

PETRUS PICTAVIENSIS [PETER OF POITIERS], *Compendium historiae in genealogia Christi*

In Latin, decorated roll on parchment

Northern Italy, Piedmont? Lombardy?, c. 1300-1350

Parchment roll, seven membranes sewn together, each measuring approximately 420/460 mm, text complete, running vertically from top to bottom, written in a gothic book hand, in brown ink (justification: text width circa 285 mm), ruled in plummet with a complex grid traced on the parchment allowing for proper layout of medallions, frames and diagrams, rubrics in red, a few rubrics in pale blue ink painted initials alternately in red and blue, some guide letters perceptible, planned spaces (roundels and squares) for diagrams and/or miniatures left blank (unfinished), roundels and square spaces for diagrams lined in red or blue, arborescences and genealogical trees linking different boxes and roundels traced in red and/or blue, protective blue silk veils sewn at the top and bottom of roll. Parchment roll placed in a modern bamboo tube (Parchment a bit frayed at the top of the first membrane, a few stains to parchment but overall in good condition). Dimensions 3445 x 35 mm.

Rare, unrecorded manuscript of Peter of Poitiers's central work, extensively used in medieval schools, here in its more unusual roll format and with unfinished diagrams. This is evidently the only extant roll that includes the interpolated version of the second version of the text (both of which are very rare in roll format), which includes excerpts from other sources. Its medieval provenance, having belonged to the Master General of the Order of the Dominicans, Corradus Mondone of Asti (1462-1465), is noteworthy.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in Italy based on script and preparation of parchment, likely in Northern Italy (Piedmont? Lombardy?). It cannot yet be determined in which region the roll was copied, and the lack of iconographical elements – planned but not realized – does not allow for stylistic comparisons. A possible Piedmont place of origin is only inferred from late medieval provenance from Asti, which does not constitute per se proof that the codex was in Piedmont prior to its fifteenth-century ownership. Further paleographical comparisons and research on Italian examples of the text in roll form might allow for better localization, for instance one might study Rome, BAV, Vat. lat. 3783, a roll manuscript of this text, also datable to the fourteenth century. A date of copy for the present scroll in the fourteenth century seems plausible based on script and general layout.
2. Corrado Mondone d'Asti (Astensis), as indicated in an inscription hidden at the very top of the scroll and again at the foot of the roll, in the right-hand corner: "Conradus Mondone Astensis." He was Master General of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) from 1462 to 1465 (30th Master of the Order), after the resignation of his predecessor, Marcial Auribelli. In 1465, Corrado of Asti also renounced his charge (to be replaced by none other than his predecessor Marcial Auribelli, who resumed his post for a second mandate) and retired in Asti where he lived a life dedicated to prayer and study, in particular of the writings of Saint Thomas Aquinas. He died in his convent in 1474, where a funerary plaque read: "Sepulcrum patris F. Corradi Mondonii Astensis philosophorum principis, et sacrae theologiae doctoris excellentissimi..." See O.

Derossi, *Scrittori piemontesi, savoiardi, nizzardi, registrati nei catalogi del vescovo Francesco Agostino della chiesa e del monaco Andrea Rossotto*, Turin, 1790, p. 30 : "Corrado Mondone d'Asti, maestro generale dell'ordine de predicatori, teologo e predicatore..." On Conradus Modonius Astensis, see also T. Kaeppli, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum Medii Aevi*, vol. I (Rome, 1970), p. 285. A manuscript of one of the works of Conradus Mondonius of Asti (*Compilatio in I partem Summae Divi Thomae*), contemporary with the author (autograph?) is found in Asti, Biblioteca del Seminario IV-V (2 vol. 15th c.). Another work by Conradus Mondonius, his *Questiones quodlibetales XXV* is found in Turin, BN, D. V. 5 (also 15th c.).

Situated near the Castelvecchio in Asti, the Convent of the Dominicans in Asti ("Dominicani della Maddalena," in Asti) is one of the oldest Dominican foundations, founded circa 1219 (the Order of the Dominicans was officially recognized by Pope Honorius III in 1216). It is in the convent of the Dominicans of Asti that Jacopo da Cessole (1275-1322) took his vos (Cessola is a small town near Asti). The Convent was suppressed in 1802 under Napoleonic rule of Piedmont and the buildings of the Gothic Chiesa della Maddalena were demolished. On the convent of the Dominicans in Asti (Convento della Maddalena), see N. Gabiani, Chiesa e Convento della "Maddalena," in Asti, *Atti della Societta Piemontese di archeologia e belle arti* 9 (1918), pp. 163-164.

