

[ANONYMOUS], *Plena et perfecta*, Commentary on PSEUDO-CICERO, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*  
In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment  
Northern Italy, Venice or Bologna?, dated 1342

ii (paper) + i (parchment, probably from the original binding) + 52 + i (parchment) + ii (paper) folios on parchment (palimpsest, traces of earlier script visible running perpendicular to the present text, apparently Italian legal documents, visible on ff. 11v, 14, 28, 34v, 39, 51v), early modern foliation in ink top outer corner recto, missing one quire between quires four and five (collation, i<sup>12</sup> ii<sup>10</sup> iii<sup>12</sup> iv<sup>8</sup> v<sup>10</sup>), boxed horizontal catchwords lower margin (lacking in quire three), quires signed in roman numerals in the upper margin on the first folio, leaf and quire signatures very bottom outer corner recto with a letter designating the quire and an Arabic numeral the leaf, ruled lightly in lead with the top and bottom horizontal rules full across and single vertical bounding lines defining the columns, (horizontal rules indiscernible), prickings remain on some folios (justification 235-223 x 167-158 mm.), written above and below the top line in two columns of seventy-one to fifty-eight lines in small cursive gothic scripts by at least two scribes, one scribe concluded his portion with a colophon on f. 34v, majuscules within text highlighted in red, red underlining and paragraph marks, two-line red initials, fourteen-line red initial, f. 1, infilled in red, and with red and black pen decoration, numerous original imperfections in parchment and a few later stains, f. 13, ink is faded and has been partially re-written, f. 33, stain, overall in good condition (reflecting its original condition). Bound in nineteenth-century limp vellum, with small flap extending over the fore-edge, title in spine in gilt, "Commentarii in rhetorica Ciceronis, M CCC XLII Tractatus grammatica varii," and date, s. XIV below, in good condition, with some soiling and minor stains. Dimensions 292 x 205 mm.

This is one of only four manuscripts of an unpublished commentary on the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*. The text was probably written in the early fourteenth century, making it the first commentary on the *Ad Herennium* after the twelfth century and one that inaugurated a new tradition of Italian commentaries. This signed, dated, and plentifully annotated copy, likely owned by the Dominican Convent of SS. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, is essential for the much-needed edition of this text, and for further research on its author and place in the history of rhetoric.

## PROVENANCE

1. Written in Northern Italy, possibly in Venice or Bologna given the history of the manuscript and its text, in 1342; signed and dated by one of its scribes (complete transcription, below, f. 34v), "Scriptus per me Monterillum Perutii Magistri Montis de monteuli." No scribe by this name has been identified in Krämer [Online Resources]; nor is he documented among the manuscripts from SS. Giovanni e Paolo in Quinto, 2006 ("Perutii" may possibly be "Peruzzi," a Tuscan surname, and "monteuli," might be read as monteulivo, i.e. Monte Olivo; we thank Dr. Giovanna Murano for her assistance); he prefaces his name by two traditional scribal comments, "Manus scriptoris laudetur omnibus horis finito libro referamus gratias Christo" ("Praise the hand of the writer. At any hour that the book is ended let us give thanks to Christ"; similar colophons, see Bénédictins du Bouveret, 1982, vol. 6, nos. 22430 and 22431), and – the very traditional verse, versions of which can be found in the seventh and eighth

centuries, “Scribere qui nescit nullum putat esse labore/ Tres digiti scribunt cetera membra dolent” (“Those who don’t know how to write think it is no trouble, but although three fingers write, the whole body suffers”; similar to Bénédictins du Bouveret, 1982, vol. 6, 23351-2, and 23354) – the “three fingers” he mentions are the three fingers used by the scribe to hold his quill.

School texts were often copied on what we can deduce was less expensive parchment; this manuscript was clearly copied as economically as possible on very roughly prepared parchment leaves, some of which are palimpsests, in this case probably Italian legal documents that were scraped to remove their text so that they could be re-used (a previous cataloguer reported a date, “1300,” legible in the underscript on f. 34v; I have not been able to verify this). The parchment used for ff. 9-10, was particularly poor, and the lower portion of f. 10rv was so flawed that the scribe was unable to write on it. Overall, the very dark and mottled hair side of the parchment is notable, as are the original holes and other imperfections (for example, ff. 17-18, 25, and 35).

