

SAINT JEROME, *Epistulae; Adversus Vigilantium; and De Perpetua virginitate beatae mariae adversus Helvidium*

In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper

Southern Germany, Regensburg, signed and dated 1435

216 ff. on paper, unidentified watermark, blossom with stem (probably four-petalled), split between pages, modern foliation in pencil top outer corner recto, complete except top half of f. 215 and most of f. 216 are missing (collation, i-xvii¹² xviii¹⁴ xix⁸), horizontal catchwords lower inside margin, no signatures, frame-ruled in ink with all four bounding lines full length (justification, 95-92 x 60-58 mm.), written below the top line in a skilled hybrida script in twenty-four to twenty long lines, guide letters visible within many initials, majuscules within text highlighted in red, red running titles including Arabic numerals numbering each text, red paragraph marks and underlining within text, three- to two-line red initials, many with decorative extensions, finely drawn contemporary realistic pointing hands with sleeves in red and black throughout, in excellent condition apart from the three damaged folios at the end, f. 214, outer margin damaged, f. 215, top quarter missing, with loss of text, and f. 216, mostly missing, darkened edges, a few wormholes and minor signs of use, ff. 199- end, stain in the outer margin (text remains legible). ORIGINAL BINDING of wooden boards, cut flush with the book block, covered with red leather, flat spine with three raised bands, sewn on three double cords, tail bands now missing but the thread once wound around it is extant, impressions from two clasps visible on the upper board, in fragile condition, front cover scuffed and worn at the edges, partially detached (only attached by bottom cord), back cover mostly missing with only a small fragment of the broken board, partially covered in red leather, remaining, early modern paper label added on the bottom of the spine, with "G. 21" written in ink. Dimensions 146 x 109 mm.

This is an exceptionally interesting collection of texts by Saint Jerome, still in its original binding and signed and dated at numerous intervals by the scribe, Johannes Tyrolf, providing valuable evidence on how fast scribes wrote. Tyrolf signed at least five other manuscripts. It includes unpublished marginal comments, as well as an original subject index, copied by the main scribe in a formal hand and could be an invaluable source for studies of the reception of Jerome's works, as well as for the history of education in general, in fifteenth-century Germany.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in 1435 by a known scribe, Johannes Tyrolf (who also signed his name "Tyrell"), in Southern Germany, and presumably in Regensburg where Tyrolf lived. The manuscript is signed by the scribe numerous times: f. 3, upper margin, "Johannes Tyrell propria manus"; f. 145v, with the date, 1435 on the feast of St. Erasmus (June 2); f. 159, 1435, on the feast of St. Alban (June 22); f. 178, 1435, on feast of John and Paul (June 26); and f. 201, with the date, 1435, and a verse colophon. Based on this, we can note that it took him twenty days to copy the fourteen folios (twenty-seven pages), between f. 145v and f. 159, so a bit more than a page a day, but only four days to copy the eighteen folios, or thirty-seven and a half pages, between f. 159 and f. 178 – about nine pages a day. Signed and dated manuscripts are relatively uncommon. Manuscripts such as this one that are signed multiple times,

and include information that allow us to calculate how long the scribe spent copying the manuscript are even less common (for other examples, see de Hamel, 2006, and Gullick, 1995, as well as TM 403 and 439 on this site).

