

PETRUS RIGA, *Aurora*

In Latin, illustrated manuscript on parchment

Northern France, Paris, c. 1200-20; and Northern France, Normandy, 1401

iii (modern parchment) + 213 + iii (modern parchment) folios on parchment, modern foliation in ink top outer corner recto, complete (collation, i^s [+one leaf, f. 1, added before 1] ii-x^s xi^s [3, f. 84, and 5, f. 87, single] xii-xiv^s xv⁴ [complete, original structure uncertain, possibly originally 8, with 5-8 cancelled] quires 16-20, ff. 118-153v, added: xvi-xix^s xx⁴ xxi-xxv^s xxvi⁶ [-6, cancelled with no loss of text] xxvii¹⁰ xxviii⁵ [original structure uncertain], most catchwords and signatures trimmed; traces of signatures, middle lower margin, last leaf, end of quire one, f. 9v, and end of quire twelve, f. 97v, original sections: ruled in lead, with triple full-length vertical bounding lines on each side of the column, and with the top three and bottom three horizontal rules usually full across, and with an extra single horizontal rule full-across in the top margin, prickings, top, outer, and bottom margins (justification, 152 x 70-65 mm.), written on the top line in an upright early gothic bookhand in a single column of forty-two to forty-one lines by two scribes, the second scribe copying ff. 199-212v, the opening majuscule of each line of verse copied between the outer bounding lines, red rubrics, guide letters for the initials remain on f. 84, four- to two-line alternately red or blue initials with pen decoration in the opposite color; leaves added, 1401: ruled in ink, with triple full-length bounding lines on the left and single on the right, and with an extra set of double bounding lines, full-length, in the outer margin, and with the top and bottom two horizontal rules full across, prickings, outer margin (justification 160-158 x 71-50 mm.), written under the top line in a late gothic bookhand in a single column of forty-one lines, majuscules highlighted in pale yellow, three- to two-line alternately red and blue initials, with pen work in the contrasting color, four- to three-line parted red and blue initials, with pen decoration in both colors, pen decoration for both types of initials includes approximately 240 CHARMING PENWORK DROLLERIES of human faces, including men, old women, girls, priests, knights, peasants, boys, etc., as well as dogs and demons, original imperfections in the parchment, opening and closing leaves darkened, and last leaves cockled, some soiling and thumbing, and a few minor stains, outer margin, f. 122, but generally in excellent condition. Bound in late medieval (?) boards, left without covering, chamfered with rounded corners, rebacked in brown leather with four raised bands and title in gilt, "Petri de Riga, *Aurora*"; two modern catch and clasp fastenings, fastening back to front, in good condition, slight wear to edges. Dimensions 215 x 125 mm.

This remarkable copy of one of the most popular forms of the Bible in the Middle Ages, extant in over 400 manuscripts, the *Aurora* was studied by students who found its verse easy to memorize, and it is said that it appealed equally to the sons of the nobility looking for entertainment. This manuscript is an early witness to Peter's second edition of the poem and also includes texts from Peter's third edition and from the revision of the poem by Aegidius of Paris. Approximately 240 pen and ink drawings of human faces from all walks of life enliven this copy.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in Paris, probably c. 1200-1220, as indicated by script and initials, making this an early copy of the text; the motifs used in the pen-work initials may be compared with Paris, BnF, MSS lat. 14243, lat. 7936, and lat. 12529, as reproduced in Stirmermann, 1990, pp. 62-64, nos. 14, 15 and 19. Acts, copied on ff. 199-212v, with the preface by Aegidius of

Paris, appears to have been added to the manuscript as an afterthought, probably soon after the original text was copied.

