

Latin Grammar: ANONYMOUS, Grammar Treatise and Other Short Grammar Texts;  
DONATUS, *De barbarismo*; GUARINO VERONESE, *De orthographia, Carmina  
differentialia*; Classical, Biblical, and Patristic Excerpts  
In Latin, with notes in Italian, manuscript on parchment  
Italy (Florence), dated October 1474

129 folios on parchment, early modern brown ink foliation on ff. 1-73 with modern pencil foliation where ink foliation is illegible, modern pencil foliation on ff. 73-129, incomplete (i<sup>10</sup> [-1, first folio missing with text loss] ii-xiii<sup>10</sup>), occasional contemporary quire signatures, hardpoint ruling on hair side (justification 100 x 60 mm.), written by one restrained and minute Humanistic cursive hand in dark brown ink, 24 long lines, one-line red initials set within and outside the text block, red rubrics, many simple two-line initials in deep blue, some staining, usually minor except on ff. 31-33 and f. 128v, 20% of text illegible on ff. 31v-32v, rodent damage at opening edge of ff. 10-22 not affecting text or gloss, many folios pristine. UNRESTORED CONTEMPORARY BINDING, dark brown leather over cushioned beech boards, same pattern stamped on front and back with three layers of multi-filleted frame: outer frame unstamped, star(?) stamps aligned in a grid in middle frame, innermost panel contains a four-petal flower at center (perhaps same star? stamps arranged in a diamond), four-point stars enclosed at corners with multi-filleted arcs, three wide alum-tawed split-thong sewing supports, bottom endband of white and blue, top endband missing, white paper label on spine reading "I | 260" lacking bottom half, cover leather considerably abraded with two large holes in center panel of back cover and some worming on front and back, eroded at corners, star-shaped nails on front opening edge holding traces of two red velvet straps (with leather cores?), two leaf-shaped clasps intact on back, spine covering eroded at top and bottom and split at back spine joint, first quire separated from top support and last two quires attached only to bottom support. Dimensions 150 x 100 mm.

An unedited Latin grammar, ripe for modern scholarly study, made up of a collection of anonymous grammar texts with a restricted circulation, together with ancient and contemporary humanist grammars. Known in a small handful of manuscripts, this is the only copy not in an institutional collection. Dated, in its original binding with contemporary notes, this manuscript was owned by the grandmother of the Renaissance painter Jacopo da Pontormo and was probably used by the artist to learn his Latin grammar.

## PROVENANCE

1. Dated October 20, 1474 (f. 62v, in text), this manuscript was copied by a professional Florentine scribe, as indicated by both the script and the origin of several contemporary manuscripts containing the same group of texts. Many comparable manuscripts have a highly decorated opening folio, featuring full-color Florentine white-vine borders with the original owner's portrait or family arms (see Columbia University, Plimpton MS 136, Online Resources). Given the visual and textual similarities between Plimpton MS 136 and this manuscript, it probably also had such an opening folio, although it was lost by the time the sixteenth-century inscriptions were added to the current f. 1.
2. The name "Mona Brigida", written in a late fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century hand, appears at the top of f. 73; this is an unconventional place to add an ownership inscription. According to Vasari's famous *Lives of the Artists*, Mona Brigida was the grandmother of Florentine painter Jacopo da Pontormo (1494-1556), who raised him until her death in the first decade of the sixteenth century. Mona Brigida arranged Jacopo's instruction in reading, writing, and basic Latin grammar – the use for which this manuscript

was intended – before he moved to Florence at thirteen as a ward of the court (Vasari, 1991, p. 394). This manuscript was almost certainly in or near Florence during this early period of the artist's life; Mona Brigida may have been its first or second owner.

3. Inscriptions by several sixteenth-century hands, some of which are occasionally difficult to decipher or illegible, are also present. Two are found on f. 1, reading: "Ad usu[m] Io Bat. Fernis[?]" and "Io forese foresi [...] di secondo[?] maggio 1585". Forese Foresi (currently unidentified) adds his name several times to f. 129rv, as well as "Questa regale sono di forese foresi," "Queste regole sono di forese foresi da Pistoia," and a demand that if the book be found, it be treated carefully and returned under cash penalty: "le truova lerenda sotto pena della Valuta che sono y10 et [?]12 [lire?] chi lo rendera li sara usato Diligentia" (f. 129v). Alongside these inscriptions are a number of pen trials by multiple hands.
4. Forese Foresi's inscriptions on f. 129v are often overwritten by a seventeenth-century owner who identifies himself as Paolo Pertichelli. He tells us he first entered the Church (presumably referring to his vocation) in 1630: "A di 12 di maggio io Paolo Pertichelli mi cominciai a andare in Cappella la prima volta nel millesimo 1630" (f. 90). He leaves one more dated note at the bottom of f. 129v: "Io Paolo feci 1631." Paolo Pertichelli did not overwrite Forese Foresi's mention of Pistoia, despite overwriting the other identifying parts of his inscriptions on f. 129v; he too was from Pistoia.  
  
