

[Miscellany] PS.-PLINY, *De viris illustribus*; LEONARDO BRUNI, *De primo bello Punico*; AULUS GELLIUS, *Noctes Atticae* [*Aesop's Fables*]; CICERO, *De senectute*; ST. JEROME, *Epitaph of St. Paula*, *Three Lives of Hermits*, *Letters*; ANON., *Life of St. Athanasius*; WALTER MAP, *Dissuasio Valerii*, and other texts
Latin manuscript on paper and parchment
Italy (Perugia?), 1440-before 1500

iv (paper) + 187 (paper and two parchment folios, ff. 28 and 37) + iii (paper), early foliation in Arabic numerals in dark brown ink (followed here) with two folios numbered 148, multiple watermarks, first two flyleaves, two large circles connected by a line terminating in a cross, similar to but larger than Briquet 3176, Venice, 1478, third and fourth flyleaves: pigeon standing on a two-line bar supported by Roman numeral II all contained within a circle, no comparable watermarks found, throughout, column topped with crown, Briquet 4411, Macerata, Rome, Volterra, Naples, and others, 1460-1498, demi-griffin, similar to Briquet 7449 and 7450, Florence, Palermo, Sienna, Lucca, and others, 1385-1419, horn on looped string, similar to Briquet 7695, Rome, Naples, Venice, 1472-1484, and two others with indistinguishable motifs hidden in the gutter, back flyleaves, three mounds with a cross extended from the center, similar to Briquet 11719, Sienna, Florence, Rome, and others, 1401-1431, complete (i¹⁰ [+11, one singleton added at end] ii-iii⁸ iv¹⁰ v-viii¹² ix¹⁴ x-xii¹² xiii¹² [+13, singleton added at end] xiv-xvi¹² xvii⁸ [-7 and 8, last two blank leaves cancelled]), catchwords on all but last quire, blind ruling (justification 150 x 80 mm.), written by one competent humanist hand in brown ink in 32 long lines, rubrics and 1- to 6-line initials in red, some bright, some faded, occasional simple maniculae, five 6- to 16-line simple white-vine initials in pen on ff. 1, 2, 55v, 100, initial f. 2 with touches of red, otherwise uncolored, and f. 76, white-vine initial with border extending through top and inner margin with flowers and a small bird, some staining and flecking throughout, minor worming in first 10 and last 25 folios, some small tears in outer margin (ex. f. 155) including repairs (ex. f. 84), some bleeding onto folios of blue ink used to color the edges of the bookblock, all folios fully legible except two: f. 1 badly damaged but repaired with old tape and paper, c. 20% text missing at inner and bottom margins, f. 37 missing l. 12 due to buckling of parchment, otherwise good condition. Bound in nineteenth-century Italian parchment over pasteboard, blue and white endbands, pastedowns marbled in red, yellow, blue, and green, bookblock edges colored blue, "94 M:S: PLINIO ET ALTRI 00 27" with scrollwork design on spine in brown ink, some very minor staining and scratches, three of seven sewing supports broken from front cover allowing view of printed Latin strips of spine lining, but intact at back. Dimensions 217 x 145 mm.

It is not often that we can profile an ordinary Renaissance man from the works he chose to read and wrote out for his own use. Signed and dated by the scribe, the colophons tell us this manuscript was written by an otherwise unknown Perugian notary, Laurentius Capitaneus, who later became a monk. In this highly unusual anthology of secular and religious texts, Laurentius assembled works reflecting his diverse interests over time, charting his transition from notary to monk. Two of the texts are unedited.