2. Fifteenth-century (?), note, top margin, f. 2: "Liber biblie metrificate qui dicitur Aurora authore magistro petro de Riga" and very top margin, in an earlier hand (?), "Iste Biblia metrificata que vocatur aurora petri <>"; occasional short notes on the text found throughout in this hand, as well as nota marks and other brief annotations in at least one earlier hand.
3. The manuscript was updated in 1401 by R. de Bazoches, rector of the schools of Glos-la-Ferrière in Normandy, about half-way between Alençon and Évreux, who records in a long colophon on f. 145v (transcribed below, see Text) that he completed his work on Tuesday, 30 June 1401 during a time of plague and great indulgences from Rome, even though the Church was divided (the Western Schism which divided the Church for forty years was to be resolved in 1417). His additions are found on f. 1, quires 17-20 (ff. 118-151v), and ff. 198 and 212v-213v. He may also have added the initials and their fanciful drawings of human faces, which may represent the full population of Glos-la-Ferrière. The calligraphic "B" found in the very top margin, f. 2 (partially trimmed), and on f. 212v, inner margin, lower half of the page, may refer to Bazoches.

Ricardus de Bazoches, or Richard de Bazoques, signed a number of other books, including Paris, BNF, MS lat 2994, a copy of works attributed to Augustine and Isidore, and a treatise on chant, perhaps composed by Richard himself; he copied this manuscript in 1407-13, noting that he was then a teacher at a school near the church of St. Nicholas in Évreux, and that he became a priest when he was fifty-two (thus he was born around 1361) (see van Moé, 1938). He copied another manuscript, now Paris, BNF, MS lat. 3074, while he was studying theology in Paris in 1392-3, and Vatican City, Reg. lat. 1559, Ps.-Ovid, *De Vetula*, between 1390 and 1408. The Vatican manuscript includes a fascinating and extensive list of books he used in his studies; no. 100 is "Aurora Petri" (Bignami-Odier and Vernet, p. 147; see in general, Krämer, online resources, below).

An outline of his peripatetic career can be constructed from the extensive colophons found in these books (see Bignami-Odier and Vernet, pp. 129-30; they did not know of the manuscript described here). Born around 1360 in the village of Saint-Christophe-le-Jajoulet, he was a cleric in the diocese of Sées where he taught at the schools in Conches in 1390. After studying in Paris, he became rector of the schools of Glos-la-Ferrière in 1401; finally by 1407, we find him teaching in Évreux.

4. Belonged to the Celestine Convent of the Trinity in Mantes, diocese of Rouen, between Évreux and Paris at Limay, founded in 1376 with the endorsement of King Charles V; their inscription, f. 213, "Iste liber est celestinorum de medunta, sic signatus 591" (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 113, a thirteenth-century Bible has a similar inscription).
5. Belonged to the Reverend Walter Sneyd (1809-1888); his sale, London, Sotheby's, 16 December 1903, lot. 608.

6. Belonged to Sir Sydney Cockerell (1867-1962), who purchased it 7 September 1911 from Ellis; his notes on front flyleaf begin, "Sydney C. Cockerell, Cambridge, September 7, 1911," followed by notes on where he purchased the manuscript and then notes on the manuscript's origin and its history, including the information found in the colophon on f. 145v.

Cockerell was a noted scholar of medieval manuscripts and the director of the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge from 1908-1937. His personal collection of medieval manuscripts was stellar. He published descriptions of his manuscripts during his lifetime (Cockerell, 1950, describing this manuscript), and his collection has been the subject of numerous modern studies (de Hamel, 1987, 2001 and 2004; Panayotova, 2008, and Online Resources).

7. Cockerell Sale, London, Sotheby's, 19 May 1958, lot 118 to Quaritch.
8. Quaritch Catalogues 794 (1959), no. 19; 859 (1965), no. 16; sold in April 1966 to Galvin.
9. Dealers' and owners' notations include, inside front cover in pencil, "B3"; in ink, note suggesting the manuscript was Italian, thirteenth century, and included drawings; inside back cover, in pencil: "3QYLV," and in pencil, "25474."