Perhaps even more interesting than how quickly he wrote this particular manuscript, is the number of books he wrote at this period of his life. His other signed manuscripts include Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 14811, also copied in 1435, and owned by, and presumably copied for, Hermann Pötzlinger (c. 1415-1469), the *Rector Scolarium* of the Benedictine monastery of St. Emmeram, Regensburg; it later was part of Pötzlinger's bequest of his books to the monastery's library in 1469 (Rumbold, 1985, pp. 334 and 339, and Ineichen-Eder, 1977, p. 215); Clm 14808, also copied in 1435, in this case with another scribe, Friedrich Gerhart, a monk of St. Emmeram, Clm 7451 (in 1432); and Clm 7823 -- these last two were owned by a Canon from Regensburg, Konrad Onsborg, who gave his books to the Augustinian monastery in Indersdorf in 1478 (see Glauche and Knaus, 1979, p. 668); and Benediktinerstiftes Seitenstetten, Cod. 104, again copied in 1435/6; he owned Clm 14893, and 7819 (which he also gave to Konrad Onsborg). Krämer (online resources) records that he was a priest in Regensburg and a chaplain at Simon and Jude in Regensburg "super Zeritudone," and later became a monk at St. Emmeram under Abbot Wolfhard Strauss (1423-1452); Rumbold, 1985, p. 334, suggests he may be identified with Johannes Tyrolf de Straubing who matriculated at the University of Vienna in 1442/3. The evidence for all these statements needs reevaluation, but it is certain that a careful review of all the manuscripts copied by Johannes Tyrolf, including this one, could be the basis of a fascinating study of this fifteenth-century scribe.

Since Johannes seems to have copied manuscripts for at least two other people, it is admittedly impossible to know whether he was copying this manuscript for his own use, or for someone else. It also seems unclear to this writer whether he was in fact already a monk of St. Emmeram in 1435.

The Benedictine monastery of St. Emmeram in Regensburg, founded before 739, was originally associated with the cathedral of St. Peter in Regensburg; it became an independent abbey in 975, and continued until the dissolution of Bavarian monasteries in 1803, when most of its books went to the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek in Munich. The monastery was the site of an active scriptorium and an important library since the early Middle Ages – the scriptorium is documented as early as the middle of the eighth century, and there is a document mentioning the library in 879. There were a number of library catalogues, including a very detailed catalogue at the end of the fifteenth century, now Clm 14675, by the librarian Dionysius Menger (1465-1530), which included nearly 900 manuscripts and 500 printed books (see Inneichen-Eder, 1997, pp. 97-387 on library at St. Emmeram and its catalogues, including a list of surviving manuscripts and bibliography, pp. 139-142; Wunderle, 1995 and 2011, and Neske, 2005). Menger's catalogue is organized by shelfmark with letters followed by numbers; "G 21," the post-medieval shelf added on a paper label on the spine of this manuscript, is not included in this catalogue (none the numeric series in this catalogue go beyond "20").

It is clear from the evidence of this manuscript alone that Johannes Tyrolf was an accomplished, well-educated scribe; the Greek within this manuscript, for example, is copied in a clear, competent Greek minuscule (for example, f. 59v; and on ff. 118v, 123v, 124, with transliteration above); and the text by Jerome is accompanied by an extensive, formal marginal apparatus (discussed further with the text,

below). Further study would be necessary to determine whether these comments are Johannes's own notes, presumably reflecting his studies, or whether he was copying a known scolia on Jerome's texts.

2. Belonged to the Ritter-Waldauf-Bibliothek; inside front cover, in ink, "Waldaufficae foundationis, 1596"; their stamp, now mostly effaced, f. 1 (pointed oval stamped in blue ink, outline only remains).

The foundation of the library dates to the gift made in 1501 by the imperial proto-notary Florian Waldauf (also Baldauf, c. 1450-1510; in 1495, he was counter-signatory to the preliminary contract of the Habsburg-Spanish double wedding), and his wife Barbara, of a chapel, a collection of relics and the ministry of the parish church in Hall. As steward of the Waldauf endowment, the city of Hall was responsible for the donations "dass alle jar etliche puecher nach anzaigen des predigers zum predigambt gekauft und in der heiligen capellen liberei an ketten gehangen und vesorgt warden," as well as for acquiring books from the estates of religious figures. Although the library rarely made purchases, it did acquire books from the bequests of clergymen, monasteries, and schools. During World War II an unknown number of valuable manuscripts were given to private individuals in Hall for safekeeping; after the war, none of these books were returned (see online resources, below).

