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[MISCELLANY]. GREGORIUS MAGNUS, *Dialogues* [French translation of the *Dialogi*];
LOTHARIO CONTI DEI SEGNI (POPE INNOCENT III, *Traittié de la vilté et de la misaire
de la condicion humaine* [French translation of *De miseria humane conditionis*]; GUILLELMUS
DE CONCHES, *Les bons dits et enseignements de tous les philosophes* [French translation of
Moralium dogma philosophorum]

In French, decorated manuscript on parchment
France, perhaps Paris, c. 1360-1380

136 ff., probably 6 leaves lacking after f. 43, and probably 5 before f. 44 and a leaf lacking after f. 45, else complete
(collation : 3 [from quire 6], i-v8, vi3 [ff. 1-3, probably of 8, probably lacking iv-viii], vii3 [probably of 8, lacking i-v],
viii-xviii, xviii10), ruled in brown, justification 168 x 125 mm, text in double column (column width: 55 mm), with 31-34
lines per column, written in brown ink in a round gothic bookhand, with horizontal catchwords in decorative cartouches
(sometimes with fish or dragons), traces of alphabetical quire signatures in the third text, a cadell with a human face on f.
84, headings in red, running titles from f. 44 in red, paragraph marks and line-filler in the table of contents alternately in red
and blue, 163 painted initials alternately in red and blue with contrasting penwork, 5 large parti-colored initials, up to 5
lines high, in red and blue with contrasting penwork in red and black (ff. 1, 4v, 50v, 72, 103v), spaces left for miniatures
never executed, a few partially rubbed scribbles in margins, some original flaws in the vellum with medieval stitching,
occasional creasing and thumbing especially on ff. 113-118, a few initials partially smudged (ff. 45v, 46v, 61, 119),
occasional stains. Nineteenth-century blind-stamped tan pigskin (signed "Four relieur" inside upper cover), vellum flyleaves,
edges gilt, remnants of ties. Dimensions 246 x 180 mm.

The manuscript contains an interesting anthology of three major texts in French translation, doubtless prepared for aristocratic use, given the quality of the script and elegant layout, and for lay understanding, given the vernacular versions of these popular texts. The French prose translations found here both of Gregory and Innocent III remain unstudied and lack modern critical editions.

PROVENANCE

1. Language and script confirm a French origin for this manuscript. The quality and layout of the script suggest the manuscript was likely made for aristocratic use, and the fact that spaces were set aside for miniatures (never executed) testifies to the refined quality of the copy. These vernacular translations of edifying texts appealed specifically to members of aristocratic circles, and copies of these texts in French prose translations are found in prestigious libraries such as the library of Charles V (see L. Delisle, *Recherches sur la librairie de Charles V*, II, 1907, pp. 54-55, no. 305 [translation of Gregory] and 312 [translation of Innocent III]), thus shelved almost beside each other). The

Duke of Berry owned four copies of the French translation of Gregory's *Dialogues* (see Delisle, II, 1907, pp. 243-244).

2. Raoul Rochette (died 1854), secretary of the Académie des Beaux-Arts, Paris, his sale, Techener, 20 March 1855, lot 219.

3. Amsterdam, Biblioteca Philosophica Hermetica, J. R. Ritman, his bookplate on upper pastedown, BPH, no. 90.

TEXT

As originally bound, the French translation of the *Dialogues* probably came first. In the present configuration, the *Dialogues* have been moved to third place (ff. 44-136).

ff. 1-4v, Table of chapters for Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, rubric, *Ci co[m]m[en]ce la table des chapistres et des livres du tresnoble livre du dialogue mo[n]s[eigneur] s[aint] g[re]goire*, followed by rubric, *Ci fine la table des chapistres du tresnoble livre du dialogue de monseigneur saint gregoire p[ap]pe de romme ou temps qui vivoit. Deo gratias*;

ff. 5-5v, Table of chapters for Lothario Conti dei Segni (Pope Innocent III), *Traittié de la vilté et de la misaire de la condicion humaine*, with rubric, *Ci commence le livre de la vilté miserable de la condicion humaine*; followed by a second rubric (f. 5v), *Ci apres commence le livre de la vilté et de miserable condicion de ceste vie humaine hystoriee [hystoriale]*;

ff. 5v-32, Lothario Conti dei Segni (Pope Innocent III), *Traittié de la vilté et de la misaire de la condicion humaine*, incipit, "Ci commence le premier chapistre. A son treschier pere en dame dieu l'evesque de Porto [Porto, near Rome] Lothiers (?) indigne diacre salut en celui qui est vray..."; explicit, "[...] la mort ne seront confes de leurs pechiéz et repentans. Explicit", followed by rubric, *Ci fine le traittié de la vilté et de la misaire de la condicion humaine*.

Early in 1195, Cardinal Lothario dei Segni, later Pope Innocent III, wrote a short treatise that was to become one of the most popular and influential works of the Middle Ages, the *De miseria humane conditionis*, organized in three books: the first concerns the wretchedness of man's conception, the various miseries humans must endure; the second deals with the pleasures, riches and honors for which humans strive; and the third book concerns the putrification of the body and the pains of Hell. The work was dedicated to Pietro Gallogia, cardinal bishop of Porto, near Rome.