PROVENANCE

1. Written by the scribe Laurentius Capitaneus, who names himself in colophons on ff. 98v and 164. The first colophon identifies him as a Perugian notary ("Laurentii Capitanei perusini notarius") and dates the completion of this part of the work to 1460. The second colophon identifies him as a monk ("Laurentius monachi scripsit") and dates its completion to "1461 KL Februarii." Another date, "1440 Nonis Maii" is found on f. 121v; it tells us this manuscript was a rather long time in the making, and not bound in the order in which it was copied. The scribe added to his volume after 1461 on the verso of the dated f. 164, but without further colophons. We may presume however that this

otherwise unknown Laurentius Capitaneus (not included in Bénédictins du Bouveret, 1965-1982), first notary, then monk, completed his miscellany before 1500: if he was competently copying texts in 1440, he probably died before the turn of the century. Whether he completed the whole manuscript in Perugia, or left Perugia to take religious vows elsewhere is unknown.

Although most of the volume's marginal notes were added by Laurentius himself or his near-contemporaries, the table of contents, added in the seventeenth century, and two *ex libris* (discussed below) attest to the manuscript's continued use in subsequent centuries. "No. 176" is copied in the upper margin of folio 1.

2. According to an eighteenth-century *ex libris* at the top of f. 1, this book belonged to the library of the Congregation of St. Maur in Rome ("Ex li. Cong. St Mauri Romae"). The Congregation of St Maur (1618-1818) was a branch of the Benedictine Order known for their erudite scholarship and critical editions of medieval texts: Jean Mabillon and Bernard de Montfaucon were Maurists. Although they were entirely French, the Procureur général, the Maurist's representative in the Curia, lived in Rome. This same *ex libris* is found in other manuscripts and printed books in the Bibliothèque national de France and the Biblioteca Angelica in Rome (for shelfmarks see Sabba, 2008, pp. 239-41). Our manuscript is not readily identifiable in the library's 1688 catalogue (Sabba, 2008, pp. 246-54), given the brevity of those descriptions.
3. Another *ex libris* on the verso of the fourth flyleaf, dated 1814, marks this book as belonging to one Joseph Soruglio[?], noting that he was a priest: "Ex Bibliotheca Parochi D. Jos. Soruglio[?]." Although unidentified, he was the last owner to have made an identifiable mark in the volume. Further notes: "9c" and "185 / li" in brown ink, presumably related to past sales prices, are found at the top of the third front flyleaf.

TEXT

ff. 1-26, *Plinii secundi iocundis viri ex aditissimi de viris illustribus libellus. Proca rex albanorum*, incipit, "PROCHA REX ALBANORUM AMulium et numitorum ... pretiosissimis odoribus cremandum curavit; LAUS DEO. Si cupis illustres tulerit quos maxima roma: Scire viros paucis Plinius ipse docet; [f. 26] De Proca De Romulo ... De Agrippa oratore."; [ff. 26v-27v blank];

Unknown [Sextus Aurelius Victor], *Liber de viris illustribus urbis Romae*, Ch. 1-77. Modern editions of *De viris illustribus* usually contain 86 chapters about Rome's famous leaders, beginning with the mythological King Procas of Alba Longa (Ch. 1), and ending with Cleopatra (Ch. 86). This version, however, exists in only two manuscripts, while other manuscript copies (including this one) have 77 chapters, beginning with Procas and ending with Pompey the Great. At the end the scribe has here listed 18 names from the text whom he introduces as the "best Romans," some known to Pliny himself. They are grouped into eight numbered categories, although no one holds the first position.

Since the earliest printed copies, *De viris illustribus* has been attributed to Sextus Aurelius Victor (c. 320-90 CE), a Roman historian and politician. As also seen here, manuscripts usually attribute *De viris illustribus* to Pliny (the Younger, if indicated) (Reed and Tarrant 1983, pp. 149-50; Sage 1980, 83-84). Despite considerable attention to the issue of its authorship (see

Braccesi, 1973, and Sage, 1975, 1980, and others), its true author remains unknown. It appears, according to catalogues, in over 150 manuscripts (Reeve and Tarrant, 1983, p. 151). Manuscripts of the text are relatively rare on the market.

ff. 28-98v, *Comentariorum primi belli punici liber incipit foeliciter. prefatio.*, incipit, "[V]ereor ne qui putent me nimium antiqua . . . pauca loca exedere iussi sunt," *FINIS. Leonardi aretini oratoris clarissimi primi punici belli finite sit[expunged] Comentararia manu mei laurentii Capitanei perusini notarii. 1460"*;

Leonardo Bruni, *Polybius Historicus de primo bello Punico et Plutarchi paralelia*, 1498. Leonardo Bruni (c. 1370-1444) was perhaps the most important humanist historian of the Italian Renaissance. After studying under the great Coluccio Salutati, he became apostolic secretary to four popes (1405-1414) and succeeded his master as chancellor of Florence (1410-1411, 1427-1444).