Everything points to this originating as a student’s personal copy of this text. Given the evidence that it was at some point in its history in the library of the Dominican Convent of SS. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice (see below), it is at least possible that it was copied by a student who brought the manuscript with him when he entered the order. Almost every page includes annotations in a number of different hands, witnessing to its use by further students, including frequent notes highlighting passages of particular interest (many examples, including f. 5v, “Nota quid est superbia,” “Quid est perfidia,” etc.), as well as numerous pointing hands, some variant readings, and occasional longer notes (for example, ff. 1v, 3, 7v, 8, 32, etc.); in Book IV the figures of diction are copied in the margin with elaborate flourishes (see ff. 43-48). Book II of the *Ad Herennium* begins on f. 16v, and is followed by a section, ff. 16v-18, apparently with no lemmata, but with especially copious marginal annotations (on f. 18, the beginning of Book II is repeated, two lines from the bottom, column a). Whether these notes were added while the manuscript was in the library of SS. Giovanni e Paolo – in which case they are fascinating evidence for the study of classical rhetoric at this Convent – or before its acquisition by the Dominicans, is an interesting area for further research.

2. Written in a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century hand on the back parchment endleaf (almost certainly from this manuscript’s original binding), “Bertholinus” (see the discussion of the author, below).
3. Most likely belonged to the Dominican Convent of Saints Giovanni e Paolo (San Zanipolo) in Venice (based on its nineteenth-century history; see below), a thirteenth-century foundation that was suppressed in the first decade of the nineteenth century. Construction of its church, one of the most important in Venice, began in 1234 and continued for centuries until its consecration in 1430. Seventeen of their manuscripts are identified in Kaeppli, 1966, pp. 70-72, including this one, p. 71, no. 9 (listed as Sotheby’s, 1950, lot 30; see also Quinto, p. 372, Appendix III.2.5, listing this manuscript as Christie’s, 11 July 2000, lot 78). It was an important foundation with a library that was significant enough by the late fifteenth century that it was the intended recipient of Cardinal Bessarion’s collection of Greek and Latin texts. This manuscript has not been identified in the eighteenth-century catalogue of the library (Berardelli, 1778-80, 1782-84), very likely because there is no category in the catalogue that clearly identifies a text of this type. SS. Giovanni e Paolo had more than 700 Latin and Italian manuscripts when it was suppressed; Beradelli published five sections of his

catalogue of the collection, and announced his intention of cataloguing a sixth section, Poetry and Rhetoric. This section, which was never published, would have been the logical place for the manuscript described here (Quinto, 2006, pp. 45-46, and for the general history of library and its dispersal, pp. 43-52).

4. In ink, lower margin, f. 1, "Commentaria in Rhetoricam Ciceronis," probably in the same early-modern hand that added the foliation, and on the verso of the front parchment endleaf, "VI."
5. Belonged to Baron Charles Alexander de Cosson (1846-1929) who purchased it in 1876: his armorial bookplate inside front cover, and note on the front flyleaf leaf in ink: "From the library of S.S. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice. See note in a fourteenth-century manuscript of the Golden Legend bought at the same time, 1876." This Golden Legend, which later sold at Christies, 11 July 2000 (Sale 6348), lot 27, includes a record of its bequest to SS. Giovanni e Paolo by the Dominican, Nicolaus Augustus of Venice. Baron de Cosson purchased a total of five manuscripts from the same source, all with similar bindings, and almost certainly all from the library of the Dominican Convent of SS. Giovanni e Paolo (sold at Sotheby's, 27 March 1950, lots 29-33; see also the Christie Sale noted above, lots 27, 28, 78). Born in Durham of a French family who immigrated to England, he was an explorer in Egypt and Abyssinia, as well as an archaeologist and antiquary, especially known for his collection of arms and armor. He moved with his family to Florence in 1901, where he lived until his death.
6. Belonged to his eldest son, Baron Claude Augustin de Cosson, (b.1877), who pursued a career in the Egyptian service before retiring to Florence.
7. Sold at London, Sotheby's, 27 March 1950, lot 30 (excerpt from catalogue pasted on the front endleaf, f. i) to William Foyle.
8. Belonged to William Alfred Foyle (1885-1963), the noted London bookseller, who gathered one of the largest private collections in England after purchasing Beeleigh Abbey in 1943; his maroon leather bookplate, inside front cover, with the inscription, "Ex libris W. A. Foyle Beeleigh Abbey, and motto "Animo et Fide"; his sale at London, Christie's, 11-13 July 2000 (Sale 6348), lot. 78.

## TEXT

ff. 1-52v, incipit, "Plena et perfecta locutio triplici comparatur adminiculo. Regulari nominis ... Vtilitas huius operis talis est ut perlecto hec libro simus copiosi ad persuadendus vel dissuadendus aliud. Titulus talis est marci tullii ad gaium <?> primus liber incipit habemus proprium ..., *Et si in negotiis* [Ad Her. I.1] ... *et puero* ... dudum ipse et hospites sui sederent."