3. Private European Collection.

TEXT

Text, diagrams and arborescence run vertically from top to bottom:

Peter of Poitiers, *Compendium historiae in genealogia Christi, I aetas - VI aetas (First to Sixth Ages of the World)*, incipit prologue, "Considerans ystorie sacre prolixitatem necnon et difficultatem scolarium quoque circa studium sacre lectionis maxime illius que in ystorie fundamento versatur..."; incipit text "Adam in agro damasceno formatus et in paradysum, under IIIIor flumina oriuntur..." [Adam was created in the territory of Damascus and placed in Paradise, the source of the four rivers...]; explicit (5th Age), rubric (scroll, 6th membrane), *Hic terminatur quarta etas...*; explicit, "[...] Tempore anni Ruffi est mortuus Augustus Cesar postquam regnaverat annis LVII et mensibus VII et diebus X, ex quibus XIII vel XII [annis] Antonius cum eo regnavit" [It was in the time of Rufus that Augustus died after ruling for fifty-seven years, seven months and ten days – fourteen or twelve (sic?) of which he ruled with Anthony] (see Latin edition in Moleiro, Facsimile, vol. II, pp. 135-147; Spanish and English translation are found on pp. 93-129; the facsimile published and produced by Moleiro is also an example of an roll of Italian origin, produced and illuminated in Tuscany in the 13th century, Rome, Bibl. Casanatense, 4254).

A noteworthy point, before discussion, is the indication of the sources of the *Compendium* added interlineally in red, above the relevant passages. The sources quoted in this manner are naturally mostly biblical scripture, but the scribe has also indicated other sources such as "m[agiste]r yst[orie]", no doubt Petrus Comestor and his *Historia Scholastica*. Such interlinear quoting of the text is not something we have seen in other scrolls containing the *Compendium*, underscoring that the text in the present roll is in fact an interpolated version of the text, although the exact amount of interpolation still remains to be determined. A full study of the interpolated versions would allow for a better understanding of the variant versions. This is apparently the only roll-format manuscript containing an interpolated version, and there are a number of spaces left unfilled, not for diagrams or illustration, more likely for more text.

This roll contains a fourteenth-century copy of Peter of Poitiers' *Compendium historiae in genealogia Christi*. The work is an abridgment of biblical history, given in the form of a genealogical tree of Christ. Beginning with Adam, the persons who formed the line of succession are enumerated in order. To each person is allotted a short biographical notice and the names are enclosed in circles (or roundels). The work contains also biographical notices on some biblical persons who do not enter into the genealogy of Christ, with accounts of kings and events of nations relative to the Hebrew people. This very important work is considered to be very influential on later medieval genealogical representations, and occupies a central place in the development of universal chronicles and medieval historiography in general (see C. Klapisch-Zuber, 2000; M.-E. Gauthier, 2008). Peter of Poitiers's *Compendium* was a source of inspiration to all succeeding representations of historical facts and genealogical trees, allowing for the success and development of universal chronicles from the 13th century onwards, but also in important exegetical works such as those of Nicolas of Lyra who makes use of Peter of Poitiers's genealogical diagrams. The influence of Peter of Poitiers is still perceptible in works such as the *Fasciculus temporum* of Werner Rolewinck, circa 1473.

Peter of Poitiers was a French scholastic theologian, born at Poitiers (or in the Poitou region of France) circa 1125-1135 and died in Paris, circa 1215. Very little is known about Peter of Poitiers. He studied at the University of Paris, where he attended the classes of Peter Lombard and became professor of theology. He succeeded Petrus Comestor as chair of scholastic theology in 1169 and was later made Chancellor of the Church of Paris in 1193.

The *Compendium* is Peter of Poitiers's most famous work. The author sought to provide students with a short summary of biblical history. This was not the first attempt to summarize biblical history as Peter Comestor and his *Historia Scholastica* or Petrus of Riga and his *Aurora*, sought to do just that, although the result was deemed still too lengthy. Peter of Poitiers attempted to produce an even shorter *Compendium*, and this version was from the outset destined to be presented in roll-form: Peter chose to present family-trees on parchment hides as study aid for poor clerics and students, whose education was considered largely inadequate by both the Third (in particular with the "charitable decree") and Fourth Lateran Councils. The *Compendium* fulfilled the need to better instruct poor or illiterate clerics and children, clearly conceived as an "educational short-cut" (see Monroe, 1978, p. 92). Scrolls were used for manuscripts of the *Biblia pauperum* or regal genealogies. The scroll presentation was practical for class-room presentation (recalling the *Exultet* rolls used for when chanting Easter proclamation). Philip Moore underscores how this opusculum is useful as a means to understand the teaching practices of the period (thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries) [see Moore, 1936, p. 117; on pedagogy in medieval universities and cathedral schools, see J. Le Goff, *Les intellectuels au Moyen Age* (1985); on memory aids, see M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory...*, Cambridge, 1996].

