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THOMAS AQUINAS, *Epistola de modo studendi*; CATO, *Disticha Catonis*; MARTIN DE BRAGA (PSEUDO-SENECA), *Formula honestae vitae [De Quattuor virtutibus cardinalibus]*; PSEUDO-BERNARDUS CLAREVALLENSIS, *Epistola ad Raymundum de cura rei familiaris*; *Doctrine de la Foy Catholique or Table de la foi catholique*
In Latin and French, decorated manuscript on parchment
France, Paris or Ile de France? c. 1500-1515

44 ff., preceded by a parchment flyleaf, on parchment, complete (collation: i², ii-vi⁸, vii²), written by two hands in a rounded bâtarde script, text copied on up to 16 long lines (justification: 103 x 70 mm), parchment ruled in light red, some catchwords, some quire signatures, prickings still visible, rubrics in bright red, paragraph marks in red and blue, line-fillers in red and blue, initials 1-4-line high in liquid gold with designs of arabesque, floral or acanthus leaves on blue, brown or dark red grounds, contents of manuscript detailed in black ink on verso of flyleaf as follows: "Epistolae sancti Thomae / Catonis Liber / Senecae libellus de quatuor virtutibus / Doctrine de la foi catholique." Bound in a contemporary binding of blind-tooled calf over pasteboard, the covers divided by quadruple fillets into concentric frames filled with repeated impressions of a stamp of a fleur-de-llys in outer frame (not unlike that reproduced in D. Gid, Catalogue des reliures françaises estampées à froid... de la Bibliothèque Mazarine [1984], vol. II: "lis 30" or "lis 31"), a monogram IM with floral motif in middle frame (this stamp rare and unrecorded), an unidentified stamp in central frame (foliate motif with acorns?), back sewn on three raised thongs, evidence of ties now wanting (rebacked with repairs to corners, boards a bit scuffed and worn, but else preserved in its contemporary condition). Dimensions 155 x 115 mm.

Interesting miscellany likely used as a didactic compendium with texts traditionally employed for instruction purposes—Aquinas on acquiring knowledge; Cato's Distichs, a famous medieval textbook; and Martin of Braga, another didactic staple. Also included are short texts on how to run a household and on the central articles of the Christian Faith. The layout of Cato's Distichs suggests that the present manuscript was likely compiled for the use of a young student, providing him (or her!) with a ready manual of standard texts.

PROVENANCE

Written in France in the early 16th c. based on script and linguistic features (with the last text included in the miscellany in French). The binding appears to be close to those realized in Paris, Champagne and Northern France. Further comparisons with similar codices is necessary to determine exact region of production for this codex.

Very faint early ownership inscription on verso of back flyleaf (legible with ultraviolet light) indicates the manuscript was once owned by a certain Jean de Marle, whose name appears on f. 18 (legible with ultraviolet light): "Iohannes de Marle." This could be Jean de Marle, échevin of Paris in 1499. Jean de Marle had a daughter Claude who married Augustin de Thou (also Prévôt des marchands in 1538), grandfather of Jacques-Auguste de Thou (French Statesman, bibliophile and historiographer).

Germain de Marle: "Germanicus...de Marle...Iesus Maria. Iesus Maria" (full inscription to be read with ultraviolet light). This could be Germain de Marle, Général des monnoyes, Prévôt des marchands of Paris in 1502. There was another Germain de Marle, seigneur de Tilloy who was Prévôt des marchands in 1526 (see Babelon, 1986, pp. 532 and 534).

Gabriel Peignot, his sale Paris, 1852, lot. 189 (*Catalogue d'une nombreuse collection de livres anciens rares et curieux provenant de la bibliothèque de feu Gabriel Peignot....* Paris, J. Techner, 1852, no. 189, p. 24. At the time of the sale, the manuscript was clearly misdated: "Précieux manuscrit sur peau de vélin de 44 feuillets très bien conservé et exécuté dans la première moitié du XIV^e siècle."

TEXT

ff. 1-2v, Thomas Aquinas, *Epistola de modo studendi*, rubric, *Incipit epistola sancti thome in qua proponit ydoneum modum salubriter acquirendi scientiam sive humanam sive divinam*; incipit, "Quia quesivisti a me qualiter te studere oporteat in thesaurum sciencie acquirendo tale a me tibi super hoc traditur consilium..."; explicit, "[...] Hec ergo pro tuo profectu studii et vita dixerim tuum existit ea sectari. Vale et insibus totis virtutibus incumbere iterum vale";

