

MARCUS TULLIUS CICERO, *De officiis*, *De amicitia*, *Paradoxa stoicorum*, *De senectute*;  
FRANCISCUS PETRARCUS, *Epistulae variae* (excerpts from);  
PSEUDO-PLUTARCHUS, *De liberis educandis*, Latin trans. by Guarinus Veronese  
In Latin, illuminated manuscript on paper  
Northern Italy, Lombardy (Milan?), c. 1475

129 ff., preceded by one parchment and one paper flyleaf, followed by two paper and one parchment flyleaf, complete, in very regular quires of 10 (collation: i-xii10, xiii9 [of 10, with x a cancelled blank]), on paper, with watermarks of the type Briquet, "Fleur à 8 pétales", close to no. 6597, Milan, 1472 or no. 6599, Milan, 1475 or Pavia, 1480, written in a fine and regular humanistic script, in brown ink on up to 29 long lines (justification 135 x 90 mm.), paper ruled in light pink, vertical catchwords, some contemporary quire signatures, wide margins, rubrics in bright red, some paragraph marks in bright red, numerous initials in red or blue with opposing filigree penwork in blue or light pink, 7 decorated initials in pale yellow wash on colored wash grounds with interlacing white vine ornamentation of the bianchi girari type (ff. 1, 30, 47, 71, 91, 101, 116v), a few drawings in the margins (e.g. f. 93, a skull facing the text "Mors terribilis..."), a few marginal corrections or annotations. Bound in a later imitation half-binding of brown calf, wooden boards left bare, back sewn on three raised thongs, remnant of leather clasp on upper board, brass catchplate on lower board, no pagedowns, front and end parchment flyleaves with Hebrew manuscript text (Very fresh internal condition, a few wormholes never affecting legibility, very good overall condition). Dimensions 240 x 175 mm.

This is a fine, quintessential humanist manuscript. The classical corpus of Ciceronian texts, often copied together and supplemented by other texts, would have appealed to humanists for their rhetorical, pedagogical, and linguistic ideals. With its elegant *bianchi girari* initials, the present manuscript displays generous clean margins, allowing ample place for a teacher's or student's marginalia and scholia. The influential Pseudo-Plutarchan work on education still awaits its modern editor.

## PROVENANCE

1. Copied and decorated in Italy, likely Lombardy (Milan or Pavia) as suggested by the watermarks in the paper. There are no other traces of previous ownership, except perhaps a few pen trials that are contemporary or near-contemporary. The style of the brown ink and painted *bianchi girari* initials suggests a Lombard origin, with the interesting use of colored wash pigments, perhaps more adapted to the paper support.
2. European Continental Collection.

## TEXT

ff. 1-69v, Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De officiis*, rubric, *Marci Tullii Ciceroni officiorum liber primus*; incipit, "Quamquam te marce fili annum iam audientem cratippum..."; explicit liber primus (fol. 30), "[...] sed ad reliqua pergamus"; rubric (f. 30), *Marci Tullii Ciceronis officiorum liber secundus*; incipit, "Quemadmodum officia ducerentur..."; rubric (f. 47), *Marci Tullii Ciceronis officiorum liber tertius*; incipit, "Publium Scipionem Marce fili..."; explicit liber tertius (f. 69v), "Vale igitur mi Cicero tibi que persuade esse te quidem mihi carissimum sed multo fore cariorem si talibus

monumentis preceptisque latebere. Laus deo" (ed. W. Miller, *De officiis...*, Cambridge [Loeb Classical Library], 1990);

Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 BCE) is perhaps the most renowned name in Roman literature. He was a skilled dialectician, rhetorician, and orator, who enjoyed a long career as a politician in the Roman Senate. He practiced law in Rome and studied philosophy in Greece before becoming Consul in 64 B.C.E. Cicero went into political retirement during the dictatorship of Julius Caesar (c. 48 B.C.E.). When Caesar was assassinated in 44 B.C.E., he returned to public life to support the Roman Republic and to oppose the triumvirate of Marcus Anthony, Octavian, and Marcus Lepidus. Most of our knowledge of Cicero's life comes from his own letters and from Plutarch's *Life of Cicero* composed over a hundred years after his death.

