

Hagiographical miscellany, including, PSEUDO-EUSEBIUS OF CREMONA, *Epistola de morte Hieronymi* (Italian transl.); PSEUDO-AUGUSTINUS, *Epistola ad Cyrillum de magnificentiis Hieronymi* (Italian transl.); PSEUDO-CYRILLUS [Cyril of Jerusalem], *Epistola de miraculis Hieronymi* (Italian transl.); BERNARDINUS SENENSIS, *Confessione volgare*; BIANCO DA SIENA, *Laudi* (28 stanzas).

In Italian, decorated manuscript on parchment and paper  
Northern Italy, Lombardy? or Veneto?, c. 1460-1475

99 ff., on paper and parchment, with parchment forming the outer and inner bifolia of each quire to strengthen stitching, missing some leaves (small section cut out towards the end, traces of writing on the stubs) (collation: i<sup>11</sup> (if 12, lacking i, likely a vellum opening flyleaf), ii-iv<sup>18</sup>, v-vi<sup>16</sup>, vii<sup>14</sup> (of 18, missing ii-x and xiii-viii, some text leaves excised)), on paper (watermark close to Briquet, "Tête de boeuf sommée d'une fleur," no. 14825 (?), Vicenza, 1475; Mantova, 1469), written in a cursive bookhand, in brown ink, on up to 35 lines (justification: 108 x 74 mm), ruled in ink, some catchwords, manichulae in brown ink, rubrics in red, guide letters in brown ink, some capitals stroked in yellow wash, 2- to 3-line high initials painted in red or blue with calligraphic penwork in various shades of red (from bright crimson to pale pink), purple and blue, larger initials (6- to 7-line high) marking the major textual division similarly painted in red or blue, but with more elaborate penwork extending in the margin, manichula in the margins pointing to passages in text. Bound in a contemporary Italian binding of brown sheepskin over wooden boards, covers paneled with double blind fillets forming a saltire pattern, back sewn on 3 raised bands (remnants of paper labels with title and/or shelfmark, worn), brass catch engraved with "ave," small remnant of leather tie, missing clasp (rebacked; still quite worn and wanting leather, restorations to the covers, binding a bit worn and a few lacerations to leather, but nonetheless in contemporary condition, internal condition very fresh, although some wormholes but without gravity). Dimensions 154 x 105 mm.

This codex is a witness to the ever-expanding cult of Saint Jerome in fifteenth-century Italy. Translated into Italian, the three spurious letters were originally composed in Latin probably in the late thirteenth century by a Dominican in Rome, and the original letters were sources for a number of fourteenth-century hagiographers. The tradition of vernacular translation of these letters merits further study to identify other extant codices. Fine calligraphic initials, a minute but very regular script, and a contemporary binding also grace this manuscript.

## PROVENANCE

1. Copied and decorated in Italy, likely Lombardy (or perhaps Veneto?) based on script, watermark in paper and linguistic features. The manuscript was necessarily copied after 1450, date of the canonization of Saint Bernardino of Siena because he is mentioned in the rubric preceding his "Divota confessione" as "[...] venerabile padre e doctore sancto Bernardino de lo ordine de frati minori" (f. 67).
2. Conventual Library of the Monasterio della Consolata [Monastery of Our Lady of Consolation (Turin)], as per ex-libris inscription on f. 1: "Ex libris Monasterii Beate Marie Consolationis Taurine [Turin]." The inscription is copied by a 17th century hand.

