

ANTONIO FIORDIBELLO, *De auctoritate ecclesiae ...*, Romae, apud Antonium Bladum, 1545; TADDEO PICCONI, *De itinere christiani sacrum opusculum*, Romae, apud Ioannem Mariam de Viottis Parmensem in domo S. Birgittae, 1553; VITTORIA COLONNA, *Rime spirituali*

In Italian, two imprints and a manuscript on paper  
Italy (Rome?) 1545; 1553; c. 1563-1580

Two imprints followed by a manuscript bound in a single volume, ii (i, pastedown, paper flyleaves, contemporary with binding) + 44 + 32 + 88 (manuscript, foliated in modern pencil 1-88) + iv (blank paper flyleaves, iv, pastedown) folios on paper, somewhat cockled, bottom margin front flyleaf (blank) damaged, some foxing. I. first imprint (Fiordibello), 44 folios on paper, unfoliated, complete (collation, eleven quires, A<sup>4</sup> [title page, Aii] B<sup>4</sup> [signed B, Bii] C-L<sup>4</sup>), printed signatures, the first leaf in each quire signed only with an upper case letter, the second leaf with a letter and number, title page is unsigned, (justification 165 x 90 mm.), 27 long lines in italic font, engraved title page with roundel of an eagle, small four-line engraved initial on the first page, II. second imprint (Picconi), 32 folios on paper, unfoliated, complete (collation a -b<sup>4</sup>), first leaf of each quire signed with a letter only, second leaf signed a ii, and so forth, 29 long lines of roman type, (justification 163 x 100 mm.), sig. a i, engraved title page with coat of arms enclosed in a wreath, sig. a ii, 6-line engraved initial of a captive being led on horseback, sig. a iv, 6-line engraved initial of the author(?) offering his book to a cardinal, sig. b i verso, half-page woodcut of Moses in the Desert, sig. b ii, six-line engraved initial of men laboring in the fields with a prisoner, sig. b iii, small hole top margin, III. manuscript (Colonna), 88 folios on paper, watermark similar to Briquet 12209 (Vicenza 1579, Roma 1580, Fabriano 1565), and to Piccard Online 42380 (o.O 1568), 42381 (Rome 1563), 42383 and 42384 (both Rome 1577), complete, (collation i-xi<sup>8</sup>), no signatures or catchwords, unruled, (justification 113 x 85-70 mm.), 14 long lines in an elegant italic script, no rubrics, beginning of each sonnet in more flourished majuscule, some bleed through (paper is very thin), but text is nonetheless legible throughout. Bound in contemporary limp vellum, with head and tail bands which no longer lace into the back cover (so it is loose), once with two fasteners (holes remain front and back covers), spine damaged with some loss of vellum (hole in middle of spine exposing sewing), back pastedown partially detached and torn, spine lettered in ink, running vertically, "F[i ...]b<. >us deo," and at top, reading horizontally "Florebe./ de Auct./ Eccle."; with a later paper label at bottom, "S. 86." Dimensions 192 x 133.

Fascinating hybrid book, consisting of two imprints (one exceedingly rare) on Christian life, along a manuscript version of the spiritual poems of the female author Vittoria Colonna, friend of Michelangelo. The compilation of these texts in their contemporary binding sheds light on the views of reform-minded Catholics (the so-called *spirituali*) in Italy after the Council of Trent and attests to the persistence of manuscript culture in the age of print.

## PROVENANCE

1. The volume includes two religious texts printed in Rome in 1545 and 1553 respectively, bound together with a manuscript from the second half of the sixteenth century of the *Rime spirituali* by Vittoria Colonna, almost certainly copied from the *editio princeps* of Valgrisi printed in 1546; the watermark evidence suggests that this manuscript, like the two imprints, is from Rome, copied between c. 1563-1580.

Given the likely date of the binding, which may be contemporary, and the coherence of the contents (discussed below), it is possible that this volume was assembled for, or even by, the first owner of the manuscript of Colonna's spiritual poems, perhaps as late as 1580, depending on the date of the manuscript portion. Certainly, the volume as a

whole dates after the council of Trent, which concluded in 1563. Alternatively, the volume could have been assembled by the Jesuits of Viterbo; it certainly was part of their library in the seventeenth century (see below).

2. Belonged to the Jesuit College at Viterbo, with their seventeenth-century ex libris on the title page of the first imprint: "Coll. Viterb. Soc. Jesu Catal. Inscr." Cardinal Scipione Cobelluzzi (1565-1626) gave his library to the Jesuits at Viterbo before his death, and there is therefore some possibility that this volume could have belonged to the Cardinal, who was a learned man and the librarian of the Archives of Castel Sant'Angelo. The Jesuit College was suppressed in 1868; part of their library was transferred to the Bishop's seminary in Viterbo, and from there to the municipal library in the 1960s, but much of it was dispersed.

## TEXT

I. Sig. A i- L iv, [title page; Sig. A i] ANTONIVS FLO/REBELLVS DE AUCTORITA/te Ecclesiae ad Ampliss. Virum Iacobum Sa-/doletum Episcopum Carpentoracten./ S.R.E. Presb./ Cardinalem/ ROMAE M. D. XLV [Sig. A i, verso blank; text begins on Sig. A ii] ANTONIVS FLOREBELLVS DE auctoritate Ecclesiae ad Amlpiss. Virum Iacobum Sadoletum Episcopum Carpentoracten. S. R. E. Pres. Cardinalem., incipit, "Quod optare Sadolete antea ... animi studio oro atque obsecro," *Romae apud Antonium Bladum. M. D. XLV*; [Sig. L iv verso, blank].

