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PUBLIUS VEGETIUS RENATUS, *Mulomedicina (Digesta artis mulomedicinalis)*, [in an anonymous Tuscan translation, *L'arte de la medicina de le bestie* or *The Art of Animal Medicine*]

**In Italian, illuminated manuscript on parchment
Italy, Ferrara ?, circa 1450-1475**

92 ff. , complete (collation i⁶, ii², iii-v¹⁰, vi⁸, vii-x¹⁰, xi⁶ [8-2]), on parchment, ruled in light red ink, written in brown ink in a tight humanistic minuscule, on up to 33 long lines (justification 155 x 105 m), rubrics in red, Roman numerals in red indicating chapters, paragraph marks in red and blue, 2-line high initials in alternating red and blue, with either red or mauve penwork, a single 2-line high burnished gold initial on a green ground highlighted with white tracery, decoration extending in the margin with hairline penwork, gold disks and colored flowers, four 4- to 5-line high ILLUMINATED INITIALS (ff. 1, 24, 42v, 79) in pink, green and blue, on highly burnished gold grounds, some initials with extending marginal decoration of hairline penwork, colored acanthus leaves, burnished gold disks and flowers, concentric circles in lower margin destined to receive heraldic arms, circles in blue, red and burnished gold, arms scratched out with initials GE (unidentified) still present. Bound in modern vellum over pasteboard, smooth spine with gilt title, single fleurons and double filets (Two first folios soiled, with some loss of text, restituted in later ink). Dimensions 212 x 150 mm.

Preserved in 26 manuscripts, although not yet edited, this anonymous translation of Vegetius's *Mulomedicina* belongs with a group of vernacular texts in Tuscany that witness a deepening interest in the Italian language in the fourteenth century. Of interest for the study and practice of veterinary science in Middle Ages, the text discusses medieval human-animal relationships at large, as well as the role and status of horse-doctors and their methods of treatment (both magical and empirical). It deserves further study for its linguistic features and the specialized hippiatric language it employs concerning equine animals (Ortoleva has announced a forthcoming edition).

PROVENANCE

1. Italian vernacular translation, as well as the script, confirms Italy as the origin of this manuscript. Its illuminated border decoration and initials suggest Northern Italy, likely Ferrara, as a probable place of origin, with initials and border decoration in the spirit of the artists working at the time of Borso d'Este (1450-1471) or Ercole I (1471-1505) in Ferrara, particularly the characteristic indented gold grounds and the initials traced in juxtaposed colored leafy designs. Note the very elegant initial on f. 42v with an infill of colored beads in clusters.

2. Contemporary or near-contemporary painted concentric circles, meant to contain heraldic arms that have been scratched out. Only the unidentified initials "GE" remain, likely those of the person who commissioned this manuscript.

TEXT

ff. 1-2, Anonymous Tuscan translation of Vegetius, *Mulomedicina*, rubric, *Libro primo de vegetino de l'arte de la medicina de le bestie. Capitulo primo e prolago .i.* ; incipit Prologue, "L'arte de la medicina de le bestie [non e] la piu vile che sia ma secondo che lomo e la piu nobele cosa del mondo chosi la medicina e la piu nobele sentia del mondo... "; explicit Prologue, "[...] quando lo riguarda e savio tostamente conosci l'avenemento de la emfermeta";

ff. 2-23v, Anonymous Tuscan translation of Vegetius, *Mulomedicina*, Book I, rubric, *Capitulo generale de li sengni quando le bestie encomencano adenfermare come se conoscano. R. ii.*; incipit, "Quando la bestia encomenza ad enfermare..."; explicit, "[...] Queste ene el fine del primo libro de vegitio del publico de renatio...E queste sono le rubri del secondo libro";

ff. 23v-24, Table of chapters for Book I, 60 chapters (Book I actually has 62 chapters, thus chapters 61-62 do not figure in the Table, but are present in the text, ff. 23-23v);

ff. 24v-42, Anonymous Tuscan translation of Vegetius, *Mulomedicina*, Book II, incipit, "L'arte de la medicina cioe la mascalcia de le bestie..."; explicit, "[...] li suoi servi non desmentaca per sua nobilissima alteça". The text is not followed or preceded by a Table of chapters to Book II, which contains 60 chapters;

ff. 42-42v, Table of chapters for Book III, 58 chapters, all present in the text, with rubric and chapter number copied after the relevant chapter;

ff. 42v-51v, Anonymous Tuscan translation of Vegetius, *Mulomedicina*, Book III, incipit Prologue (chap. 1), "Conponendo eo el libro ke detto de sopra secondo la sententia..."; rubric, *Questo ene el proemio del terco ibro R. ii.* ; explicit, "[...] a bere aceto caldo per corvo/corno (?)";

ff. 51v-52v, Table of chapters for Book IV, announcing 76 chapters, all present in the text, which contains actually 86 chapters;

ff. 52v-78v, Anonymous Tuscan translation of Vegetius, *Mulomedicina*, Book IV, incipit, "Questo tractato comença mo contene le cure de tutte le bestie..."; explicit, "[...] e molto provata (?) medicina acio";

ff. 78v-79, Table of chapters for Book V, 65 chapters, all present in the text, with rubric and chapter number copied after the relevant chapter;

ff. 79-91, Anonymous Tuscan translation of Vegetius, *Mulomedicina*, Book V, rubric, *Proemio del quinto libro R. i.*; incipit, "Questo ene el quinto libro el loquale se contene de la forma e de la qualita de l'ossa... "; explicit, "[...] Sapi che el sugo di porri non piantati messo una libra de sugo per una unzacon qialche cosa e canarane (?) l'olio e poi unze dove la [...]" (text perhaps missing a few lines;

however, all 65 announced chapters are present, and there are further supplementary rubrics that figure after chapter 65, on ff. 89v-91v: *Enpiasto verde* [cataplasm ?]/ *Cerotto / Enpiasto... / ... Caustico* [type of potion?]. As often is the case with practical texts such as this one, it seems more likely that form and content altered in transmission, scribes adding remedies and chapters to the fixed original text, which could explain that the text continues after the announced 65 chapters.