The Church and Sanctuary of the Consolata is one of the oldest places of worship in Turin. La "Consolata" [Our Lady of Consolation] is a Byzantine-style icon said to have

been painted by Saint Luke and given to Saint Maximus, Bishop of Turin, by Saint Eusebius of Cremona, Abbot of Bethlehem (died 423). In 1014, the Marquis of Ivrea received a vision of the Virgin at his sickbed, who requested a chapel to "La Consolata" in Saint-Andrew's Church. On fulfilling her request, the Marquis discovered the old icon in the church's crypt. The Church of Saint Andrew was destroyed. A blind man in France dreamed of the painting at the turn of the twelfth century: the man traveled to Italy to convince the people of Turin to start digging. The remains of the chapel were uncovered as well as the undamaged icon of La Consolata. The painting drew an ever growing number of pilgrims. The current painting is actually a copy of the Madonna and Child painting of the Church of the Madonna del Popolo in Rome.

The Monastery of Our Lady of Consolation was founded in the tenth century, and was originally a house of Benedictine monks. The Benedictines were replaced by the Cistercians (actually the "Feuillants" or the "Réformés de Saint-Bernard," reformed Cistercians) in the sixteenth century, and the latter build a new chapel to hold the holy image and proceeded to promote the cult of the Consolata. A number of codices from the former library of the Monasterio della Consolata are now in the Biblioteca nazionale universitaria di Torino, others were restituted to the Cistercian "bibliotecario" in 1824 (on the Monastery, see Cottineau, II, 3233: "Notre-Dame de la Consolata, abbaye de Feuillants à Turin").

3. Inscription in red ink, in upper righthand corner of the upper pastedown: "Antonius filius domini Petri" [Anthony, son of Peter]. The hand is late 15th century, so near contemporary with the manuscript. There are a number of annotations throughout, including in a slightly later (16th c.?) hand this inscription: "Transito de S. Jeronimo cum la declaratione deli .x. Commandamenti" (see front pastedown).
4. French bookseller's label: "Manuscrit partie sur papier, partie sur vélin, renfermant des épîtres, confessions etc...."
5. European Continental Collection.

## TEXT

ff. 1-33, Pseudo-Eusebius of Cremona (12<sup>th</sup> c.), [Italian translation of the Latin *Epistula Pseudieusebii de morte Hieronymi*] [Letter to Pope Damasus and Senator Theodore], rubric, *Epistola ad Damasum et Theodorum Senatorem de morte Hieronimi*, rubric, *In nomine Domini. Incomenza el transito del gloriosissimo santo Jeronimo doctore eximio. E prima la epistola del beato Eusebio al beato Damasso vescovo Portuenses e a Theodoro senectore di Roma christianissimo de la morte del predito Ieronimo. E prima; incipit, "Al venerabile e reverendissimo padre Damasso vescovo portuense...In molti modi nel passato esso dio a parlato a tutti nui per lo suo figliollo..."; explicit, "[...] e in lo fucturo le alegreze le quale tu al prexente posedi"* (Latin version, BHL 3866);

The Pseudo-Eusebian letter adressed to Pope Damasus and Senator Theodore, describing St. Jerome's death, probably dates from the end of the thirteenth century and is possibly of Dominican origin, perhaps composed – as the following two other epistles – by a single common author (see L. Lanzoni, "La leggenda di S. Girolamo," in *Miscellanea geronimiana*, Rome, 1920, pp. 37-38 : "Gli eruditi hanno dimostrato che queste tre epistole sono false e furono

composte da un unico scrittore medievale non prima del XII secolo. Io credo di più che la composizione dei tre falsi discendere tra la fine del XIII e il principio del XIV.." (p. 38)). Other authors had already doubted its authenticity (declared false by Erasmus, C. Baronio and Stiltinck, *Acta sanctorum Septembris*, t. VIII, Antwerp, 1762, pp. 423-424). The author of the spurious epistles was familiar with the *Vita terza* of Saint Jerome (BHL 3873). The original Latin text is described in BHL 3866; Cavallera II, 144-145; and published in PL 22, 239-282). This letter is most often copied with the following two other spurious letters. The present version is the Tuscan vernacular adaptation (or translation) of the Latin original.

