

PSEUDO-AUGUSTINUS [likely FRA AGOSTINO DA SCARPERIA], *Soliloquia* and [ECKBERTUS SCHONAUGIENSIS], *Soliloquium seu Meditationes*
In Italian, manuscript on parchment and paper
[Italy, perhaps Verona, c. 1440-50]

57 folios, collation integral (i-iii14, iv14+1, but apparently missing a quire each after ff. 27 and 41, else complete), outer and middle bifolios of the quires composed of parchment and the remainder of paper (watermarks close to Briquet, I, no. 2466, "balance dans un cercle, à plateaux rectangulaires," Verona, 1442), written in dark brown ink in a neat rounded humanistic hand by a single scribe throughout on 28 long lines (justification 130 x 80 mm.), horizontal catchwords, modern pencil foliation skipping a leaf between ff. 20 and 21, headings in red, capitals touched in red, a 2-line red initial with calligraphic penwork decoration on f. 1r, occasional 2-line initials in brown and spaces left for others, some thumbing and staining and general signs of use. Bound in a nineteenth-century binding of marbled leather over pasteboards, spine in five compartments and gilt, mottled edges. Dimensions 190 x 135 mm.

Rare early manuscript of a translation in Italian of the Pseudo-Augustine *Solilioquia* accompanied by another Pseudo-Augustinian text on the Meditations, the latter now firmly attributed to Eckbertus Schonauigiensis and often found copied together with the *Soliloquia*, the two texts constituting a pair very early on. Likely transcribed in Verona at least a quarter century before the printed edition in a neat humanist hand.

PROVENANCE

1. Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872), his MS 2335 (signature recorded on f. 1), purchased from Thorpe; his sale London, Sotheby's, 21 May 1913, lot 525, afterwards, H.P. Kraus, *Bibliotheca Phillipica*, cat.153 (1979), no. 55.

2. J. R. Ritman, *Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica*, Amsterdam, MS 121 (published online, see below). [in neither instance is the accompanying text identified].

TEXT

ff. 1-48, Pseudo-Augustinus, *Soliloquia* [Italian translation], rubric, *Questo e gli soliloqui del sancto Augustino orando et contemplando con Dio a solo a solo e chi vuol haver e sentir sapore e dutilita truovasse mondo de cuore e di mente etc.*; incipit, "Damiti a cognoscere signor che mi cognoscha. Damiti a cognoscere virtu de l'anima mia ..."; explicit, "Questa e la porta de Dio et solo i giusti intrano per essa. Tu autem Domine miserere nostra Deo gratias. Amen"; rubric, *Qui finisce il Soliloqui de sancto Augustino*. (ed. Migne, PL, vol. 40, col. 863-898; see esp., Esnos, p. 322-334: Italian Translation A of the Soliloquia [52 recorded manuscripts], traditionally attributed to Fra Agostino da Scarperia, prior in Lucca, born circa 1320 and translator of the *Sermones ad fratres in eremo*, also attributed to Pseudo-Augustinus [Goff, A-1313 and A-1316]).

ff. 48-57, Pseudo-Augustinus [Eckbertus Schonauigiensis], *Soliloquium seu Meditationes*

["Verbum mihi ad te ..."] [Italian translation] [Missing rubric and opening initial], incipit, "[U]na parola secreta io ho adire a te redicieli Christo Ihesu. Prosumo di parlare a te la fatura de le tuo mane per ardire de la carita desirando la tua beleça e destrugiendome de venire a te desiderato ..."; explicit, "Et al tuo unigenito fiolo de Dio con lo eterno tuo padre et lo spirito santo sia laudado et continua beleza permanente et regno jocondo et perpetuo per tuti i seculi di seculi. Amen. Amen. Amen ..." (ed. Migne, PL, 195, cols. 105-114: Eckberti abbatis Schonaugiensis, *Soliloquium seu Meditationes*; and Goff, A-1334; on Eckbert of Schönau, see also Bibliothèque nationale, *Catalogue des incunables*, vol. I, pp. 189-190, A-759 and A-762).

Preceding the Confessions, the *Soliloquia* is a comparatively early text of Augustine. It takes the form of a dialogue and offers the most intimate witness of Augustine's state of mind between his conversion and baptism. They contain a discussion of wisdom and of the immortality of truth, and have been described as "the first extended discussion of faith and reason following his conversion." However, in the later Middle Ages, Augustine's original text of the *Soliloquia* ("Soliloquies on God and the immortality of the soul") had been virtually forgotten. In its place a Pseudo-Augustinian and profoundly mystical *Soliloquia*, composed in the thirteenth century, enjoyed tremendous popularity. The Latin versions of this Pseudo-Augustine are largely inspired by twelfth-century authors, especially Hugh of Saint-Victor's *De arrha animae*, and there is marked influence of the Confessions of Saint Augustine. Like Johannes of Fecamp's *Confessio theologica*, the text is composed as a confession. Of all the apocryphal Augustine texts, this one enjoyed the greatest success in Italy and in France.

The *Soliloquia* was translated three times in Italian over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Latin manuscripts on which the translations were based are quite different, and so the translations are divided into three versions (A, B, and C). The present translation (A) is most widespread. It originated in Florence. Half the manuscripts were either copied for bourgeois owners or for Florentine monasteries. And, although the translation remains anonymous, it is traditionally attributed to Fra Agostino da Scarperia, and it was certainly realized in an Augustinian milieu. There are 52 manuscripts of this translation, whereas there are only 6 of Version B and 2 of Version C. Whereas the genuine *Soliloquia* was published only in 1491, the Italian version was printed first in 1480 and six times before 1500 (Milan, 1480, 1492; Florence, 1489, 1491, 1496; and Venice, 1495).

Both texts, the *Soliloquia* and the *Soliloquium seu Meditationes* were attributed very early on to Augustine because of the highly personal first-person discourse, close to that of Augustine in his Confessions, and they are often found copied together.

LITERATURE

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Esnos, Geneviève. "Les traductions médiévales françaises et italiennes des Soliloques attribués à Saint Augustin," in *Ecole française de Rome. Mélanges d'archéologie et d'Histoire* 79 (1967), Paris, E. de Boccard, pp. 299-366;

Bertini, G.M. "I Soliloquia e lo Speculum Peccatoris dello Pseudo Agostino in Catalano," in *Homenatge a Antoni Rubió i Lluch. Miscellània d'Estudis Literaris, Històrics i Lingüístics*, Barcelona, 1936, vol. 2, pp. 233-63;

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Soliloqui in Italian, MS 121, Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica, Amsterdam

http://www.xs4all.nl/~bph/500_6.html

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