

JOHANNES CASSIANUS, *De institutis coenobiorum et de octo principalium vitiorum remedia* [*The Institutes of the Cenobia and the Remedies for the Eight Principal Vices*]

In Latin, manuscript on paper

Northern Italy, perhaps Piedmont, c. 1470-1480

87 ff., complete (collation i-vi¹², vii¹¹ (16-5) with first and last four ff. cancelled), on paper with two different watermarks close to Briquet 9472: "Lettres YHS" – Avigliana [near Turin], 1468; Casella [near Genoa], 1469 and Briquet 14335 and 14337: "Tête de boeuf" – Pignerol (Piedmont), 1450-1470 and Turin, 1481-1482, written in a rounded cursive script, in brown ink, on up to 31 long lines (justification 196 x 118 mm), catchwords, ruled in ink, rubrics and chapter numbers in red, paragraph marks in red, numerous 2-line high initials in red, certain second letters of opening words touched in yellow wash, a few larger ajouré initials in red (ff. 6, 30v, 44 et passim), one five-line high opening initial parti-colored in red and blue, some contemporary addenda or corrections in margins, some nota elaborately signaled in the margins. Unbound (wide margins; wormholes especially in last quires and some dampstains). Dimensions 290 x 200 mm.

Copy realized for monastic use of a text absolutely central to the practical and spiritual tenets of monastic culture and one that sheds light on the Eastern origins of Western monasticism. Cassian's *Institutes* provided the major source for the Rule of Saint Benedict; this and other extant manuscripts testify to the ongoing monastic practice of copying texts that relate directly to confinement and its requirements well into the fifteenth century. Although extant in a large number of manuscripts, published many times in the incunable era, and edited based on the early manuscript tradition, the text was surprisingly known by DeRicci in only one copy in North America.

PROVENANCE

1. Watermarks and script point towards a Northern Italian origin for this manuscript, likely realized in a monastic setting. The manuscript could very well have been used for reading during meals, and a contemporary hand expressly insists in the margin: "De lectione et scilento [sic] mense" (On reading and remaining silent during meals [at the table]). Further research and codicological comparison might lead to possible abbeys where this exemplar could have been copied and circulated.
2. Nineteenth-century marginal notes, in French, such as "Castor, évêque d'Apt" (f. 1). Apt is in Southern France, East of Avignon.

TEXT

ff. 1-2v, Johannes Cassianus, *De institutis coenobiorum...*, Preface, rubric, *Johannis Cassiani de institutis monachorum et de conflictu viciorum et virtutum liber incipit*; incipit (fol. 1), "Veteris instrumenti narrat historia sapientissimum Salomonem..."; explicit, "[...] perfectio est etiam [etiam] in inpari facultate" (Guy [2001], pp. 22-32; CSEL [17] [1888], pp. 3-7);

ff. 2v-6, Johannes Cassianus, *De institutis coenobiorum...*, Book I [Of the dress of the monks], incipit (fol. 2v), "De institutis ac regulis monasteriorum dicturi..."; explicit, "[...] nec gestantes carnem spiritui repugnantem. Amen." (Guy [2001], pp. 34-54; CSEL [17] [1888], pp. 7-16);

ff. 6-12v, Johannes Cassianus, *De institutis coenobiorum...*, Book II [Of the canonical system of the nocturnal prayers and psalms], incipit (fol. 6), "[Capitula] De canonico nocturnarum horarum [sic] et psalmodum modo..."; incipit, "Duplici igitur hoc quo diximus..."; explicit, "[...] oneret aut labore" (Guy [2001], pp. 56-89; CSEL [17] [1888], pp. 16-32);

ff. 12v-17v, Johannes Cassianus, *De institutis coenobiorum...*, Book III [Of the canonical system of the daily prayers and psalms], incipit (fol. 12v), "De nocturno orationum et psalmodum..."; explicit, "[...] aut propria invitat voluntas" (Guy [2001], pp. 90-117; CSEL [17] [1888], pp. 32-45);