This is a commentary on the First Punic War, the first of three major battles between Rome and Carthage in 264-241 B.C. Although some modern studies have dismissed it as a mere translation of Polybius, but it in fact also draws on Strabo, Thucydides, Florus, Plutarch, and possibly Zonaras. It was initially an enormous hit: humanist scholars lamented the loss of Livy's account of the First Punic War along with the entire second decade of the *Ad urbe condita* and were happy to embrace Bruni's replacement. While some 160 manuscripts of the Latin version of this work (and a further 120 of the Italian version) have been accounted for, they rarely reach the market. (Ianziti, 2012, esp. pp. 61-66). There are a significant number of marginal notes throughout this copy, but especially in the first half, which are by the main scribe, near-contemporary hands, and occasionally a later hand. Almost all mark the introduction of new figures or events in the text.

f. 99rv, *Fabula exopi ex aulo gelio*, incipit, "Esopus ille e Phrigia fabulator haud immerito . . . Ne quid expectes amicos, quod tu per te agere possis," *FINIS*;

Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*, Book 2, Ch. 29. This brief section contains one of Aesop's fables attributed to Aulus Gellius (c. 125–after 180 A.D.), a Roman author and grammarian. It is also found in Venice, Marc. MS lat. VI 255 (3669), a fifteenth-century Italian manuscript (Kristeller 1998, p. 251). It recounts the moralistic story of the lark and her chicks (readily found online as "The Lark and Her Young Ones") that instructs one to never ask of another what he can do for himself. Marginal notes mark different events and characters as they occur in the story.

ff. 100-121v, *M. tullii ciceronis de senectute ad titum acthicum pomponium incipit*, incipit, "O tite si quid ego advito [sic] curam ve levasso . . . quae ex me audistis, re experti probare possitis," *1440 Nonis Maii. FINIS FOELITER M. TULLI CICERONIS LIBER EXPLICIT DE SENETUE [sic]"*;

M. Tullius Ciceronis, *De senectute*. One of Rome's most famous figures, Cicero (106-43 B.C.) was a politician, orator, lawyer, and philosopher. Written in the year before Cicero's death from the perspective of Cato the Elder at 84 years old, *De senectute* (On Old Age) addresses four disadvantages of old age: it prevents one from taking part in public affairs, causes physical infirmity, denies sensual gratification, and carries us towards death. He argues, however, that these are substituted by greater and more refined pleasures and is generally optimistic about aging. This text has been popular for two millennia; it has more than 500 entries in the Schoenberg Database of Manuscripts. In this copy, topics are called out in the margin, and corrections and gloss are added between the lines.

ff. 121v-135v, incipit, "[R]Omanae magnitudini (ut veteres docti auctores descripsere) dum invisita fuit ... per longa ipsa felicissimi romae vixere," *FINIS Laus iesu*;

An unidentified, apparently unedited account of great men of antiquity. Where it derives from is presently unknown; it is not found among the best-known collections of 'illustrious men' popular in late-medieval Italy, including those by Cornelius Nepos, Sextus Aurelius Victor, Suetonius, and their imitators, Petrarch and Boccaccio. It begins with a discussion of Scipio Africanus, then the attributes and deeds of Antiphus, Phidippus, and (an unidentified) Marcus Cornelius.

f. 135v, incipit, "Scipio quam genuit: pauli fudere parentes ... Munera portantes hominique deoque dedere";