Attributed to Aquinas, the present *Epistola de modo studendi* is sometimes considered spurious (see P. Mandonnet and J. Destrez, *Bibliographie thomiste*, 1960, p. XXII, who classify the *Epistola de modo studendi* amongst the "[Opuscules] d'authenticité discutée, mais probable"). Nonetheless, it is published in P. Mandonnet (ed.), *S. Thomae Aquinatis...Opuscula omnia...*, 1927, vol. IV, p. 535. Interestingly, the text copied in this codex is longer and differs somewhat from the edited version. It contains advice to a young monk, John, on how to learn, including advice to pay no attention to the source but to judge the content and "make it your business to shelve in the bookcase of your mind whatever you can, as if desiring to fill a vase."

ff. 3-18, Cato, *Distichis Catonis or Dicta Catonis*, incipit Prologue, "Cum animadverterem quam plurimos homines errare graviter in via morum...", incipit Book I (ff. 4-7v), "Si deus est animus nobis ut carmina dicunt / Hic tibi precipue sit pura mente colendus..."; incipit Book II (ff. 7v-11), "Telluris si forte velis cognoscere cultus"; incipit Book III (ff. 11-13), "Hoc quicumque veli carmen cognoscere lector"; incipit Book IV (ff. 13-18), "Securam quicumque cupis deducere vitam"; explicit, "[...] Miraris verbis nudis me scribere versus / Hec brevitas sensus fecit coniungere binos. Explicit liber cathonis";

f. 18, Added verses [by the same hand who signed the now almost effaced name "Iohannes de Marle" (f. 18)], apparently unpublished and unidentified, although found in two other manuscripts, according to the *In Princípio* database: "Est sapientia gratia scientia si docentur / Que data crescit

cresce [...] taceatur..." (also found in Troyes, Bibl. Mun., MS. 895, f. 192v ; Uppsala, UB C204, fol. 65v, with a slightly different incipit, "Est sapientia grata pecunia si doceatur...");

The *Disticha Catonis* (Distichs of Cato) exerted throughout the Middle Ages an extensive influence, and there are few texts that were so widely read and commentated (with the exception of course of the Sacred Scripture): "By the ninth century, at the latest, Cato had become the standard first reader in the Christian schools of Western Europe" (Hazelton, 1957, p. 160). A very popular elementary school book (read as far back as the Roman primary schools, used in Merovingian and Carolingian schools), the *Disticha Catonis* are often accompanied with glosses and commentaries: this most likely accounts for the spacing between verses in the present manuscript, destined to receive a gloss or an interlinear commentary, never executed, but nonetheless possible given this textual layout.

The *Disticha Catonis* were published very early on, most certainly for school use, with the first incunable edition circa 1472 (Paris, BnF, vélins 2857: Pellechet-Polain, 3406; for a list of the early printed editions, see Boas, 1952, pp. XLIX-LII). The definitive edition of the *Disticha Catonis* is that of M. Boas (Amsterdam, 1952), superseding that of J. W. Duff and A. M. Duff, *Minor Latin Poets*, Loeb Classical Library, 1934 (revised edition 1982), pp. 585-639. For a study of the medieval Cato, see R. Hazelton, "The Christianization of Cato: The *Disticha Catonis* in the Light of Medieval Commentaries" (Hazelton, 1957). See also *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, "Disticha Catonis," vol. III, col. 1123-1127.

The popularity of the Distichs was indeed long-lived; Benjamin Franklin praised their texts, with which he was so impressed that he had a version printed in the eighteenth century. In 1735, Franklin issued William Logan's translation, called *Cato's Moral Distichs Englished in Couplets*. Franklin wrote about the Distichs as follows: "It would be thought a Piece of Hypocrisy and pharisaical Ostentation in me, if I should say, that I print these Distichs more with a view to the Good of others than my own private Advantage: And indeed I cannot say it; for I confess, I have so great Confidence in the common Virtue and Good Sense of the People of this and the neighboring Provinces, that I expect to sell a very good impression."

f. 18v, blank;

ff. 19-31, Martin de Braga (Pseudo-Seneca), *Formula honestae vitae* [De Quattuor virtutibus cardinalibus], rubric, *Senecae moralis philosophi de quatuor virtutibus libellus feliciter incipit*; incipit, "Quatuor virtutum species ex multis sapiencium sentenciis defunte sunt..."; explicit, "[...] aut deficientem pumat ignaviam. Prudentissimum senesce finit opus de quatuor virtutibus";

There was an almost universal belief that the *Formula honestae vitae*, or as it is often entitled *De quattuor virtutibus*, was to be ascribed to Seneca. The presumed Senecan origin of this text culminated in some 40 manuscripts of the fourteenth century and over one hundred of the fifteenth century that all provide Seneca as its author. Petrarch appears to be the first to doubt the correctness of the Senecan tradition. In the twelfth century, several manuscripts are found without the preface (as is the case in the present manuscript) that provided the name of the actual author, although it is clear the Bishop of Braga was heavily indebted to Seneca.