TEXT

f. 1r [Added, 1401] incipit, "Scire cupis lector quis credor istius actor/ Petrus Riga vocor cui christus petra rigat cor/" [Couplet on the name of the author; in Oxford, Magdalen College, MS 24, as in this manuscript, it is followed by Aegidius's Preface; Beichner, ed. p. 11, no. VI]; f. 1, *Prologus illius qui hunc librum <?>buit corrigere quidem egidius tremensis parisiensi vocabuntur*, incipit, "Fraterni tractatis quasi ..." [Preface of Aegidius of Paris, Beichner, ed., p. 8, no. IV]; f. 1, *De istius libri utilitate et eius lectura*, incipit, "Nil homini melius quam ..." [Verses in Praise of the *Aurora*; Beichner, p. 10, no. V, from line 41]; f. 1r, *Preambula vattis actoris huius libri*, incipit, "Dulcius ut ...": *Inuocatus actoris ad deum*, incipit, "Da tua facta deus ..."; *De sex diebus in generali*, incipit, "Primo facta die duo .../ Sequente diem." *Cetera vertendo folium sequens reperies.*

Prefatory verses by Aegidius of Paris and other authors added to the manuscript in 1401; some of this material traditionally circulated with copies of this text, and was edited in Beichner's edition, as listed above; the sources of the remaining texts have not been identified.

ff. 2-116v, *Prologus pentateuco moysi*, incipit, "Frequens sodalium meorum peticio cum quibus conuersando ..."; [f. 2v] *De vi dierum*, incipit, "Primo facta die duo celum terra leguntur/ ... De patre facturi cesar in aure tua/" *Explicit vetus testamentum.* [f. 117rv, blank];

Peter Riga's Preface, Beichner, ed., pp. 7-8, no. III, followed by the Old Testament in Peter's second version (does not include Aegidius' interpolations), Beichner, ed. 21-417; Genesis is followed by Exodus (f. 22v), Leviticus (f. 40v), Numbers (f. 51), Deuteronomy (f. 59), Joshua (f.

63), Judges (f. 66), Ruth (f. 70), 1-4 Kings (f. 71), Tobit (f. 89v), Daniel (f. 95v), Judith (f. 105v), Esther (f. 108), and 1-2 Maccabees (f. 111).

ff. 118-151v [added, 1401], incipit, "Librum Job moysi quidam attribure magistri/; f. 127, *Incipit prologus in Cantica canticorum secundum magistrum P. Rigali metrificatum*, Solus origenes cum doctos uicerit ommis ... Descendens veterum patrum de germine natus [followed by colophon] f. 145v, *Ett sic est finis huius libri de canticis canticorum. Noncupati secundum magistrum P. Rige metrificatum remensemque nominatum seu pocius agnominatum. Qui quidem notabiliter et valde laudabiliter vtrumque testamentum metrificavit et in eo contenta de lucidavit tropologice nec non et allegorice etiam anagogice translative et methaphorice sensus ipsius sacre scripture plenarie devodavit propter quod multum laudandus est quia totam ecclesiam opera tam nobili plustravit. Valeat eius anima regna possidere letissima. In quibus felicissima sunt agmina dulcissima, Finitur ergo hoc nouum opus conscriptum manu propria R. de basochiis tunc temporis scholarum de glocia rectoris videlicet anno domini M CCCC primo diem iouis commemorationis sancti pauli apostolici. Quo quidem anno et precedenti fuit mortalitas generalis et eadem anno fuerunt etiam magne indulgencie romane licet ecclesia tunc esse diuisa. Christus eam reunire sibi per suam [added: misericordiam]piissimam dignetur. Qui vivit et regnat cum deo patre in vnitae spiritus sancti deus. Per omnia secula seculorum, Amen."* f. 146, [Lamentations] *Prologus super liber trenorum qui dicitur lamentationi iubs ieremie*, incipit, "Sicut sunt cantica canticorum, sunt lamentationes lamentationum ... Quid recte dominus ihesus alpha sit ω vocetur" [ff. 152-153v, blank];

Job and the Song of Songs, Beichner, ed. pp. 669-760, followed by Lamentations, by an unknown author; see Beichner, ed., pp. xxiv-xxv, noting that he found this text in some manuscripts of the *Aurora*, and Dinkova-Bruun, "Biblical versifications," 2007, p. 328, n. 52, stating that it is found in more than thirty manuscripts of the *Aurora*. These texts, from Peter's third edition, were added to the manuscript in 1401.