One scribe completed his portion of the text near the top of the first columns on f. 34v; he left the remainder of the folios blank except for a scribal colophon: "Manus scriptoris laudetur omnibus oris finito libro referamus gratias Christo. Scribere qui nescit nullum putat esse laborem. Tres digiti scribunt cetera membra dolent. Scriptus per me Monte<r>illum Perutii Magistri Montis de monteuli. Sub Anno domini 1342 Quadragesimo Octavo Indictione prima Tempore domini Clementi papae sexti." A new hand resumed copying the text at the top of f. 35 (with tie marks indicating continuity).

Now missing one quire following quire four, so the text ends imperfectly on f. 41v with the commentary on III.XVI.28: "... alteram quam ad artificalem memoriam." *Hic est ffinis istius tractatus scilicet pronuntiationis. Post istum*

*sequitur de memoria artificiosa et incipitur in <>llio sisternio[?].*" The scribe left f. 42rv, blank (the last folio in that quire), and the text now resumes abruptly on f. 43, incipit, *"//Si reuertimur ad... id est ad finem clausule... Complexio ... (book IV.XIV.20)"*, the text then continues with no breaks, ending with a commentary on IV.LI.64 (Marx, ed., 1964, p. 183). Although this is not the end of the *Ad Herennium* (Marx, ed. ends on p. 192), it does not appear that this copy ever continued further (ends f. 52v, a few lines from the bottom of the second column).

Unpublished commentary on the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, known from its opening words as the *"Plena et perfecta,"* commentary. Copied as a continuous commentary with the lemmata from the *Ad Herennium* underlined in red, followed by the author's discussion of the text; sections within the text begin with two-line initials, and minor divisions within these sections are marked with paragraph marks, but there are no original indications of the usual four (or six) books found in manuscripts of the *Ad Herennium*; see f. 16v, incipit, *"In primo libro de herenni,..."* (Book II); f. 32, incipit, *"Ad omnem iudicalem causam ..."* (Book III; the beginning of Book IV now missing).

This important text has never been printed, nor studied in depth. It is known in only three other manuscripts besides this one: Oxford, Bodl. MS Lat Class. D.36, ff. 1v-98, fourteenth century, also from SS Giovanni e Paolo – one of the group purchased by Baron Charles Alexander de Cosson (*Iter italicum* online no. 1200); San Gimignano, Bibl. Communale, MS A II 21, fourteenth century, fragmentary at end (*Iter italicum*, vol. 6, p. 208; online, no. 2276; pp. 116-117, no. 24); and Naples, Bibl. Nazionale, V D 18, fifteenth century, 96 fols. (see *Iter italicum*, vol.1, p. 415; and online no. 164), once owned by Gasparino Barzizza (1360-1431), who studied rhetoric at Pavia, then tutored in Venice, ultimately teaching in Padua (1407-1421), Ferrara, and Milan.

The text was probably written in the early fourteenth century, making it the first commentary on the *Ad Herennium* after the twelfth century, and one that inaugurated a new tradition of Italian commentaries on the text. This signed and dated copy, likely owned by SS. Giovanni e Paolo in Venice, must play a role in any further research on the text, its author, and its subsequent influence in the history of rhetoric. A careful comparison of the text of this copy and the copy now in the Bodleian Library Oxford, also from SS. Giovanni e Paolo, is of special interest, since the presence of two copies of this text in their library seems remarkable, especially given how few copies seem to have survived. The numerous annotations and marginal notes in this manuscript also deserve careful attention and comparison with the notes in other copies.

Medieval and Renaissance rhetoric, once almost entirely neglected by scholars, has been the subject of intense interest over the last decades. The importance of the tradition of classical rhetoric, and in particular the Ciceronian rhetorical texts (including the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*) throughout the Middle Ages and Renaissance has been convincingly argued in recent scholarly studies (see especially Cox and Ward, 2006, and Ward, 1995), replacing the traditional view that saw rhetoric as peripheral to the intellectual history of the Middle Ages – its influence restricted to treatises that provided instruction in letter writing (the *ars dictamina*) and indirectly, in manuals on preaching.