First published in Latin in Rome 1468 (Hain 8551) and again Rome, 1470 (Hain 8552), the printed Italian translation appeared soon after circa 1471. The work was also adapted in Sicilian dialect: *Libru di lu transitu et vita di messer sanctu Iheronimu* (see Di Girolamo, 1982, who based his edition on the single known manuscript, Toledo, Biblioteca del Cabildo Primado, MS 25/30 (dated 1473)). The work was also translated into Middle-German. See Jaatinen, M. *Die Mittelniederdeutsche Übersetzung der Sog. Hieronymus-Briefe nach der Lubecker Handschrift (MS. Theol. Germ. 11)*, Helsinki, 1950 ("Eusebius-Brief," pp. 14 et sqq).

Pope Damasus I was active in defending the Catholic Church against the threat of schisms. In two Roman synods (368 and 369) he condemned Apollinarianism and Macedonianism, and sent legates to the First Council of Constantinople which was convoked in 381 to address these heresies. Pope Damasus appointed St. Jerome as his confidential secretary. Writing in 409, Jerome remarked, "A great many years ago when I was helping Damasus, bishop of Rome with his ecclesiastical correspondence, and writing his answers to the questions referred to him by the councils of the east and west...". Hence, it appears that Jerome spent three years (382-385) in Rome in close relation with Pope Damasus. Invited there originally to a synod of 382 convened to end the schism of Antioch, he made himself indispensable to the pope, and took a prominent place in his councils.

The most accessible printed edition of the forged letters (this one and the following two) (BHL 3866-68) is PL 22, 239-326. For more recent editions and further references, see Henryk Fros, Supplement to BHL, *Novum Supplementum*, pp. 421-22 (same numbers 3866-68).

ff. 33-38v, Pseudo-Augustinus, [Italian translation of the Latin *Epistula Pseudo-Augustini ep. Hipponensis ad Cyrillum de magnificentiis B. Hieronymi*], rubric, *Fenise la episola del beato Eusebio al beato Damaso episcopo Portuense e Teodonio senatore di Roma de la morte del glorioso Jeronimo. E incomenza la epistola del beato Augustino al beato Cirilo pontifice Yrosolimitano de la magnificencia e miraculi e virtude del glorioso sancto Ieronimo*; incipit, "O venerabile prete Cirilo, pensi ch'io tacere le laude del venerabile prete pasato Ieronimo..."; explicit, "[...] essere inganato per alcuno modo del suo desiderio" (Latin version, BHL 3867);

This is the Italian translation of the *Epistola de magnificentiis Hieronymi ad Cyrillum*, erroneously attributed to Saint Augustine. The original Latin text is recorded in BHL 3867; published PL 22, 281-289; see also *Augustini Opera*, PL 33, 1120-1126. It is often found copied with the epistles found in this manuscript on ff. 1-33 and 38v-67.

ff. 38v-67, Pseudo-Cyrillus, [Italian translation of the Latin *Epistula Pseudo-Cyrilli ad Augustinum de miraculis Hieronymi*], rubric, *Fenisse la epistola del beato Augustino al beato Cirilo de le magnificencie del beato Ieronimo confessore e doctore eximio. Incomenza la epistola del beato Cirilo al beato Augustino de la miraculi del*

*glorioso Ieronimo*; incipit, "Al venerabile vescovo eximio Augustino vescove Yponense Cirilo vescovo Yerosolimitano...e minimo de tuti li sacerdoti desiderando de seguitar le vestigie ..."; explicit, "[...] Morte sancto Ieronimo intorno a li anni del signor Yhesu Christo .ccc. lxxx. Ad honore e laude sia de dio e gla inperio e forteza in secula seculorum. Amen"; final rubric, *Finita e questa opera ad laude de dio e di sancto Ieronimo* [beneath the final rubric is placed a paragraph that is meant to be inserted in the previous text, and is not the beginning of a "new" text] (Latin version, BHL 3868);

The original Latin text recorded in BHL 3868; published PL 22, 289-326; see also *Augustini Opera*, PL 33, 1126-1153).