TEXT

ff. 1, *Hugo de claustro anime in duodecima abusione*, incipit, "Beatus Job dic[?] 38, Penna sunt communis ..."; *Ibidem*, Tre 4 [Lamentations 4:1], *Dipsersi sunt lapides sanctuarii ...*;

Brief extracts, citing Hugh of Fouillooy, *De claustro animae*, Isidore, *De Summo bono*, and the Bible, among other texts.

ff. 1v-2, *Registrarum epistolarum s. hieronimi*, incipit, "Epistola sancti Jeronimi ad S. Antonini, 1 ... Ad letam denuntiendis parvulis, 31"; [verses added in another contemporary hand following this text], incipit, "Rarius in publico/ Modestus in domo/ ... Timor quoque dei";

Numbered list of contents.

f. 2v, *Anno domini 420, Beethleem Jeronimus. Nota*, incipit, "Anno domini 420 Bethleem Jeronimus presbiter doctor et interpres ..."; *Augustinus 430 ...*; incipit, "Sciendum est prout dicit Johannes de Deo in penitentiali suo libro septimo ... quod sanctus Ieronimus fuit de ordine ananchoritarum ...";

Notes on events in the life of Jerome and Augustine; Johannes de Deo (c. 1190-1269) cited in the last extract was the author of a treatise on penance.

ff. 3rv, *Epistola gloriosi Ieronimi ad Anthonium monachum*, incipit, "Dominus noster humilitatis magister disceptantibus de dignitate discipulis ...";

Jerome, *Epistula 12*, Hilberg, ed., CSEL 54, pp. 41-2.

ff. 3v-15v, *Epistola gloriosi Jeronimi ad Rusticum monachum*, incipit, "Nichil est christiano felicius cui promittitur ... sed magna sunt premia. Amen;

Jerome, *Epistula 125*; Hilberg ed., CSEL 56, pp. 118-142.

ff. 15v-27v, *Hieronimus ad Nepotianum presbiterum de institutione clericorum*, incipit, "Petus a me Nepotiane carissime litteris transmarinis et crebro petis ...";

Jerome, Epistula 52; Hilberg ed., CSEL 54, pp. 413-441.

ff. 27v-34v, *Hieronimus ad heliodorum*. Epistolam exhortatoriam scribit de contemptu mundi, incipit, "Quanto amore studio contenderim ut partier in heremo ...";

Jerome, Epistula 14; Hilberg ed., CSEL 54, pp. 44-62.

ff. 35-40, *Hieronimus ad paulinum presbiterum de institutione clericorum et monachorum*. *Epistola Sequitur*, incipit, "Bonus homo de bono thesauro cordis profert ...";

Jerome, Epistula 58; Hilberg, ed., CSEL 54, pp. 527-541.

ff. 41v-46v, *Hieronimus ad Oceanum de vita clericorum*, incipit, "Sofronius Eusebius Hieronimus Oceano suo salutem. Deprecatus es ut tibi breuiter exponere qualiter clerici ...";

Ps. Jerome, Epistula Sup. 42; ed. PL 20:288-292; Lambert, 1969-1972, no. 342; Dekkers, 1961, no. 633. Ff. 45v-46 were left blank; at the bottom of f. 45 there is a note telling the reader that the text continues on the page marked by a certain symbol (supplied); the symbol is found at the top of f. 46v, where the text continues with no break from f. 45.

ff. 46v-57v, *Hieronimi ad oceanum de unius <mo>ris vno*. *De conuersatione clericorum*, incipit, "Numquam filii Oceane fore putabam indulgentia principis ...";

Jerome, Epistula 69; Hilberg ed., CSEL 54, pp. 678-700.

ff. 58-59, *Epistola Hieronimum ad Anigam spanum ad humilitatem et patientiam prouocans*, incipit, "Quamuis mihi multorum sim conscius peccatorum ..."