ff. 154-198, *Incipit prologus super euangelia*, incipit, "Post legem ueterem testamentum petre refulget/ Lex noua fac uersus de novitate novos/ ... Dat finem petrus finit et ipse suum. Explicit" *Explicit novum testamentum*. f. 191v, *Incipit recapitulations tocius libri et primum capitula sine a*, incipit, "Principio rerum post v dies homo primus/ ... Barnabas et Tytus hii docuere fidem";

Gospels and *Recapitulationes*, in Peter's second version (includes the Passion), lacking Aegidius' interpolations; Beichner, ed., pp. 421-625.

ff. 198rv, [Added in 1401 in the blank space remaining], *M. Egidius tremensis corrector huius operis*, incipit, "His te petre tuo merito mediante laboris/ ..." [Prayer of Aegidius, Beichner, ed., p. 13, no. IX]; *M. Egidius ad huc loquitur*, incipit, "Egidii nescit tremensis musa decendis/ ..."; f. 198v, *M. Egidius tremensis de liber huius ordine*, incipit, "Clauditur iste liber in xl libellis/ ..." [Number of books in the Bible, Beichner, ed., p. 19, no. XVI]; *De modo librorum et a quo sunt ordinati*, incipit, "Sunt ita dispositi mira breuitate libelli/ ..."; *De numero versuum M. Petra Rige compositoris huius liber*, incipit, "Quindicies mille decies sex collige versus/ ..." [Number of verses in the *Aurora*; Beicher, ed., p. 17, no. XII]; incipit, "Vivat ametque sumus, cui scripsit anime honore. ..." [rhyming colophon];

Short verses added in 1401; some circulated often with the *Aurora*, and were edited by Beichner, as listed above; the remaining texts are unidentified.

ff. 199-212v, *Incipit prologus super librum actuum apostolorum*, incipit, "Dixi me finisse librum sed turrus inactus/ ... Ense sacrat Paulum pax lux dux urbe cruce Petrum";

Acts of the Apostles, Beichner, ed., 626-668, with the prologue by Aegidius, printed Beichner, 626; Acts was part of Peter's third, and final version of the poem – here with Aegidius's preface from his first revision – and it appears to have been added to the original manuscript by another scribe.

ff. 212v-213, [added, 1401] incipit, *Hic finit liber et consummat linea metrum. Explicit aurora petri poete ...*; f. 212v, *De adventu antecristi*, Angelus ad ioachim dixit dictamine tali/ ... [four-lines of verse; also in Cologne, Hist. Arch GB f° 129, f. 298]; f. 212v, *Versus de fine libri secundum auctorem eius*, incipit, "Explicit Aurora que prebet verba deocra/ ..." [three-lines; also in Kresmünster SB 129, f. 298, and Grenoble, Bib. mun. MS 48]; ff. 212v-213, *De compositoribus huius libri*, incipit, "Scire cupis lector quid codicis istius auctor/ ..." [Verses concerning the author; Beichner, ed., pp. 11-12, no. VII]; f. 213, *De approbatione magistrum petri Rige remensis dyocesis*, incipit, "Egidii maletornatos ..." [four lines]; f. 213, *De principio ade usque ad christum*, incipit, "Bis decies centum .." [seven lines] f. 213v, incipit, "Finis fraudem pregnant dolus detractio regnat ..." [couplet]; f. 213v, incipit, "Virtus ecclesia clerus demon symonia/ ..." [couplet]; incipit, "Novum personis preponitur et rationis ..." [eight lines]; incipit, "Ha modo si durus modicum...." [couplet]."

Edited by P. E. Beichner. *Aurora, Petri Rigae Biblia Versificata, A Verse Commentary on the Bible*, 1965; Stegmüller, *Repertorium biblicum*, nos. 6823-25, listing more than 250 manuscripts; Greti Dinkova-Brunn recently reports that she has found more than 400 manuscripts (Dinkova-Brunn, "Additions," 2007, p. 1, note 3).