Cicero's *De officiis* was the last major work of the great orator's career. He composed the work in epistolary form to his son Marcus in 44 BCE. *De officiis* concentrated on the theme of duty. For Cicero, duty was a relationship between how duties are performed and how they are guided by the final purpose of life. He believed that knowing one's duty depended on the ability to discern the proper course of action for each.

f. 70, Franciscus Petrarca, *Epistulae variae*, 63, incipit, "Urget hunc [sic, hinc] animum dolor serenissime princeps et in lamenta precipitat huic silentium iubet..."; explicit, "[...] quamquam feliciter serenare et stabilire divinitus ac victoriosam facere dignetur altissimus. Data Milani die 28 octobris 1356" (see E. H. Wilkins, *The Prose Letters of Petrarca*, 1951, p. 142);

ff. 70-70v, Franciscus Petrarca, *Epistulae variae*, 6, incipit, "Reverendissime pater et domine audito rumore flebili ac stupendo..."; explicit, "[...] in omnibus fiducialiter uti velit altissimus vos promoneat et conservet. Data etc." (see E. H. Wilkins, *The Prose Letters of Petrarca*, 1951, p. 139);

In addition to the letters included by Petrarch – the Father of Humanism – in his three celebrated collections (*Epistolae familiares*, *Epistolae sine nomine*, *Epistolae seniles*), there are 77 extant prose letters of his which the Poet did not so include. Included in this codex are two of these prose Letters. In 1863, Fracassetti gathered 75 letters from a great variety of sources in a collection that he called *Epistolae variae* (see Fracassetti, 1863). Wilkins (1951) gave a comprehensive study of these Prose Letters.

ff. 71-89, Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De amicitia*, rubric, *Marci Tullii Ciceronis ad atticum amicum suum de amicitia liber incipit*; incipit, "Quintius Mutius agur seuola multa narrare de celio lelio socero suo memoriter ac iocunde solebat..."; explicit, "Vos autem hortor ut ita virtutem locetis sine qua amicitia esse non potest ut ea excepta nihil amicitia prestabilius putetis. Finis" (ed. W. A. Falconer, *De senectute; De amicitia; De divinatione...*, Cambridge [Loeb Classical Library], 1992);

Cicero composed his dialogue on friendship, the *Laelius seu de amicitia*, for his friend Titus Pomponius Atticus in 44 BCE. The three interlocutors in the dialogue are Gaius Laelius, Gaius Fannius, and Quintus Mucius Scaevola. In this dialogue, Cicero argues that true friendship is political friendship. True friends therefore share the same notions of justice and virtue as if they were of the same party. True friends are different from tyrants, who impose their own will upon others and as such have no friends.

ff. 89v-90v, blank;

ff. 91-99, Marcus Tullius Cicero, *Paradoxa stoicorum*, rubric, *Marci Tullii Ciceronis paradoxorum liber*; incipit, "Animadverti brute sepe catonem auunculum tuum cum in senatu sententiam diceret..."; explicit, "[...] nonmodo non copiosi ac divites sed etiam pauperes et inopes extimandi sunt. Finis" (ed. H. Rackham, *De oratore: book III; De fato; Paradoxa stoicorum; De partitione oratoria...*, Cambridge [Loeb Classical Library], 1967);

Cicero composed his *Paradoxa stoicorum* as an introduction to Stoicism in 46 B.C.E. In this work, he sets out to explain six basic principles of Stoicism commonly rejected by non-Stoics. These are 1) moral value is the only good, 2) virtue is sufficient for happiness, 3) all sins and virtues are equal, 4) every fool is insane, 5) only the wise man is really free, and 6) only the wise man is really rich. Despite Cicero's stated intentions that the treatise was written for self-amusement, the treatise provided him with a forum for attacking his critics and enemies.

ff. 99v-100v, blank;

ff. 101-116, Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De senectute*, rubric, *Marci Tullii Ciceronis de senectute liber*; incipit, "O Tite si quid ego adiuto curamve leuasso..."; explicit, "[...] ut ea que ex me audistis re experti probare possitis. Finis" (ed. W. A. Falconer, *De senectute; De amicitia; De divinatione...*, Cambridge [Loeb Classical Library], 1992);

Cicero composed the *De senectute* in 44 BCE after the death of his daughter. The composition of *De senectute* also coincided with his increasing lack of hope in the restoration of the Roman Republic. The work is written as a dialogue, with P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus, Gaius Laelius Sapiens, and Marcus Porcius Cato as the main characters. In this work, Cicero argued that maturity and morality determine one's response to growing old and dying. He therefore argued that one's life should be used to cultivate wisdom in order to overcome the miseries of old age, disease, and death.

ff. 116v-117, Guarino Veronese, Dedicatory Epistle to Antoinio Corbinelli, preceding his translation of *De liberis educandis*, incipit; "Maiores nostros angele mi suavissime non admirari et maximis prosequi laudibus..."; explicit, "[...] sed de his alias plutarcum ipsum audiamus";

ff. 117-128v, Pseudo-Plutarchus, *De liberis educandis*, Latin translation by Guarino Veronese, incipit, "Quidnam est quod de ingenuorum educatione..."; explicit, "[...] et hoc ipsum quadam sortis ac [...] bonitate per multaque in super diligentia indigebit ac humano effici posse constat ingenio. Gloria laus et honor tibi sit rex christe redemptor. Cui puerile decus prompsit osana pium. Finis."