Jerome, Epistula 76; Hilberg, ed., CSEL 55, pp. 34-36.

ff. 59- 60, *Hieronimus ad marcellam de decem nominibus quibus apud ebrios deus uocare*, incipit, "Nonagesimum psalmi legens in eo loco quo scribitur. Qui habitat in adiutorio altissimus ..."

Jerome, Epistula 25; Hilberg ed., CSEL 54, pp. 218-220.

ff. 60-61v, *Hieronimo ad Marcellam de muneribus*, incipit, "Ut absenciam corporum spiritus confabulationem ...";

Jerome, Epistula 44; Hilberg ed., CSEL 54, pp. 322-3.

ff. 61v-68, *Prologus in epistolam sequentem*, incipit, "Retulit michi quidam frater e gallia ...", f. 62v, *Hieronimi epistola ad matrem et filiam*, incipit, "Primum quidem scire vos cupio soror et filia me non idcirco scribere quia aliquam sinistram suscipiter ...";

Jerome, Epistula 117; Hilberg ed., CSEL 55, pp. 422-434; the introduction and the letter are numbered separately in the running titles as "12" and "13."

ff. 68v-77v, *Ieronimi epistola consolatoria ad paulam de dormitione filie eius*, incipit, "Quis dabit capiti meo aquam et oculis meis fontem lacrimarum et plorabo ...";

Jerome, Epistula 39; Hilberg ed., CSEL 54, pp. 293-308.

ff. 77v-79, *Hieronimi ad principiam romanam uirginem*, incipit, "Scio me principia in chrstio filia a plerisque reprehendi quod interdum scribam ...";

Jerome, Epistula 65; Hilberg ed., CSEL 54, pp. 616-647.

ff. 79v-80v, *Epistola sancti Hieronimi ad Exsuperantium*, incipit, "Inter omnia que mihi sancti fratris quintilianie amicitie prestiterunt ...";

Jerome, Epistula 145; Hilberg, ed., CSEL 56, pp. 306-7.

ff. 80v-81, *Hieronimi ad tranquilium quomodo Originem lege debeat*, incipit, "Maiores spiritus vincula esse ...";

Jerome, Epistula 62; Hilberg ed., CSEL 54, pp. 583-4.

f. 81rv, *Epistola Pamachii ad gloriosum Ieronimum*, incipit, "Pamachiis et Oceanus Hieronimo presbitero salutem. Sanctus aliquis ex fratribus scedulas ...";

Jerome, Epistula 83; Hilberg ed., CSEL 55, pp. 119-120.

ff. 81v-90v, *Epistola Hieronimi presbiteri ad pamachium et Oceanum [modo?] sequitur*, incipit, "Scedule quas misicis honorificata me ...";

Jerome, Epistula 84; Hilberg ed., CSEL 55, pp. 121-134.

ff. 90v-94, *Epistola Hieronimi contra vigilantium presbiterum in quo eius blasphemiam arguit*, incipit, "Iustum quidem fuerat nequamquam litteris ...";

Jerome, Epistula 61; Hilberg ed., CSEL 54, pp. 575-82.

ff. 94-97, *Hieronimus ad Riparium presbiterum contra Vigilantium*, incipit, "Acceptis litteris tuis primitus non responde ...";

Jerome, Epistula 109; Hilberg ed., CSEL 5, pp. 351-356.

ff. 97-108v, *Hieronimus aduersus Vigilantium*, incipit "Multa in orbe monstra generata sunt ...";

Jerome, *Aduersus Vigilantium*; ed. Feiertag, 2005, listing extant manuscripts pp. xxxix-lxviii, including 127 dating between the eighth and twelfth centuries, and approximately 240 dating from the thirteenth through the fifteenth centuries, and in PL 23:339-352; Lambert, 1969-72, no. 253; Dekkers, 1961, no. 611.