St. Jerome's epitaph for St. Paula. Jerome (c. 342-420) is widely known for his contributions to early monasticism, and his many letters, treatises, Scripture commentaries, and translation of the Bible. From a rich senatorial family, St. Paula (347-404 A.D.) was widowed at 32 and grew increasingly religious, founding a double monastery in Bethlehem: one side for her and her female followers, and the other for Jerome and his male followers. She is credited with assisting in the creation and distribution of Jerome's Vulgate (Cain, 2013).

ff. 136-164, incipit, "[Q]UI NAVALI PRAELIO DIMICATuri sunt ... Christo deditum posse mori non posse superari"; incipit, "[I]NTER MVLTO SAEPE DVbitatum est ... Pauli cum meritis eius quam purpuras cum regnis suis"; [f. 147v] incipit, "[S]CRIPTVRVS VITAM BEAti hilarionis ... forsitan quia plus locum dilexerat," *1461 KL FEBRVARI EXPLICIT VITA SANCTI HILARIONIS LAURENTIUS MONACHI SCRIPSIT*;

St. Jerome, *Vita Malchi monachi captivi*; *Vita sancti Pauli primi eremita*; *Vita sancti Hilarionis*, printed *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 23, col. 55-62, 17-30, 29-54. Collectively known as the *Three Lives of Hermits*, the *Vita Malchi* (391 A.D.), the *Vita Pauli* (374 or 375 A.D.), and the *Vita Hilarionis* (390 A.D.), form a trilogy and were often bound together. Hundreds of copies survive: including just those made before the twelfth century, there are 94 extant manuscripts of the *Vita Malchi*, 128 of the *Vita Pauli*, and 93 of the *Vita Hilarionis* (Cherf, 1943, p. 65). Numerous later medieval examples are also extant. Characters and events in the text are marked in the margin, and the text has been corrected by a contemporary hand, sometimes the scribe's own.

ff. 164v-176v, incipit, "[S]Ofronius eusebius hieronimus oceano scio salutem ... [f. 167] Benedixit eam et abiit letitia plenus"; incipit, "Nihil est Christiano felicius cui promittuntur regna caelorum ... Durum; grande; difficile; sed magna sunt praemia";

[Pseudo-] St. Jerome, "Ad Oceanum: de vita Clericorum," *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 30, col. 297-301 [Letter 42]; St. Jerome, "Ad Rusticum monachum," *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 22, col. 1072-1085 [Letter 125]. The first letter, "Ad Oceanum," addressed by Jerome (but now considered inauthentic) to a friend, Oceanus, discusses the characteristics of clerical life; that is, chaste, ascetic, and completely dedicated to God. It here cuts off one paragraph from its end in the edition. The second letter, "Ad Rusticum monachum" was addressed by Jerome to a man named Rusticus; he advises Rusticus not to become a lone anchorite, but to instead join a monastic

community, and distinguishes the attributes of a good monk and bad monk. There are numerous *maniculae* by the scribe throughout; he clearly saw these texts as worthy of deeper rumination on the meaning of monasticism.

ff. 177-188v, incipit, "[P]ETIISTIS a me sorores ac filiae in christo dilectissime ... eius viri et continentiae et integritatis";

Unidentified text on St. Athanasius, beginning with the preface to his *vita* written as a letter to the nuns of Santa Croce of Giudecca from Hermolaus Barbarus (1454-1493), the Bishop of Verona. It discusses the translation of Athanasius's relics and the miracles which he performed thereafter and says that the text that follows was translated from the Greek.