The correct author was Saint Martin, Bishop of Braga (Portugal) (died in 579). His authorship was confirmed by C. W. Barlow (thesis: "The Text-Tradition of the *Formula vitae honestae* of St. Martin of Braga," Yale University, 1935; edition, Barlow, 1950). The Latin original was published in *Martini episcopi Bracarensis Opera Omnia* (Barlow, 1950, pp. 236-250), with a study of the early manuscript and textual tradition. The work had a tremendous influence on the later Middle Ages, on authors such as Vincent of Beauvais, Alard of Cambrai, and many others: it was translated into a number of vernacular languages (see for example a full examination of the rich French vernacular translation known as the "Seneque des IIII virtus" conducted by H. Haselbach, 1975). Martin of Braga's *Formula honestae vitae* remained a favorite drill book for elementary schools well into the sixteenth century.

ff. 31v-37v, [Pseudo-Bernardus], *Epistola ad Raymundum de cura rei familiaris*, rubric, *Epistola bernardi silvestris super gubernacione rei familiaris*, incipit, "Gracioso ac felici militia raymundo domino castri ambrosii..."; explicit, "[...] optavit ad quem eam perducat sua dampnabilis senectus";

The *Epistola de cura rei familiaris* is a short manual of instruction for householders, popular throughout Europe existing in numerous manuscripts and prints. No critical edition and no examination of the text exists, so nothing can be stated with certainty about its authorship and history (a transcription of the Latin version found in Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Cod. 2881 Rec. 2256 (ff. 87-90) is provided by C. D. M. Cossar, *The German Translations of the Pseudo-Bernhardine "Epistola de cura rei familiaris,"* 1975, pp. 97-102). In the Middle Ages, the work was popularly ascribed to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, an ascription that is now unanimously rejected by modern scholars. The work was translated into most European vernacular tongues. An actual critical edition and census of the extant codices remains to be conducted.

ff. 37v-43v, *Doctrine de la foi catholique or Table de la foi catholique* [French translation of the *Tabula Fidei christianaæ*], rubric, in French, *Sensuit une bonne table et prouffitable doctrine de la foy catholique contenant plusieurs choses et premierement les sept vertus principales*; incipit, "Les sept vertus principales trois en y a theologales c'est assavoir foy esperance charité..."; following rubrics, *Les .vii. pechez mortelz*; *Les vertus contraires*; *Les œuvres de misericorde*; *Les .vii. œuvres de misericorde espirituelle*; *Les .vii. sacremens de sainte eglise*; *Les .vii. peticions contenues en pater noster*; *Les .vii. dons du saint esperit*; *Les .ii. principaulx commandemens*; *Les dix commandemens de la loy*; *Les .v. sens de nature*; *Les .iii. consaulx de Jhesucrist*; *Les .vii. beneuretez des justes*; *Les .vii. vertus du corps glorifié*; *Les principales joyes de paradis*; *Sensuit les principales peine d'enfer*; *Les six aages du monde*; *Les sept aages de l'omme*; *Les .xii. articles de la foy*; last rubric, *Le vesteinent espirituel de l'ame*; explicit, "[...] Homme ne vit pas seulement de pain mais de la parole qui yst de la bouche de dieu. Explicit tabula fidei."

The last text contained in this miscellany is a French translation of the Latin *Tabula fidei christianaæ* [Table of Christian Faith], which provides the main articles and principles of Christian faith to be assimilated by any devout Christian. The Latin original is preserved in a number of manuscripts, including: Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, 512, fol. 584; Oxford, Bodl. Library 797, f. 14; Paris, BnF, MS lat. 1865, f. 105. There are most certainly many other manuscripts to be identified. We have identified another copy of the French translation in Paris, BnF, MS fr. 9558, f. 23: "Aucuns enseignemens de la foy catholique... Premierement les .vii. vertus principaulz... Explicit lai table de lai foy." Again undoubtedly, such a central text to Christian faith is to be found in other manuscripts. These texts are not always well described or identified in manuscript catalogues. We

have not found this text indexed in K. Sinclair, *French Devotional Texts of the Middle Ages*, Westport, 1979-1988.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Distichs of Cato

http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_762511293/distichs_of_cato.html

Latin and English translation of Distichs

<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/texts/monostich.html>

On St-Martin of Braga

<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/jod/texts/monostich.html>

Read V. Trovato, 2005 (quoted in Literature)

http://books.google.fr/books?id=xW0J9bSE-9gC&pg=PA109&lpg=PA109&dq=martin+of+braga&source=web&ots=uBRcOnWWSh&sig=kece0tiDfDHglxELA5L6vV95AYY&hl=fr&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=10&ct=result

Thomas Aquinas, *Epistola de modo studendi* (in Latin and in English)

<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/aquinas/epist.shtml> (Latin)

http://www.forumromanum.org/literature/aquinas/stud_e.html (English)