The Prologue (*propositio*) beginning, "Considerans..." is worth quoting here in its English translation, as it best underscores the author's intention: "Taking into account the great detail of biblical history and the difficulties students encounter when studying the Bible – particularly those who have no knowledge of the foundations of history – and also considering those who have no access to books and yet wish to hold the sacred narrations in their memory as in a sack, I have attempted to summarize the series of patriarchs from whom Christ is descended through the tribe of Levi and Judah in a single, small book" (Transl. in Moleiro, Facsimile, 1999-2000, p. 93). The Prologue thus suggests that the work has two complementary motives, one pedagogical and the other mnemonic. The text covers Biblical history from the first age of the world, starting with Adam, through the five ages which each open with five Old Testament characters (Adam, Noah, Abraham, David and Zedekiah). The sixth age of the world is

heralded in by the annunciation of the birth of Jesus Christ, and the genealogy of Christ extends spiritually through his apostles. The entire genealogical arborescence is underscored by the presence of iconographical medallions and diagrams (not executed in this particular roll, although spaces have been planned).

There are many manuscripts, as the work was extremely successful (see partial list of extant manuscripts in Moore, 1936, pp. 101-106; a more exhaustive list is found in Stegmüller, 1954, pp. 362-364, no. 6778). One counts some fifty extant manuscripts of the text, to which one should add the present recently rediscovered roll. The oldest extant copy of the *Compendium* of Peter of Poitiers is a manuscript scroll datable to the early thirteenth century and housed in Harvard, Houghton Library, MS Typ 216H (see L. Light, 1988, pp. 103-104); another scroll of the early thirteenth century is in Cleveland, CMA 1973.5 (see Monroe, 1978). Not all are in scroll format, as some manuscripts have adopted the codex format for the text (for instance, Brussels, BR, KBR 9174). The text was often modified and interpolated. In his study of the *Compendium*, Philip Moore has come to the conclusion that the text survives in three different versions: the original (as found in Paris, BnF, MS lat. 14435), the version with excerpts from Comestor's *Historia Scholastica* and other sources inserted (as found for instance in London, BL, Roy. MS 1 B X [Stegmüller, no 6778,3] or Hamburg, Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Theol. 2029 [Stegmüller, no 6778,2]: interestingly, both of these versions are codices and not rolls), and finally, thirdly, the version incorporated into the world chronicles (see Moore, 1936, pp. 100-101). In fact the interpolations and deletions vary to such a degree that it is unlikely that two identical manuscripts will be found (see study by M. C. Vivancos, in Moleiro, Facsimile, 1999-2000, vol. II, pp. 18-19).

The present version of the text appears to be an example of the second version of the work, the base text of Peter of Poitiers interpolated with passages borrowed from the *Historia scholastica* and other sources. This fact adds to the interest of any rediscovered roll, as the text is fluctuated: indeed no two rolls or codices containing the interpolated text are alike and thus each one should be studied and collated carefully. It should be stressed that the roll-format – evidently the preferred form in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries – has survived in lesser numbers than the codex format. Moore specifies when the manuscripts he lists are roll manuscripts (actually only 6 rolls listed): none of the rolls he lists contain the interpolated version (Moore, 1936, pp. 101-106). A more in-depth survey of the extant manuscripts and the textual versions they contain is necessary, but the present roll seems to be one of the earliest, if not the only, roll-format manuscript containing Peter of Poitiers's *Compendium* in its interpolated version. There is no critical edition of the *Compendium* taking into account all the early manuscripts and rolls.

DIAGRAMS

The present list does not account for all diagrams found or planned in the roll, but one should signal the following six mnemonic diagrams:

Membrane 2: Diagram of Noah's Ark; Another diagram of Noah's Ark (according to Joseph: "Hec est dispositio arche secundum iosephum");

Membrane 3: Arches and columns classifying the forty-two stages covered by the people of Israel in the three listed years (architectonic diagram);

Membrane 4: Manner in which the tribes and the Levites were arranged around the tent of the Covenant according to the four cardinal points (circular and quatrefoil diagram);

Membrane 6: Layout of the City of Jerusalem (circular diagram).

LITERATURE

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Zwingli, U. *Petri Pictaviensis Galli genealogia et chronologia sanctorum patrum*, Basel, 1592 [edition of the *Compendium* with interpolations incorporated into a universal chronicle].

ONLINE RESOURCES

On Peter of Poitiers:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_of_Poitiers

Moleiro, Peter of Poitiers, *Compendium Facsimile based on Rome, Bibl. Casanatense MS 4254*:
<http://www.moleiro.com/fr/livres-bibliques/genealogie-du-christ.html>

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