Paolo Antonio Pertichelli, a priest who seems to have died in 1703 (at which time, if he is the same person who annotated this manuscript, he would have been in his 80s or 90s), left some books of fiscal records and other notes to San Gregorio Hospital in Pistoia. They are now in Livorno's Spedali Riuniti Hospital archives (Floria and Pagliai, 2005, p. 121).
5. Although it is unknown who owned this book after Pertichelli, according to previous auction records this manuscript was held by a Tuscan family for many generations.

## TEXT

ff. 1-77v, *Communicamento*, incipit, "///hic passer et hec aquila . Incertum hic vel hec dies ..."; [f. 5] *DE VERBO*, incipit, "VERBUM est pars orationes ..."; [f. 30v] incipit, "PARTICIPIUM est tanquam nominis adiectivum ..."; [f. 36] *DE Verbalibus*, incipit, "Verbali nomen dicitur quod derivaritur a verbo ..."; [f. 38] *SEQUENTUR de relativis*, incipit, "Relativum est illud quod refert aliquod precedens ..."; [f. 71] *DE COMPARATIVIS*, incipit, "Comparativum nomen est illud quod cum intellectu positivi ..."; [f. 74v] incipit, "Coniunctio est pars orationis indeclinabilis ... Completivae autem dicuntur quando causa metri vel ornatus accipiuntur";

Anonymous, unedited grammar treatise with some similarities to grammar treatises by Guarino Veronese (1370-1460) and Niccolò Perotti (1429-1480), glossed in Italian, especially heavily in the first half, primarily by the scribe (in light red) but with occasional notes by later users. This annotation distinguishes different sections and offers translations and explanatory notes. The text is divided into topical sections according to the parts of speech, and by tense, case, declension, etc. It also contains parsed examples and sample sentences, in many ways resembling modern Latin primers such as Kennedy's or Wheelock's. Featuring some conventional

abbreviations, this copy was intended for use by a student with some knowledge of Latin and fluent Italian literacy.

Eleven manuscripts listed in Bursill-Hall, 1981, not including Yale University, Beinecke Library, Marston MS 111 and the present manuscript, bringing the known total to thirteen. Four of these manuscripts share several, or perhaps even all, of the other texts found in this manuscript: Florence, BNC, Cod. Con. Sopp. I.I.34 and Cod. Magliab. I.37; Venice, BNM, Cod. 4479; and Columbia University, Plimpton MS 136. There may be additional examples, as the *Census* (Bursill-Hall, 1981) does not always account for all texts in a volume (as evidenced by discrepancies between the *Census* entry for Plimpton 136 and its more detailed online catalogue description.)

Other copies are also dated at the same point in the text: for example, BL, Burney MS 316 and Plimpton MS 136 are both dated August 21, 1467. Several of the *Census* manuscripts are attributed based on their execution by known scribes or decorators to Florence, including Plimpton MS 136 and Marston MS 111. Brussels, BR, II.1485 features a colophon dated November 1472 at Florence. With only thirteen known copies including this one, this anonymous grammar treatise is rare on the market and offers excellent opportunities for further study and the preparation of an edition.

ff. 78-88v, incipit, "BARBARISMUS est una pars orationis vitiosa in communi sermone ..."; [f. 79] incipit, "Sologismus est vitium in contextu partium orationis ..."; [f. 80v] incipit, "Cum barbarismo et soloecismo vitia XII numerantur ..."; [f. 81v] incipit, "Metaplasma est transformatio quedam recti solutique sermonis ..."; [f. 83] incipit, "Schemata lexeos sunt et dianoeas ..."; [f. 85] incipit, "Tropus est dictio translata a propria significatione ... trade rati ventos dicas: hipallage fiet";

Donatus, *Ars maior*, Part 3: *De barbarismo*, *De solecismo*, *De ceteris vitiis*, *De metaplasmo*, *De schematibus*, *De tropis*, ending with three additional lines from an unidentified source; ed. H. Keil, *Grammatici latini*, vol. 4, 367-402, Leipzig, 1855-1880 (available online, *Corpus grammaticorum latinorum*).

