gordan MS 83 [dated 1463]). Three editions were printed before 1500 (GW nos. 10557-59), the first in 1476. As far as we have been able to discover, only two other manuscript copies have been in the market in the last hundred years.

ff. 44-48v, [*De diphthongis*] incipit, "GVARINVS veronensis florio valerio Salutem Plurimum dicit si vales gaudeo. Non sine causa factum esse certe scio quod dyphthonganda ["verba" expunged] vocabula te uelle intelligo ... Troezen opidum Troezemis. Scoenobates consensor funium. ΤΕΛΟΣ. *Dyphthonganda verba per celeberrimum[?] et eruditissimum virum Guarinum veronensem foeliciter scripta.*"

Guarino Veronese wrote this treatise, *On Diphthongs*, around 1415. It circulated widely in the fifteenth century; Bursill-Hall (1981) lists 46 manuscripts containing the treatise, all in European repositories. Two editions were printed before 1500 (GW nos. 11606-7), the first in 1472. To our knowledge, there has been only one other copy of the treatise on the market in the last century.

These treatises on the Latin language reflect humanist efforts to reform Latin usages in accordance with classical practice. They would have served as practical references for their early owners.

Gaspare Veronese's *Rules of Construction* has traditionally been taken as a summary of the grammatical, syntactic, and stylistic rules laid out in his longer *Regulae grammaticales* (*Rules of Grammar*), a grammatical manual addressing the traditional grammatical syllabus at the secondary level with some new humanist elements. *Grammar* draws on the works of earlier grammarians like Guarino Veronese, but it is more humanist in character, citing examples from classical authors (rather than invented Latin examples) and stepping away from the use of mnemonic verses and the vernacular to aid in instruction. *Construction* omits the sections on nouns and pronouns that can be found in *Grammar*, and focuses primarily on active, passive, neuter, and deponent verbs, on relative and interrogative constructions, on gerunds and participles, on comparative and

superlative constructions, and on figures of diction (eg. syncope, epenthesis, systole, dieresis) and rhetoric (eg. synecdoche, metaphor, hyperbole, prosopopoeia, occupatio), among other things. *Construction* has traditionally been seen as a digest of the longer, more well-known work, but in many cases it appears to offer elaboration on subjects covered more briefly in *Grammar*; further study would be of interest.

Guarino Veronese's *On Diphthongs* was the first treatise of its kind, and it addresses a complementary aspect of classical Latin conventions, namely spelling. It provides a list of Latin words and words transliterated from Greek that should be written with the diphthongs "ae" and "oe," diphthongs that had fallen out of use in medieval Latin orthography, supplanted by a simple "e" in both instances. Distinguishing diphthongs from monophthongs was a definite priority of Chrysoloras, Guarino's former teacher. Guarino's treatise seems to have been influential among his humanist peers; for example, the grammarian Gasparino Barzizza (c. 1360-c. 1431) appears to have drawn on it in his *Orthographia*, written in 1418. The brief treatise with its list of examples would have served as a valuable practical reference for humanists striving for a more classical orthography in their own Latin.

These texts complement each other in their subject matter: both offer practical guidance in writing Latin to meet humanist standards. Beyond that, it is also fitting that Guarino's *Diphthongs* accompanies Gaspare's *Construction* in this volume because Gaspare numbered among Guarino's students. Guarino Veronese (1374-1460) was an important Italian humanist teacher and translator. Having studied Greek in Constantinople under Manuel Chrysoloras (1355-1415), he went on to teach in Verona, Venice, and Florence, before taking a position as personal tutor to the young Leonello d'Este (1407-1450) in Ferrara. He became a professor of Greek in Ferrara in 1436 and so great was his reputation as a humanist scholar that he attracted students from across Europe. Indeed, Pius II (*sedit* 1458-1464) wrote in his autobiographical *Commentaries* that nearly everyone of merit in the humanities living at that time had studied with Guarino.

After studying with Guarino in Verona, Gaspare Veronese (c. 1400-1474) went on to study philosophy in Bologna, and then to study under the Camaldolese theologian Ambrogio Traversari (1386-1489) in Florence. He connected to many humanists during his time in Florence, notably the politician Stefano Porcari (d. 1453), whose younger brother Gaspare tutored. After traveling Europe with Porcari and a stint as a Camaldolese monk, he left the order and established a private school in Rome in 1445 and, with it, a reputation as a grammarian. He produced his *Rules of Grammar* during this time (c. 1450) and revised it during his later years. He would later go on to lecture on classical poets, to serve as a papal secretary, and to hold a chair of Greek and Latin rhetoric in Rome.

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