Despite this steady growth in scholarly interest in the field, there is still no published, detailed scholarly study of the *"Plena et perfecta"* commentary. John O. Ward, the authority on commentaries on the *Ad Herennium*, has included brief remarks on this commentary in his published studies, and he reported the existence of the four manuscripts listed here (Ward, 1978: pp. 60-61, Ward, 1983, p. 132-133). It has been also been

mentioned briefly by Carruthers, in her discussions of memory and rhetoric (Carruthers, 2008, p. 187, and 2006, pp. 221 and 224, citing the Oxford manuscript), and by James Murphy in his history of medieval and Renaissance rhetoric (Murphy, 1981, p. 121, again mentioning the Oxford manuscript).

The commentary is anonymous, but Ward (Ward, 1983, pp. 132-133) has suggested that it may be the work of Giovanni di Bonandrea (c.1245-1321). Giovanni is known as a member of the guild of notaries at Bologna from 1266; he probably studied in Padua, and he also spent time in Verona. He was the author of a popular rhetorical treatise, the *Brevis introductio ad dictamen*, and was the first professor to occupy the newly-created chair of rhetoric at the University of Bologna, teaching rhetoric there from 1292-5, and then again c. 1303 until his death in 1321. His successor and pupil, Bartolinus de Benincasa, certainly commented on the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and it is assumed that Giovanni did as well. Internal evidence within Bartolinus's commentary suggested to Ward that the "Plena et perfecta" commentary may be the commentary written by Giovanni di Bonandrea. This manuscript may, in fact, add new evidence to this debate, since a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century hand has inscribed, "Bertholinus" on the back vellum endleaf which was almost certainly part of this manuscript's original binding.

The tradition of commenting on the *Ad Herennium* was well-established by the twelfth century, which saw the creation of commentaries including the "Etsi cum Tullius" commentary, possibly by William of Champeaux, a commentary by Thierry of Chartres, and the Alanus commentary (often ascribed to Alain de Lille); they form part of the first group of commentaries on the text, c. 1080-1225, all which reflect teaching in Northern Europe – in Laon, the Rhine, Reims, Chartres, and Paris. The second wave of interest in the text, which resulted in numerous commentaries, from c. 1290, and continuing after the invention of printing, was in contrast overwhelmingly Italian. The "Plenus et perfecta" commentary is thus of particular historical importance, and stands at the very beginning of the Italian interest in the text.

The *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, the earliest comprehensive Latin rhetorical treatise, was written by an unknown author writing in the first century B.C. Together with the *De inventione* by Cicero (106 BC-43 BC), it was the most important text of the classical rhetorical corpus throughout the Middle Ages, and its influence continued into the Renaissance. From the fourth century, it circulated as a work by Cicero; some modern scholars have suggested that its author may be the author, Cornificius, mentioned by Quintilian, but this remains a hypothesis. Questions about its author were in fact raised in Italy in the 1480s, and appeared in print for the first time in the 1492 pamphlet by Raffaele Regio (c. 1440-1520), *Quaestio utrum ars rhetorica ad Herennium falso Ciceroni inscribatur* (see Cox, 2003, pp. 684-686).

Interest in the *Ad Herennium* was particularly important in Italy from the thirteenth century on, even before the appearance of Italian commentaries on the text. It was translated into Italian as early as the thirteenth century (in abbreviated versions, the earliest complete translation in Italian is fourteenth-century), and many of the surviving Latin manuscripts are of Italian origin, with a marked increase in numbers in the fifteenth century (see Cox in Cox and Ward, 2006, pp. 109-143). Classical rhetoric was important to the urban life of the independent city-republics in central and northern Italy, an interest that continued, although with different emphases, among the Italian humanists in the fifteenth century. Guarino da Verona (1374-1460), for example, is said to have lectured on the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* for more than thirty years, and his commentary on the text survives in more than twenty fifteenth-century manuscripts and in six printed editions.

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(available online by subscription)

Iter Italicum, the electronic version of Paul Oskar Kristeller's *Iter Italicum: a finding list of uncatalogued or incompletely catalogued humanistic manuscripts of the Renaissance in Italian and other libraries*, print ed., 6 vols 1963-92

<http://www.itergateway.org/>

Loeb edition of the *Ad Herennium*, Open Library

<http://archive.org/stream/adcherenniumdera00capluoft#page/n65/mode/2up>

Introduction from Caplan's 1954 Loeb edition

[http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Rhetorica\\_ad\\_Herennium/Introduction\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Rhetorica_ad_Herennium/Introduction*.html)

Gideon Burton, on the *Ad Herennium* (detailed outline), at the *Silva Rhetoricae*, an online introduction to rhetorical terminology and sources

<http://rhetoric.byu.edu/primary%20texts/Ad%20Herennium.htm>

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