Aelius Donatus (fl. c. 350 CE) was a Roman grammarian and rhetorician; St. Jerome was one of his pupils. His *Ars minor* and *Ars maior* were used as foundational grammar textbooks throughout the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance. The *Ars minor* was used for the elementary phase of Latin education, while the *Ars maior*, Part 3 of which is found here, was used by more advanced students.

ff. 88v-90, *De viii Figuris constructionis*, incipit, "Iuniores quodam figuram diffinientes ... licet hoc per raro dictiores utantur";

The Eight Figures of Construction. Deeply rooted in the tradition of Latin Grammars, these rhetorical elements are discussed in a variety of treatises, from Donatus's to those of Italian Humanist authors Guarino Veronese and Niccolò Perotti. The precise origin of this text is unidentified (not noted in Bursill-Hall, 1981). It includes the customary eight rhetorical figures: prolepsis, syllepsis, zeugma, synthesis, evocation, apposition, synecdoche, and antiprosis.

ff. 90v-97, incipit, "CASUS est declinatio nominis vel aliorum casualium ... Adde iuventa iuventus iunge senecta senectus";

The Five Latin Declensions; unidentified in any known Latin grammar but presented in the same manner as other contemporary and long-studied treatises: the rules are explained, and then examples offered. According to Bursill-Hall, 1981 this same text is found in three other manuscripts, Florence, Cod. Con. Sopp. I.I.34 and Cod. Magliab. I.37, and Venice's Cod. 4479, which share several more texts with this manuscript. It may also be present in Plimpton MS 136; the online catalogue description notes a grammatical treatise of the same length but does not specify its contents.

ff. 97v-101, incipit, "Heteroclitum nomen est illud quod diuersis modis declinatur ..."; [f. 100v] incipit, "Derivatio vii modis fieri ... ac tempora compar et cetera";

The opening of this section is similar, but not identical, to Guarino Veronese's *De heteroclitis* on irregular nouns. It departs from the text of both Percival's undated edition (Online Resources, pp. 23-26) and the 1490 print of Guarino's *Regulae Grammaticales* (ff. 17v-19) on f. 99. The text continues in the same vein but is unidentified. It is followed by a discussion of derivatives and substantive verbs. Also found in Florence's Cod. Magliab. I.37 (Bursill-Hall, 1981), and perhaps in Plimpton MS 136.

ff. 100v-101, incipit, "A separans m vel u ... Extruit, exsanguis, excscindit, et exspuit, expers";

Guarino Veronese, *Regulae Grammaticales* 1490, f. 19rv; ed. by Percival, *n.d.*, pp. 31-32; this short verse tract is found in just a handful of manuscripts including Florence, Cod. Con. Sopp. I.I.34 and Plimpton MS 136, mentioned above (Bursill-Hall, 1991).

Guarino Veronese was an Italian Humanist teacher, scholar, and translator. After obtaining a Latin education, he studied Greek in Constantinople. He was a popular teacher in Florence, Venice, Verona, Ferrara, and other Italian cities, and in 1429 was appointed professor of rhetoric at the University of Ferrara. He wrote several grammar treatises and commentaries on Classical texts, and produced several Greek-to-Latin translations, including works by Strabo, Plutarch, Lucan, and Isocrates. He also prodigiously collected Latin manuscripts, discovered many lost letters of Pliny, and left behind some 600 letters of his own.

ff. 101v-107v, incipit, "Dicitur esse nepos de nepa luxuriosus ... [f. 107v] Prima brevis petit h longa est sine h secunda"; incipit, "Verba neutra secundae conjugationis in indivisas facientia ... Quinque dabunt nitor metior geminante suspino";

Guarino Veronese, *Carmina differentialia*, printed in *Regulae Grammaticales*, Venice, 1490, ff. 19v-24; modern edition, Percival, 1994, pp. 160-177. This verse treatise deals with lexicon: it employs a number of homonyms, homographs, and semantically related terms (Stok, 2016, pp. 106-107; Percival, 1994, pp. 153-54). Most of the lines found in the 1490 edition are also found in this manuscript but appear in remarkably different order. In his 1994 edition Percival consulted seven manuscripts and five printed editions; he suggests that Guarino's text may have been altered by later scribes, and that the extant manuscripts present "perplexingly divergent texts" (pp. 156-157).

The *Carmina differentialia* is found in three other manuscripts sharing much of the same material as this manuscript: the two Florence manuscripts noted above, Cod. Con. Sopp. I.I.34 and Cod. Magliab. I.37, Venice, Cod. 4479 and Plimpton 136. None of these were used in Percival, 1994, nor are they presently digitized, but comparison with this manuscript's copy could prove fruitful in establishing this text's transmission and the relationship between manuscripts. Following the *Carmina differentialia* is an unidentified text (perhaps a mnemonic device) of only twelve lines about second conjugation verbs.

ff. 108-114v, *De coniugationis verborum*, incipit, "Coniugatio est consequens verborum declinatio ... Praeter Noceo. Valeo. Placeo. Careo. Pateo. Liceo. oleo. Taceo. Pareo. oleo et cetera";

Like many of the other texts in this manuscript, this grammatical treatise (short or perhaps partial) is unidentified and is only found in other manuscripts sharing the same material: the two Florence manuscripts, the Venice manuscript, and probably also (although no incipit is provided) Plimpton MS 136.

ff. 115-129, *M. T. Cicero Salvis D. Curioni*, incipit, "Epistolarum genera multa esse non ignoras ... Pectoris exceptum ingeniique bonis DEO GRATIAS"; [f. 129v blank, with numerous ownership inscriptions and pen trials].