The treatise was translated into a number of vernacular languages, including French as in the present manuscript. There is a French verse translation by Guillaume Alexis (1480) entitled *Le Passe Temps de tout home et de toute femme* (in *Oeuvres poétiques de Guillaume Alexis, Prieur de Bucy*, Paris, 1899). There are at least three prose translations. The present translation is datable to the thirteenth century and is extant in 14 manuscripts (for a list of manuscripts and their shelfmarks, all in French collections, see Lewis, 1978, note 10 on p. 67). A critical edition was announced by R. Bultot, but it does not seem to have been published. Two other translations are known, one containing portions of the Latin text and parallel French translations and another with a partial condensation (see Lewis, 1978, p. 67).

The history of the pervasive "contemptus mundi" tradition has yet to be written, although it was begun by Howard and taken up by Bultot who planned to study the tradition from its origins into medieval French literature (see Bultot, 1963-1964).

ff. 32-43v, Guillelmus de Conches, *Les bons dits et enseignemens de tous les philosophes*, rubric, *Ci après s'ensuivent les bons dis et enseignemens de tous les filosofes*, incipit, "Talent m'estoit pris que je raconptasse l'enseignement des filosofes de cele clergie qui est appellee mortalité..."; explicit, "[...] et mener a raison que se tu..." [ends incomplete];

This text is now ascribed with certainty to William of Conches (c. 1080-1160), Romanesque scientist and neo-Platonist philosopher. It is a manual on morals for the well-schooled knight. The present text is a thirteenth-century French translation of the original Latin *Moralium dogma philosophorum*. There are 38 manuscripts of the present translation according to Holmberg, all in European libraries (Holmberg, 1929, p. 39-40). The text was published by Holmberg on pp. 84-150 and closely corresponds to Paris, BnF, MS n.a.fr. 4509-4510, ff. 96-107v.

ff. 43v-50v, Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, Book I, incipit, "[...] ostee pource que reson mase segre descouvert..." [begins incomplete]; rubric, *Coument l'evesque Boniface devisa le vin es bessiaus s. Gregoire r. xxiii.*; explicit, "[...] par quoy nous puissions parler plus par loisir. Explicit";

ff. 50v-71v, Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, Book II, rubric, *Cy commence le secont livre du dyalogue mosigneur saint gregoire et parle de l'ame monsigneur saint benoit moyne et abbé. Le chapitre .i.*, incipit, "Un sains homs fu iadis de vie moult hounorable plain de grace..."; explicit, "[...] force de aver parler"; rubric, *Ci fenist le secont livre*;

ff. 72-103v, Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, Book III, rubric, *Cy commence le tiers livre du dialogue saint gregoire de paulin evesque de la cite de nole*, incipit, "Tant ay entendu dire et a conter les fes et miracles de ceulz..."; explicit, "[...] a l'aide de dieu que l'ame vit après la mort"; rubric, *Ci fenist le tiers livre*;

ff. 103v-136, Gregory the Great, *Dialogues*, Book IV, rubric, *Ci commence le quart livre de dialogue saint gregoire r. i.*, incipit, "Après ce que le premier home per de l'umain lignage..."; explicit, "[...] aurons esté sacrifié a dieu Amen"; rubric, *Ci fenissent les dialogues monseigneur saint gregoire*; Explicit.

The Gregorian *Dialogues* in four books are a collection of short tales of miracles and prodigies, with the second book entirely devoted to Saint Benedict of Nursia. The work has exercised an immense influence on the subsequent literature of the Middle Ages (the best modern edition is still that of Vogüé, 1978-1980).

The Latin *Dialogi* were translated several times in French, and there are both versified and prose versions. Numerous studies have been conducted on the different versions of the French translations of Gregory's *Dialogues* (see entry "Grégoire le Grand," in *Dictionnaire des Lettres françaises, Moyen Age*, pp. 58-59), and to this date three independent translations have been published (Prose version: *Li Dialogue Gregoire lo Pape*, ed. W. Foerster, 1876 [12th c.]; Two versified versions: *Le Dialogue de saint Gregoire le Grand traduit par Angier*, ed. R. Orenge, 1969 [13th c.]; *Le Dyalogue Saint Gregoire*, ed. S.

Sandqvist, Lund University Press, 1989 [14th c.]). However a complete study of the prose translations has yet to be conducted (for example, there are 16 manuscripts containing translations of Gregory's *Dialogues* in Paris, BnF alone, prose and verse versions mixed). The present translation has not yet been attributed with certainty to a particular translator and the list of manuscripts containing this specific prose translation has yet to be established in view of a critical edition.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

The Latin Library Edition

<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/innocent.html>

On *De contemptu mundi* in Innocent III
<http://digilander.libero.it/ortodossia/lotario.htm>

On Pope Innocent III
<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08013a.htm>