The *Aurora* has been called "the best-known poem of the Middle Ages," an opinion which is easily supported by the more than 400 surviving copies from across Europe. We know little about the life of its author, Petrus Riga. He was studying in Paris in 1165, and later was a canon of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Reims, and then a Canon Regular of the Order of St. Augustine at St. Denis in Reims; he died in 1209. The *Aurora* was not simply a narrative retelling of the Bible in verse; its editor, P. E. Beichner explains, "With its emphasis on allegorical and moral interpretation, it might more accurately be termed a verse commentary on the Bible" (p. xi). Throughout the Middle Ages it was read in the schools, by the laity, and in monasteries and convents; its influence was widespread, as evidenced by its translation into French, and use in the English *Cursor mundi*.

The textual history of the *Aurora* is complex (see Beichner, pp. xvii-xx, and p. 2). Beichner, its editor, believes the composition of the *Aurora* took years, possibly from 1170 to 1200. Between 1200, or even earlier, and 1208, Aegidius of Paris produced two further redactions. Peter's first edition included Peter's preface, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Kings 1-4, Maccabees and Gospels up to the Sermon on the Mount. His second edition added Tobit, Daniel, Judith and Esther after 4 Kings, a prologue to the Gospels, completed the Gospel text with an account of the Passion, and the *Recapitulationes*. This last section of the text, the *Recapitulationes*, is a curious catalogue of Old Testament figures presented as types or figures of subsequent things; it is composed as a lipogrammatic, or letter-dropping book, where one letter of the alphabet is avoided in each section, so that in the first section the letter "a," is avoided, in the second, the letter "b," and so forth.

The original section of this manuscript thus corresponded to Peter's second edition, ending with the *Recapitulationes*. The Acts of the Apostles – with the prologue by Aegidius of Paris – was added to this text at the end, either immediately after the manuscript was completed or soon after. Peter Riga's third, and final edition, included the additional books, Acts, Job and the Song of Songs. Acts in this manuscript was copied in another hand, and may have been added to the manuscript as an afterthought to complete the text. The layout of this section of the manuscript is continuous with the original section, but the initials were copied without pen decoration (the decoration in Acts was added to the plain initials in 1401), and the hand appears to be a little later (perhaps copied by a younger scribe).

Two revisions to the text were made by Aegidius of Paris before 1208. His first edition added a prose preface, a formal prologue, and interpolations to almost all of the books to Peter's third edition. It also moved Job and the Song of Songs to their positions within the Old Testament, and made changes to the "Historia Susannae." His second edition added a new version of the dedicatory epistle to Odo, long prologues or epilogues to a number of books, and a treatise "Mysterium de agno paschali" to Exodus. The only part of Aegidius's revisions in the original section of the manuscript is the prologue to Acts.

When Ricardus updated the manuscript in 1401, he added some of Aegidius's prefatory texts to ff. 1rv and 198 (with some additional short verses), and inserted Job and the Song of Songs from Peter's third edition following the Old Testament, together with verses on Lamentations by an unknown author that often circulated with the *Aurora*.

ILLUSTRATION

The pen-work initials added when the manuscript was updated in 1401 are quite remarkable. The plain red or blue initials, as well as the larger parted red and blue initials, are skillfully decorated with pen tendrils, ending in naturalistic leaves and other motifs. Incorporated within this pen decoration in approximately 240 initials on ff. 1v, 118-151v, and 199-212v (where they were added to text copied in the thirteenth-century) are drawings in the same color pen of human faces from all walks of life – men, old women, girls, priests, knights, peasants, and young boys, as well as dogs and demons, which form a remarkable gallery of images of medieval society. The variety and the careful attention to detail in these sketches suggest that they may well have been based on actual faces known to the artist; they may indeed represent the full population of Glos-la-Ferrière.

In some manuscripts both the script and the pen initials were copied by the scribe (the question is discussed in Friedman, 1995, pp. 210-11, and by Avril, 1971); in the case of this manuscript, these initials may be the work of Richard de Bazoches, but they may also have been added by another craftsman.

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