ff. 91v-92v, Added notes in a sixteenth-century hand, with added medical recipes, for a woman in pain, a donkey/ass that has a fever, beginning: "A una dona che avese dolore de corpo..."; "A uno anezo che avese la febra...".

Publius Vegetius Renatus (c. 383-450 A.D.) is the author of two works: the first, the famous *Epitomata rei militaris*, the most influential military treatise in the Western world, which exercised great influence on European tactics; and the second, the *Mulomedicina*, the first work entirely devoted to veterinary medicine, derived in part from two other works, the *Mulomedicina Chironis* and Pelagonius, *Ars veterinaria*. As a high-ranking reformer and dignitary, Vegetius traveled extensively throughout the Roman Empire, and during these trips he acquired an excellent appreciation of horses and bovines (he quotes the Barbarians and the Huns), including the different breeds and the various equine diseases and their remedies. The *Mulomedicina* is a concise summary of ancient veterinary science. Roman imperial veterinarians (*mulomedici*) were concerned chiefly with the health of equine animals such as horses, mules, and donkeys, as well as cattle, on which economic activity and the army were dependant. These animals had great economic and social importance ("If horses, mules and donkeys were to the economy of the Roman Empire what motor vehicles are to modern economics, then it would seem to follow that the ancient horse doctor was as important as the motor mechanic is today" [J. N. Adams, *Pelagonius and Latin Veterinary Terminology* (1995), p. 7]). The *Mulomedicina* maintained its popularity through many centuries and was translated early on. There are no less than four different Italian translations of Vegetius's *Mulomedicina* (see Aprile (2001, who publishes the translation attributed to G. Brancati, born c. 1440, in Neapolitan dialect).

This manuscript contains the first Italian vernacular translation (in Tuscan dialect), of which there are some 26 known manuscripts, the oldest dating back to the fourteenth century, none of which reveal the name of the translator (referred to as the "primo volgarizzamente anonimo toscano," in Ortoleva, 1993, pp. 198-200, and 1996, pp. 144-158; Lupis, 1992, p. 25, no. 22; Mazzini, 1986-87, pp. 153-160; and Aprile, 2001, pp. 38-40, who provides an updated list of the manuscripts). All manuscripts of this first translation are located in libraries in Continental Europe (mostly Italian public collections), except Bethesda, National Library of Medicine, MS 72 of the sixteenth century (see Faye and Bond, *Supplement*, 1962, p. 175) and London, Wellcome Library of Medicine, MS 788 (see Moorat, 1962, pp. 581-582). This first anonymous Tuscan translation cannot have been composed earlier than the fourteenth century as it contains certain words not found before then, and its Tuscan origin is confirmed by certain linguistic particularities and regional terms (*porcacchia*; *schifare*; *squinantia*). The area was a rich region for translation activity. A number of vernacular translations of classics originated in Tuscany in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries with author-translators such as Bono Giamboni, Brunetto Latini, Bartolomeo da San Concordio, and Domenico Cavalca (see F. Maggini, *I primi volgarizzamenti dai classici latini*, Firenze, 1952).

The first edition of the *Mulomedicina* in the Italian vernacular was printed by M. Tramizzino (or Tramezino), in Venice, 1544 (Vegetius Renatus, Publius. *I quattro libri di Vegezio Renato della medicina de' cavalli et altri giumenti overo l'arte di maniscalchi, tradotti della latina nella lingua volgare...*: see copy, London, BL, 46.k.21). This first printed vernacular edition is an independent translation, based on the Latin *editio princeps* (Basel, 1528; see Ortoleva, 1993, p. 198). The present anonymous Tuscan translation has not been published, although its prologue was published and compared with the original Latin by Ortoleva (1993, pp. 202-205). The translation comprises five books, whereas the original Latin contains only four books (this is discussed at length by Ortoleva, 1996, pp. 150-158).

The original Latin edition of Vegetius's *Mulomedicina*, was published by Lommatzch (1903). V. Ortoleva has announced a revised and corrected edition, to be published in Paris, Belles Lettres (see Aprile, 2001, p. 36). In the meantime, his study on the manuscript tradition--Latin, Greek and vernacular--is most useful to help navigate within a complex tradition (see Ortoleva, 1996). The oldest preserved fragment of the original Latin is found in Colmar, BM, fragment no. 624, saec. IX (the *stemma codicum* for the Latin text is found in Ortoleva, 1996).

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ONLINE RESOURCES

On Vegetius and his *Mulomedicina*, see article M. R. Mezzabotta, "Aspects of Multiculturalism in the *Mulomedicina* of Vegetius"

<http://academic.sun.ac.za/as/journals/akro/Akro45/mezzabot.pdf>

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