ff. 108v-113, *Hieronimus ad Innocentium presbiterum de muliere septies percussa et mirabiliter preservata*, incipit, "Sepe a me innocente karissime postulasti ut de eius miraculo ..";

Jerome, Epistula 1; Hilberg, ed., CSEL 54, pp. 1-9.

ff. 113-125, *Hieronimus ad Pamachium de optimo genere interpretandi*, incipit, "Paulus apostolus presente Agrippa rege de criminibus ...";

Jerome, Epistula 57; Hilberg ed., CSEL 54, pp. 503-526.

ff. 125v-145v, *Incipit liber sancti Hieronimi contra Helvidium de sancte marie virginitate et castitate*, incipit, "Nuper rogatus a fratribus ut adversus libellum cuiusdam. Helvidii ... pariter experiatur et mater. Amen." *Explicit liber gloriosi Ieronimi contra Helvidii heretici per manus Iohannes Tyrolf sub anno 1435 Erasmi martiris*;

Jerome, *De perpetua Virginitate Beatae Mariae, adversus Helvidium*; ed. in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, 23: 183-206; Dekkers, 1961, no. 609; Lambert, 1976-72, no. 251, listing more than one hundred manuscripts; English translation by Freemantle (see Online Resources).

ff. 146-151v, *Incipit liber uigilarum gloriosi Ieronimi*, incipit, "Dignum est fratres aptumque prorsus satisque consciens ...";

Ps.-Jerome, Epistula 31; printed Migne, PL 30:232; here attributed to Jerome, but see Dekkers, 1961, no. 648, sometimes circulated as Augustine, *De sanctis vigiliis*, and Niceta de Remesiana, *De vigiliis servorum dei*, Stegmüller, 1950-1980, no. 5662.

ff. 151v-156, *Epistola sancti Hieronimi paule et eustochie ad marcellam exhortatoria de sanctis locis iberusalem*, incipit, "Mensuram caritas non habent ...";

Jerome, Epistula 46; Hilberg, ed., CSEL 54:329-344.

ff. 156-159, *Epistola sancti hieronimi ad pamaochium et oceanum*, incipit, "Qui ethiopem inuiat ... magis timere quam hominem. Amen." *Explicit in die Albani martiris 1432 per manus dominum Johannem Tyrolf presbiteri*;

Ps. Jerome, Ep. 32; printed as Jerome in Migne, PL 30:239-242, but see Dekkers, 1961, no. 742, usually accepted as by Pelagius.

ff. 159v-167v, *Epistola sancti Jeronimi ad Saninianum [sic] choortatoria ad penitentiam agendam*, incipit, "Et Samuel quondam lugebat ...";

Jerome, Epistula 147 (a contemporary hand corrected the rubric, *ad Sabinianum*); Hilberg, ed., CSEL 56:312-329.

ff. 168-178, *Incipit liber ad furiam de viduitate seruanda*, incipit, "Obsecras litteris et suppliciter ... de secundis nuptiis cogitatibus, Amen." *Explicit per manus domini Iohannis Tyrolf presbiteri. Anno ab incarnate dei uerbo 1435 Iohannes et pauli*;

Jerome, Epistula 54; Hilberg, ed., CSEL 54, pp. 466-485.

ff. 178-190v, *Epistula beati Ieronimi ad Excellentiam matronam ...*, incipit, "Uetas scripture celebrate sententiam est ...";

Jerome, letter 148; Hilberg, ed., CSEL 56, pp. 329-356; although printed in Hilberg's edition of Jerome's letters, its authenticity is questionable, and many scholars think this letter was actually written by Pelagius.

ff. 190v-201, *Epistola sancti Hieronimi ad letam de nutriendis particulis*, incipit, "Beatus apostolus Paulus scribens ... celestibus offerenda." *Explicit ad letam Hieronimi de institutione paule ... non solum puellis sed etiam pueris valde congruit. Christo domino nutriendis. Explicit 1432. Hic locus est mete liber explicit ergo ualete/ Non est pro<>us mihi talis scriptura uenalis/ Portus adest pondus abest iam remige chris<to>/ libero laus summa deo penam quia sis<to>.*