The prefatory letter has been edited (see *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 15, col. 845-846, Palmé, 1866, p. 256, and more recently Ronconi, 1972, pp. 157-59), but the text that follows containing the discussed *Vita* seems to be unedited; it is not the text that customarily follows in editions. According to its incipits, this same text is found in one other fifteenth-century manuscript: Venice, Marc. MS lat. II 123 (10383) (Kristeller 1998, p. 251). At present, it is otherwise unknown.

f. 188v, incipit, "Hieronimi dicta ex epistolis Amice; contumelia viri est uxor inobedientes. Optima femina: que rariore est ... solitudinis et frequentis desiderii";

Walter Map, "Dissuasio Valerii ad Rufinum philosophum ne uxorem ducat," Lawler and Hanna, 1997, pp. 121-48. Falsely attributed to St. Jerome throughout the later Middle Ages and beyond (including in *Patrologia Latina* vol. 29) and often circulated with his *Epistolae*, this twelfth-century text advising against marriage was immensely popular. It was in fact written by the Welsh cleric Walter Map (1140-c. 1210). Throughout the Middle Ages it was used by numerous authors, including Chaucer, of treatises both for and against women (Lawler and Hanna, 2014). Here, only two lines from the *Dissuasio* are selected by the scribe, perhaps as a brief reminder to himself to steer clear of women.

f. 189, incipit, "Scriptorem eiusdem huius [...]minis. Di viris illustribus Plinii Junioris ... fol. i ... Saracenus gens dedita vultui Luciferi. Sancti Hieronmis in Vita sancti Hilarionis. fol. 155.v."

Completed by a later hand, this former flyleaf contains an index of the texts in this manuscript. At the bottom of the folio the scribe makes two notes: first, that the story of demons in Rome who were exorcised in St. Peter's Basilica can be found in the *Vita* of St. Hilary on f. 160; and second that the part in St. Hilary's *Vita* that discusses the Saracens, who worship the Devil, can be found on f. 155v. Unfortunately, the unidentified text on ff. 123-135v was initially overlooked, and its added title is not wholly legible, nor likely accurate, reading "Philippi [sic] ad...nda [admiranda?] amicitia."

This manuscript contains a thought-provoking combination of texts that reflect the interests of an educated man, before and after his transition from notary to monk, at the peak of Italian humanism. The scribe, Laurentius Capitaneus, identifies himself in one colophon (f. 98v) as a Perugian notary. Notaries were part of the new "middle class" of Italian society which increasingly exerted influence over politics, culture, and the economy in the course of the

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; notaries were particularly important figures in the development of humanism in Italy (Zorzi, 2004, Witt, 2012, Steinberg, 2007). They were educated, literate, and accustomed to writing, as demonstrated by Laurentius's experienced, if at times imperfect, hand.

While writing documents was part of Laurentius's job, he can probably be considered an "occasional scribe": he did not copy books as part of his professional life as a notary, but instead did so in his leisure time for his own library. Many of the texts chosen for his book were best-sellers of Laurentius's time. Humanist readers took enormous interest not only in classical works, but also in classical figures. Short biographies of ancient Rome's "illustrious men," such as that attributed to Pliny the Younger and the unidentified text found in the present manuscript, were particularly popular. They presented examples of leadership, civic duty, and ethical conduct strongly valued in the revivalist culture of Italy's city-states, and inspired new texts in this genre. Equally popular were accounts of great Roman events by ancient and contemporary authors, such as Bruni's recreation of the First Punic War included in this manuscript. Cicero's *De senectute*, copied by Laurentius some twenty years prior to his self-identifying colophons, was perhaps first appreciated by the scribe for its rhetorical value, and later for its time-of-life relevance.

The last third of the manuscript marks Laurentius' transition to monasticism: in addition to the scribe's new self-identification as monk, the texts accompanying his colophon are distinctly monastic. St. Jerome's reflections on his spiritual companion St. Paula, the *Three Lives of Hermits*, and two letters falsely attributed to Jerome all outline and praise ascetic and monastic ways of life. St. Athanasius's *Vita* (here an unidentified version with a known contemporary preface) likewise concentrates on idealized devotion. Notably, all the texts in the volume, include readers's notes in the margins. Although Laurentius changed his occupation he kept his non-religious texts, adding them to Christian texts to build a personal miscellany. Moreover, later monastic readers used his text in subsequent centuries, leaving their notes and corrections alongside those made by Laurentius.

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