Medieval readers were curious about the circumstances of Jerome's death. In the early fourteenth century, forged letters allegedly written by Eusebius of Cremona, St. Augustine and St. Cyril of Jerusalem would satisfy copiously the thirst for detail concerning the passing of Church Father and lead to the founding of the *Girolamini* (Hieronymites, *Ordo Sancti Hieronymi*, abbreviated O.S.H.), a common name for several congregations of hermits living according to the Rule of Saint Augustine, with supplementary regulations taken from the writings of Jerome). These three influential pseudographs began to amply circulate immediately in the fourteenth century and influenced a number of hagiographical works dedicated to Jerome.

The first is a long letter, purportedly from Jerome's disciple and successor as "abbot" of the Bethlehem monastery, Eusebius of Cremona, to Damasus, Bishop of Portus and Theodosius, a Roman senator. It describes Jerome's last hours and death.

The second is a letter from a Pseudo-Augustine to a certain Pseudo-Cyril of Jerusalem about Jerome's *magnificentiae*, his titles to glory and veneration.

The third, Pseudo-Cyril's reply to Pseudo-Augustine, enumerates Jerome's miracles before and after his death. In their original Latin, these forgeries had a prodigious diffusion in manuscript and print.

The success of these spurious letters in Tuscan and Sicilian, German, Dutch, French, Spanish, Catalan, Danish and English versions is hardly neglectful. The circulation was so dense that the letters were reasonably accessible to anyone who was literate: preachers used the letters in their sermons, artists represented them in their frescoes, paintings and manuscript illuminations. Their common purpose was to fulfill and nourish the wish for more details about the venerated saint, and to fill gaps in the known lives. The letters of Pseudo-Eusebius, Pseudo-Augustine and Pseudo-Cyril confirmed and magnified the saint, and contributed to his popularization.

The letters were probably written in Rome, early in the fourteenth century, in the circle of Santa Maria Maggiore, and internal evidence points to an author close to the Dominican Order (see Rice (1985), p. 1963; see also Lanzoni, 1920). The remnants of Saint Jerome were indeed transferred to Rome, in the "cappella del presepio" in Santa Maria Maggiore, and so there would have been in Rome, around Santa Maria Maggiore, the intellectual and spiritual impetus to compose works related to the death of Jerome.

These epistles served two hagiographical authors, the first Pietro Calo da Chioggia, a Dominican (died 1348), who composed his *De sancto Hieronymo*, in *Leggenda de Sanctis* (circa 1340); the second Giovanni di Andrea, of Bologna (also died in 1348) who composed between 1336 and 1346 a Life of Saint Jerome in four parts, *Hieronymianus* (BHL, 3876). The development of the cult of Saint Jerome in Italy from the fourteenth century onwards owes much to the latter text by Giovanni di Andrea. Both authors relied heavily on the three present epistles in Latin (i.e. Pseudo-Eusebius; Pseudo-Augustinus; Pseudo-Cyrillus) (see Lanzoni, 1920, p. 37).

There are a great number of fourteenth and fifteenth century codices that contain these three epistles, but in Latin. It would serve greatly to determine the number of extant codices of the Northern Italian vernacular tradition and their exact origin.

ff. 67v-94v, Bernardinus Senensis, *Divota confessione volgare*, rubric, *Incomença una confessione ornatissima e utilissima per salute de tuti li fideli christiani compilata dal venerabile padre e doctore sancto Bernardino de lo ordine de frati minori*;

This is a vernacular work by Bernardino of Siena (1380-1444), destined to help preachers and priests to better confess sinners and believers. This small work is published in D. Pacetti et al., *Operette volgari. S. Bernardino da Siena, integralmente edite a cura di P. Dionisio Pacetti*, Florence, 1938. We cannot provide the page references (reportedly found on pp. 47-316, but printed jointly with another Confessional (*Trattato della confessione "Renovamini"*)) as this edition is not readily accessible, but it would certainly be interesting to remap the manuscript tradition of this work. In Pacetti et al. (1938), there is a chapter relative to the "Divota confessione volgare o "Specchio di confessione."