Jerome, *Epistula 107*; Hilberg ed., CSEL 55, pp. 290-305.

ff. 201v-212v, incipit, "Abstinencia, r 30, f 31, r 31, Abrenuntatio seculi, A4 ... Christiana [abbreviated, Xriana, and alphabetized with words beginning with X] c 2";

Alphabetical subject index with references to the number of the text and marginal letters; spaces left blank for additions.

ff. 212v-216, *Jeronimus ad demetriadem virginem*, incipit, "Jeronimum non perfecta virtus sed ceterarum virtutum fundamentum est" [ff. 215-216, text missing; f. 216v, blank].

Twenty-two very short paragraphs with extracts and comments on various works by Jerome.

This manuscript includes twenty-five letters by Jerome: letters 12, 25, 52, 14, 58, 69, 55, 25, 44, 117, 39, 65, 145, 62, 83, 84, 61, 109, 1, 57, 46, 147, 54, 148*, and 107 (148 is now considered Ps-Jerome but was edited in Hilberg's edition), together with three pseudonymous letters by various authors that circulated as Jerome's (Epist. supp. 42, 31 and 32), and Jerome's treatises, *Adversus Vigilantium* and *De perpetua virginitate Beatae Mariae adversus Helvidium*, with formal marginal comments, a subject index, and brief extracts and biographical notes added at the beginning and end of the manuscript.

This is a fascinating manuscript with a sophisticated layout designed to make it a very useful scholarly reference work. Each text is numbered in the table of contents at the beginning of the manuscript, and the numbers are repeated in the running titles in red Arabic numerals. The subject index on ff. 201v-212v includes topics followed by numbers, corresponding to the number of the text, and letters, referring to letters copied in the margins (the letters were added as needed to locate the subjects listed in the index on the page, and thus vary in their placement and frequency in each text). Even more remarkable here are the marginal glosses, copied by in a contemporary hand (almost certainly the main scribe), that include variant readings (for example f. 64v), identification of biblical citations (for example, f. 97), and extensive notes on the contents (for example, f. 91, "Errores Origenis heretici notantur hic," f. 97v, noting that "Calagurris" is a city in Spain, ff. 102 and 107v, notes on the forms of argument, "argumenta a contrario" and "argumenta a comparatione," and f. 140v, "pulchra fabula"). These marginal notes deserve careful study as an important witness to how Jerome's letters were read and studied in fifteenth-century Germany. The marginalia also includes verses; for example, see f. 55, bottom margin, contemporary addition in a formal script, "Primum preciptur quod sit sine crimine presul/ Monogaius [sic] sobrius predens ornatus et hospes/ ..." (for another example of verses included in the marginalia, see ff. 1 and 66). Carefully drawn red and black pointing hands, depicted with part of the sleeve, are also found throughout as part of this apparatus.

Jerome was a prolific letter writer, and some 154 epistles are attributed to Jerome's pen (modern scholars generally accept 123 as genuine), composed between 370 and 419, and varying in length from a few lines to several thousand words, which in Hilberg's monumental edition fill nearly 1600 pages; edited in CSEL 54, letters 1-70; 55, letters 71-120 and 56, letters 121-154, originally published in 1910, 1912 and 1918, now in a second, revised edition published in 1996, and in Migne, *Patrologia Latina* vol. 22; good introductions in Labourt, vol. I, pp. XLI-LVI, Cain 2009, and Conring, 2001. There is a complete translation in French (Labourt, 1949-1963), and partial English translations are also available online (see Online Resources); editions and translations are listed in Pentiti and Cerroni, 1990, pp. 31-5.