ff. 17v-30v, Johannes Cassianus, *De institutis coenobiorum...*, Book IV [Of the institutes of the renunciants], incipit capitula (fol. 17v), "De institutione eorum qui renuntiant..."; incipit (fol. 18): "De canonico modo psalmodum atque orationum..."; explicit, "[...] caritatis perfectio possidetur" (Guy [2001], pp. 118-185; CSEL [17] [1888], pp. 45-78);

ff. 30v-43v, Johannes Cassianus, *De institutis coenobiorum...*, Book V [Of the spirit of gluttony], rubric, *Incipit de conflictu viciorum et virtutum, bellum primum adversus castrimagiam*; incipit (fol. 30v), "Quintus nobis iuvante deo liber iste procuditur..."; explicit, "[...] esse se credit" (Guy [2001], pp. 186-258; CSEL [17] [1888], pp. 78-113);

ff. 43v-49, Johannes Cassianus, *De institutis coenobiorum...*, Book VI [On the spirit of fornication], rubric, *De spiritu fornicationis. Incipiunt capitula*; incipit (fol. 44), "Secundum traditionem partum nobis..."; explicit, "[...] solidissimum roburque praemittunt" (Guy [2001], pp. 260-289; CSEL [17] [1888], pp. 113-127);

ff. 49-57, Johannes Cassianus, *De institutis coenobiorum...*, Book VII [Of the spirit of covetousness]; rubric, *Incipit de spiritu philargirie. Capitula incipiunt*; incipit (fol. 49v), "Tertius nobis conflictus est adversus..."; explicit, "[...] magnanimiter tollerare. Explicit de spiritu philargirie." (Guy [2001], pp. 290-333; CSEL [17] [1888], pp. 128-149);

ff. 57-63, Johannes Cassianus, *De institutis coenobiorum...*, Book VIII [On the spirit of anger]; rubric (fol. 57), *De vicio ire, quartum bellum*; incipit (fol. 57v), "Quarto quoque certamine est ire..."; explicit, "[...] supplicia promittuntur eternal. Explicit de spiritu ire." (Guy [2001], pp. 334-367; CSEL [17] [1888], pp. 149-165);

ff. 63-65v, Johannes Cassianus, *De institutis coenobiorum...*, Book IX [On the spirit of dejection], rubric: *De tristitia. Incipiunt capitula*; incipit (fol. 63v), "Quinto nobis certamine edacis tristicie..."; explicit, "[...] transeuntia contemplantes..." (Guy [2001], pp. 368-381; CSEL [17] [1888], pp. 166-171);

ff. 65v-73v, Johannes Cassianus, *De institutis coenobiorum...*, Book X [On the spirit of accidie], rubric, *Incipiunt capitula de vicio accidie*; incipit (fol. 66), "Sextum nobis certamen est..."; explicit, "[...] sed resistendo superandam" (Guy [2001], pp. 382-425; CSEL [17] [1888], pp. 172-193);

ff. 73v-77, Johannes Cassianus, *De institutis coenobiorum...*, Book XI [On the spirit of vainglory], rubric, *Incipit de vanagloria. Capitulum .i.*; incipit (fol. 73v), "Septimum nobis

certainen est contra spiritum cenodoxie..."; explicit, "[...] pretulisse convicti" (Guy [2001], pp. 426-447; CSEL [17] [1888], pp. 193-204);

ff. 77-87, Johannes Cassianus, *De institutis coenobiorum...*, Book XII [On the spirit of pride], rubric, *Incipit de vicio superbie. Capitulum primum*; incipit (fol. 77v), "Octavum quod extremum adversus spiritum superbiae nobis certamen est..."; explicit, "[...] in veritate credamus. Explicit de institutis monachorum" (Guy [2001], pp. 448-501; CSEL [17] [1888], pp. 204-231).