Translated from Greek into Latin, the short treatise in the Plutarchan corpus entitled *De liberis educandis* is the only complete Greek work on education that is extant. Although the treatise is no longer considered to be by the pen of Plutarch, it probably belongs to Plutarch's time, because it shares educational principles with Plutarch, as well as with Quintilian and Theophrastus. Berry notes (following Jaeger) that its influence is still alive today: "the three elements of education (nature, learning, and practice) [which] entered by way of this work into Latin thought" (Berry, 1953, p. 387). He goes on to note that the author of *De liberis educandis* ... emphasizes the importance of philosophical training, "which is the head and front of all education" (Berry, 1953, p. 389). The work had a significant influence on pedagogy in the Renaissance.

Guarino de Verona was an Italian humanist teacher, scholar, and translator (b. 1370, at Verona, d. 1460, at Ferrara). Having studied Latin as a youth, he went to Constantinople, where he studied Greek under Manuel Chrysoloras. He taught in Florence, Venice, Verona, Ferrara, and other Italian cities, and students flocked from all over Italy and abroad to listen to him. He became the tutor of Lionello d'Este in 1429, and he was then appointed professor of rhetoric in the University of Ferrara (1436). A master of Greek and Latin (Guarino brought 50 Greek manuscripts back to Venice from Constantinople), he wrote several grammatical treatises, translations from the Greek such as *De liberis educandis*, and commentaries on the works of various classical authors. He also composed an elementary Latin grammar, and he brought out a widely popular Latin version of the catechism of Greek grammar by Chrysoloras. His translations included works by Strabo, Plutarch, Lucan, and Isocrates. He also collected Latin manuscripts, works by Pliny, Cicero, and Celsus.

He dedicated his translation *De liberis educandis* to his student, Angelo Corbinelli (d. 1419, in Florence), who was a prominent merchant and humanist. In 1410-1414, Corbinelli frequented Guarino's lectures at the University of Florence and subsequently carried on a correspondence with him. In this correspondence, Guarino pays homage to Corbinelli; he promises his student a Latin translation of Plutarch's *De liberis educandis* and praises him for the care he has taken with the education of his children (see Sabbadini, 1919, I, pp. 15-16; pp. 168-169; Martines, 1963, pp. 318-319).

In the absence of a modern edition, which would require a thorough study of the existing manuscripts, there is no complete list of the extant manuscripts (see Cremaschi, describing three copies in Bergamo, 1959, pp. 272-73; and the unpublished thesis of Pacella, 1997). De Ricci lists three manuscripts in North American collections (p. 559, University of Chicago, MS 35; p. 818, Walters Art Museum, MS W. 373; and p. 982, Harvard University Library, MS lat. 49), to which MS 313, Yale University, Beinecke Library, should be added. The first printed edition is Venice, Christopher Valdarfer, c. 1471 (Goff P-821).

f. 129, Pentrials, "Carmina moralia esopi"; "Ihs maria"; "Verborum levitas morum sert pondus honestum."

This manuscript is a quintessential humanistic codex, associating a select group of Ciceronian works, particularly dear to Italian humanists, often copied together, with other extracts of works also typically tied to Humanistic ideals and interests. To the Ciceronian corpus of four classic works are added two isolated Prose Letters of Petrarch and the Pseudo-Plutarchan work on education. Copied with wide margins, perhaps destined to receive commentaries or scholia, the present manuscript would have served well the purposes of a humanist teacher or student of Rhetoric, Latin idiom and the greater ideals of Humanism and the Renaissance.

## LITERATURE

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Wilkins, E. H. *The Prose Letters of Petrarch: A Manual*, New York, 1951.

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

Biography and introduction to Cicero by The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy  
<http://www.iep.utm.edu/c/cicero.htm>

English translation of the *De officiis*  
[http://www.constitution.org/rom/de\\_officiis.htm](http://www.constitution.org/rom/de_officiis.htm)

Latin version of the *De officiis*  
<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/off.shtml>

Latin version of the *Paradoxa stoicorum*  
<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/paradoxa.shtml>

English translation of the *De amicitia*  
[http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl\\_text\\_cic\\_friendship.htm](http://ancienthistory.about.com/library/bl/bl_text_cic_friendship.htm)

Latin version of the *De amicitia*  
<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/amic.shtml>

English translation of *De senectute*  
[http://www.4literature.net/Cicero/Cato\\_or\\_An\\_Essay\\_on\\_Old\\_Age/](http://www.4literature.net/Cicero/Cato_or_An_Essay_on_Old_Age/)

Latin version of the *De senectute*

<http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/senectute.shtml>

On the reception of Plutarch in Italy

<http://www.phil-hum-ren.uni-muenchen.de/SekLit/PADEplutarch.HTM>

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