The census of manuscripts conducted by B. Lambert (1969) lists more than 7,000 manuscripts including at least one or more of Jerome's Epistles (Lambert, *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana Manuscripta*, 1969, volumes 1A and B). Hilberg consulted more than 139 manuscripts when preparing his edition; there is, however, still no complete scholarly study of the manuscript transmission of the Epistles (see discussion in Cain, appendix III, pp. 223-228). The history of the fifteenth-century printed editions is equally complex. The *editio princeps* of some of the Letters appeared first in Rome, Sweynheym and Pannartz, 1468 (Goff H-161). This and four subsequent editions between 1468 and 1470 included between 70 and 130 letters. In contrast, Schoeffer's Mainz edition of 1470 contains over 200 letters, a selection unique in the fifteenth century, which was arranged thematically. Schoeffer stated in a printed advertisement for the edition that ecclesiastical and monastic libraries were searched to uncover more letters and to establish an authentic canon (see Rice, 1985, pp. 116-125, for an account of Erasmus's 1516 edition and earlier editions).

The Renaissance revived the classical tradition of letter writing and particularly admired Jerome's letters. Their popularity is demonstrated by the manuscripts included in the Schoenberg Database, of 419 total manuscripts, 309 are from the fifteenth century, eight from sixteenth, and 102 from earlier centuries. Seven manuscripts of collections of Jerome's Epistles, all Italian from the fifteenth century have been sold since 2000; fifteenth-century manuscripts from Germany such as this one, in contrast, are much less common.

In addition to the Jerome's letters, the manuscript also includes two short treatises by Jerome. *Adversus Vigilantium* was a work written by Jerome in response to a treatise composed c. 406 by Vigilantius, a priest who once stayed with Jerome in Bethlehem, but who subsequently disagreed with him on a number of matters. Jerome's response to Vigilantius's criticisms of prayers for the dead, veneration of the saints, and aspects of the monastic life is notable for its intemperate tone. Another passionate text was his treatise in defense of the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of the Virgin Mary and of the superiority of the single over the married state composed in Rome c. 383 as a response to the teachings of Helvidius. Both these texts were popular during the later Middle Ages.

Among the letters included in this manuscript are those covering a broad range of topics; examples include a number of letters praising the monastic life (letter 125, 145), letters on the proper life of clerics (letter 52), and letters relating to the religious life of women -- reflecting the special role friendship with holy women played in Jerome's life (letters 117, 54, and 107). Given Jerome's role as the father of the Latin Bible, letters discussing the Bible are of course of particular interest to most modern readers; in letter 65, he comments on Psalm 45; he discusses the ten names of God in the Hebrew Scriptures in letter 25; and in letter 57 to Pammachius he defends his method of translation that communicated the meaning of the text, rather than the literal words (not "word for word, but sense for sense").

The Church Father Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus (c. 347- c. 419) was known as “vir trilinguis” due to his knowledge of Hebrew, Greek and Latin. In 382 Pope Damasus commissioned him to write a new translation of the New Testament and the Psalms. This translation, together with his subsequent translation of most of the Old Testament books from Hebrew, was his greatest achievement, and forms the core of the biblical translation that is now known as the Vulgate.

His letters gives us insight into his character and his intellectual concerns, revealing a gifted scholar and devout Christian, who was interested in a wide variety of subjects, and one who did not hesitate to offer criticisms and one who certainly did not shy away from intellectual fights. Jerome was a master of style and epistolary art. Addressed to colleagues, including women from his circle in Rome, many of them to female nuns and to monks, his letters discuss exegetical questions as well as practical matters of everyday life, Christian education, the fight against heresies (especially Origen, Apollanaris, etc.), asceticism, and the translation of the Bible. Although they originated as personal epistles, Jerome edited them during his lifetime, and intended them for a wider audience (he included his Epistles in his lists of works in his own comprehensive account of authors from St. Peter to Jerome, the *De viris illustribus*).

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