Bernardino da Siena was an itinerant preacher, moving all through Italy. He joined the order of the Franciscans in 1402 and became a member of the Osservanza movement, in which he played an active role as a reformer. He started his preaching career at the age of 25 in 1405: following invitations from different governments, he gradually became the most famous preacher of his time. His sermons are often conserved as *reportationes* written by anonymous listeners. He set up a number of reformed monasteries, the first being the Capriola monastery near Siena, where he would retire to write his great cycle of sermons in 1432. During his lifetime, Bernardino refused a number of bishoprics and preferred to remain an itinerant preacher: "The essence of Bernardino's life was preaching: as he himself put it, he was a preacher who did not know anything but preaching" (quoted in N. Ben-Aryeh Debby, *Renaissance Florence in the Rhetoric of Two Popular Preachers*, Brepols, 2001, p. 31).

ff. 95-96v, ruled blanks, with the exception of a few lines of prayers or devotional words in the vernacular, on f. 96: "Ave regina vita dolzedo e spes nostra salve...";

ff. 97-100v, Bianco da Siena, *Laudi*, incipit, "[F]aciamo facti or facciamo / Se Cristo in verita am[i]amo..."; explicit, "[...] Facti facti de facciamo / Se faremo quel che pessiazi / El ciel me ne guadagniamo / Che sol[o] cielo da li facti. Amen";

See Ferraro, G. *Poesie popolari religiose del secolo XIV*, Bologna, 1877. These vernacular verses are attributed to Bianco da Siena and are edited by Ferraro (1877), based on a codex in Ferrara, Biblioteca municipale, 211 N.B. 1., which contains 65 canzoni in Italian. Bianco da Siena also

known as Bianco dall'Aniolina, was an Italian mystic who entered the order of Jesuates, consisting of unordained men who follow the rule of St-Augustine. Bianco da Siena died in 1434. See *Laudi spirituali del Bianco da Siena : Povero Gesuato del secolo XIV*, Lucca, 1851. This poem is composed of 28 stanzas.

ff. 98-99v, blank leaves.

## LITERATURE

[Bollandists]. *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina: antiquae et mediae aetatis ediderunt Socii Bollandiani*, Bruxelles: Société des bollandistes, 1992 [BHL].

Di Girolamo, Costanzo. *Libru di lu transitu et vita di misser sanctu Iberonimu*, Palermo, 1982.

[Jérôme (Saint)]. *La Vita e la fin del santo Hieronymo; Epistola del B. Eusebio, del transito di S. Hieronymo, Epistola de B. Augustino, de la magnificentia del B. Hieronymo*, S.l., circa 1471.

Pacetti D. et al., *Operette volgari. S. Bernardino da Siena; integralmente edite a cura di P. Dionisio Pacetti*, Florence, 1938.

Rice, E. *Saint Jerome in the Renaissance*, Baltimore, London, 1985.

Vannutelli, V., ed. *Miscellanea Geronimiana : scritti varii pubblicati nel 15 centenario dalla morte di San Girolamo*, Rome, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1920. See in particular F. Lanzoni, "La leggenda di S. Girolamo," pp. 19-42.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Censimento, Archivio e Studio dei Volgarizzamento Italiani, on the Sicilian Translation, *Libro del transito e della leggenda di messer sancto Iberonimu*

<http://casvi.sns.it/index.php?op=fetch&type=opera&status=pub&lang=en&id=95&startchar=9>

Basilica Santuaria della Consolata:

[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santuaria\\_della\\_Consolata](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santuaria_della_Consolata)

On Saint Bernardino da Sienna:

[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bernardino-da-siena-santo\\_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bernardino-da-siena-santo_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/)

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