The Institutes--or to give its full title, *The Institutes of the Cenobia and the Remedies for the Eight Principal Vices*--is the first written work of John Cassian, Father of the Church (born in Dacia, c. 360-died c. 430). Acquainted with Egyptian monasticism, Cassian then went to Rome and over to Marseille where he composed *The Institutes* and its companion work *The Conferences*. The relation between the two works is described by Cassian himself (*Institutes*, II, 9) as follows: "These books [the Institutes] . . . are mainly taken up with what belongs to the outer man and the customs of the coenobia [i.e. Institutes of monastic life in common]; the others [the "Collationes" or Conferences] deal rather with the training of the inner man and the perfection of the heart." Cenobitic life as found in Egypt had a considerable impact on Cassian and his *Institutes* reflect this experience.

Complete in 12 books, Cassian explains in his *Preface* that he wishes to concentrate on the institutes and rules of Egyptian monasteries (monastic garb and prayer (Book I), daytime and nighttime prayers (Book II and III) (shedding light on the origin of the liturgy of the Hours), a general account of the Egyptian monastic ethos (Book IV)) as well as on the eight principal vices and how to counter them (Books V to XII). The Latin "*institutum*" can be translated as "instruction," "teaching" or "guiding principle," worthy of being handed down.

Preceding the Rule of Saint Benedict that would ultimately define the cenobitic monastic life accepted throughout the West, Cassian's works set the basis for the Rule of Saint Benedict, which retained the daily liturgy of the Hours, recommended communal and private reading of the *Institutes* and the *Conferences* to his monks, and favored the idea of unceasing prayer. Through Cassian, Benedict gained access to the Eastern monastic tradition that would considerably influence the budding Western monastic culture. Cassian's works--and thus the copying of such works in Western *scriptoria*--were to become central to all monastic libraries, much like the Rule. The *Institutes* provided the monks with the necessary practical knowledge of how to live in an enclosed environment, and the monks could turn to the *Conferences* for council on how to live a proper "spiritual inner life."

The present copy is likely contemporary with the first edition of Cassian's *Institutes* published in Brussels, c. 1474 (Hain-Copinger, 4561), and there were at least four other incunable editions of the *Institutes* (Venice, 1481; Basel, 1485; Venice, 1486; Basel, 1497). Our copy was certainly realized in a monastic setting, its subject fittingly appropriate. The text layout and parti-colored initials are close in style to the newly diffused incunables, published in the same years. There are many copies of Cassian's *Institutes*, but astonishingly De Ricci (*Census*, II, p. 1160) records only one manuscript in North American collections (Yale, Beinecke Library, Marston MS 24, twelfth century), although there have been some 13 copies of this text recorded for sale in the last 50 years (see The Schoenberg Database of Manuscripts: <http://dewey.library.upenn.edu/sceti/sdm/>). The critical edition by M. Petschenig (CSEL, 1888) is based on a selection of seven manuscripts, all from the early tradition (c. seventh to ninth centuries) (see Guy [2001], pp. 12-14).

LITERATURE

Guy, Jean-Claude (ed.). *Cassien, Jean. Institutions cénobitiques. Texte latin revu, introduction, traduction et notes par Jean-Claude Guy*, Paris, Cerf, 2001.

Petschenig, Michael (ed.). *De institutis coenobiorum. De incarnatione contra Nestorium* [Cassiani opera], Vienna, Verlag der Osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2004 [Corpus scriptorium ecclesiasticorum latinorum, 17]. First edition used here, *Iohannis Cassiani de institutis coenobiorum...*, Vienna, 1888 [CSEL].

Ramsey, Boniface (ed.). *John Cassian: The Institutes. Translated and annotated by Boniface Ramsey, O.P.*, Mahwah (N.J.), The Newman Press, 2000.

Stewart, Columba. *Cassian the Monk*, New York/Oxford, 1998.

ONLINE RESOURCES

On Cassian

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03404a.htm>

Cassian, *The Institutes* (translation by Edgar C. S. Gibson)

<http://www.osb.org/lectio/cassian/index.html>

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