Collection of extracts: letters of Cicero to and from friends including Plautus, Tironius, Terence, Silius, and Plancus (ff. 115-122; Watson, 1870); Pliny the Younger to Fabius and Tacitus (ff. 122v-123; *Epistolae*, Book 1.11 and 1.6); the Bible (f. 123v); Church Fathers (ff. 124rv; Jerome, Augustine, Ambrose, Gregory); and Classical authors (ff. 125-129; Terence, Plautus, Cicero, Sallust, Livy, Valerius Maximus, Virgil, Statius, Lucan, Horace, Juvenal, Ovid). These selections – sometimes brief letters, and in other instances compilations of single lines or phrases – are intended as examples of ideal grammar and rhetoric demonstrating the principles taught throughout the volume. This same collection of excerpts, or one remarkably similar, is found in Plimpton MS 136. The remainder of f. 129rv is filled with layers of pen trials (some by inexperienced hands) and ownership inscriptions (see Provenance above).

Latin education was central to medieval culture. All literate persons were expected to begin their formal instruction with Latin grammar, expanding their knowledge to rhetoric and logic (together the *Trivium*) before embarking on further studies. The most popular Grammars throughout the Middle Ages were Priscian's *Institutiones grammaticae*, the *Ars minor* and *Ars maior* of Donatus, and in Italy the *Ianua*, an anonymous work falsely attributed to Donatus (Black, 2001, pp. 44-45). Grammar was also fundamental to the cultural goals of the Italian Humanists, who sought to recover the "pure" Latin of ancient Rome. Driven by a growing literate public demanding a more rapid means of learning Latin than was afforded by the medieval method of total immersion (i.e. no vernacular aids), the Humanist approach introduced the use of the vernacular in elementary Latin teaching (Black, 2001, pp. 47-48): this method is witnessed in the Italian *scholia* and translations found throughout this manuscript's anonymous Latin treatise.

Latin grammar was taught by the Humanists in three stages: pupils first learned morphology, then syntax, and finally stylistics by reading, studying, and mimicking prime examples of rhetorical texts (Black, 2001, p. 43). These stages of elementary, secondary, and advanced Latin

grammar are demonstrated in this manuscript: first with the introductory treatise focused on morphology (ff. 1-77v); then the intermediate instruction in syntax and rhetoric including an excerpt from Donatus's *Ars maior*, short tracts by Humanist grammarian Guarino Veronese, and other supplemental material (ff. 78-114v); and finally, a series of idealized rhetorical texts by Western literature's greatest authorities – Classical authors, the Bible, and the Church Fathers.

While many surviving Grammars of this era were made for school use, the now-lost opening page of this manuscript was probably highly decorated, like other strikingly similar manuscripts, and it may have been made for an aristocratic collection. With this page removed by the sixteenth century, however, it probably served more humble use by later readers as a textbook. It retains, with its original late fifteenth-century binding and layers of intriguing ownership inscriptions, a definite charm.

The text in this manuscript merits closer study, together with the text in the related manuscripts, Venice, BNM, Cod. 4479, Florence, BNC, Cod. Con Sopp. I.I.34 and Cod. Magliab. I. 36, and New York, Columbia University, Plimpton MS 136, cited often above. The apparent relationship between these five codices suggests that their texts as a whole should be considered as a Latin grammar by an anonymous Italian author, composed in the 1460s, almost certainly in Florence. This unstudied and unedited treatise included grammatical works by a number of authors, perhaps some by the compiler himself, together with texts by other authors (some unidentified, and some known). The text in this manuscript thus represents a rich new source for further study of Latin education in Humanist Italy, as well as for the textual transmission of a significant work by Guarino Veronese, his *Carmina differentialia*.

## LITERATURE

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

Donatus, *Ars grammatica* in Latin and partial English translation, Corpus scriptorum latinorum  
<https://www.forumromanum.org/literature/donatusx.html>

Donatus, *Ars maior* (ed. *Grammatici Latini*, ex recensione Henrici Keilii, vol. 4, 367-402, Leipzig, 1855-1880), online, University of Zurich, Corpus corporum, Corpus grammaticorum latinorum  
[http://www.mlat.uzh.ch/MLS/xanfang.php?tabelle=Donatus\\_cps13&corpus=13&allow\\_download=0&lang=0](http://www.mlat.uzh.ch/MLS/xanfang.php?tabelle=Donatus_cps13&corpus=13&allow_download=0&lang=0)

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