Antonio Fiordibello, *De auctoritate ecclesiae* (On the Authority of the Church), composed in 1545, and printed in Rome in that year, see EDIT 16, listing eight copies of this edition in Italy; World Cat lists two copies in the United States. There was also an edition printed in Lyon in 1546.

Antonio Fiordibello, or Antonius Florebellus in Latin (c. 1510-1574), was born in Modena, where he knew Jacopo Sadoletto (1477-1547) from his school days. Fiordibello became a member of Sadoletto's household and travelled with him to Carpentras in France when Sadoletto became bishop there. Fiordibello maintained a close relationship with the reform-minded bishop until the latter's death in 1547. Sadoletto, along with the English Cardinal Reginald Pole and Pietro Bembo and others, notably Michelangelo and the poet, Vittoria Colonna, were known as the *spirituali* (the spirituals). They advocated for a vision of the Christian life that emphasized faith and each believer's personal relationship with Christ, while maintaining their commitment to the authority of the Catholic Church. Fiordibello's close connection with this circle is particularly notable here, where his most important work, *De auctoritate ecclesiae*, is bound together with a manuscript of Colonna's spiritual poems. After Sadoletto's death, Fiordibello served as Cardinal Reginald Pole's secretary, and later was secretary to Pope Paul IV. In 1558 he became bishop of Lavello. In addition to the work printed here, he was the author of an edition of Sadoletto's correspondence and other works.

II. Sig. a i-h iiiii, verso [Title page, Sig. a i], TADDAEI/ PICONII COLLENSIS/ DE ITINERE CHRISTIANI SA/crum opusculum./ Romae. M. D. LIII. [Sig. a i verso blank], [Sig. a ii], REVERENDISS. ET AMPLISSIMO Card. Frederico de Cesis Titulo Sanctae Priscae Equiti Rom. Ioannes David Tho/magnus Collensis. S. P.D., incipit, "Quoties, quanta sit in hac orbis terrarum ... Datum Romae Ex curia Capitol. Idib. Sextileis. M. D. LIII."; [Sig. A iiiii], NICOLAVS BELTRAMINVS COLLENSIS V.I.D. Benigno Lectori. S., incipit, "Cogitanti mihi saepe numero varia mortalium studia ... Ex oppido Collis. Decimo Cal. Sextilis. M. D. LIII"; [Sig. b i, verso], TADDAEI PICONII COLLEN-/sis de christiani itinere, siue christiane Insti-/tutionis sacrum

opusculum, Ioannis/ Daudii Nepotis opera, ac dili-/gentia in lucem Editum; [Sig. b ii], *TADDAEI PICONII COLLENSIS Compendium de Christiani itinere*, incipit, "Sapientissimvs quisque, dum breuia temporis huius spatia ... Pectora, et in fracto robore prisca fides. Impressum Romae apud Ioannem Mariam de Viottis Parmensem in domo S. Birgittae Anno Domini MDLIII."

Taddaeus Piconius Collensis, *De itinere christiani sacrum opusculum* (A Short Holy Work on the Christian Journey), printed in Rome in 1553 "apud Ioannem Mariam de Viottis Parmensem in domo S. Birgittae, a cura di Giovanni David Thomagni"; EDIT16, listing two copies in Italy (the sole copy listed in World Cat is also reported in EDIT16); the text was also printed in Louvain, 1554).

Taddeo Picconi (in Latin, Taddaeus Piconius Collensis), was a sixteenth-century author from Colle di Val d'Elsa, near Siena; this may be his only work, which was published posthumously by his nephew, Giovanni David Thomagni, with a preface by Nicolaus Beltraminus. The edition is quite rare, and it appears that this text, and its author, have been overlooked by scholars.

III. ff. 1-88v, incipit, "Poi chel mio casto amor gran tempo tenne/...; f. 1v, L'alto Signor del cui valor congiunte/ ...; f. 2v, S'in man prender .../ ...; f. 3v, Pende l'alto Signor .../... [f. 88v], .../ Del ciel e al cor non a lo stil risguardo."

Vittoria Colonna, *Rime spirituali* (Spiritual Poems); these 176 poems are copied from the printed *editio princeps* of Vittoria Colonna's spiritual poetry, published in Venice by Vincenzo Valgrisi in 1546: *Le rime spirituali della illustrissima Signora Vittoria Colonna Marchesana di Pescara: non piu stampate da pochissime infuori, le quali altrove corrotte, et qui corrette si leggono*, Vinegia, Apresso Vincenzo Valgrisi, 1546.

Edited, Bullock, 1982 (see also Bullock, 1985), listing 22 editions and eleven manuscripts of the poems (in addition to twenty manuscripts of anthologies where her poems appear along with those of other authors); Brundin identified fourteen manuscripts of these sonnets in Italian collections, along with one copy now in Munich, although she notes that there has been no comprehensive survey of manuscripts outside of Italy; Brundin did not know of the existence of this manuscript (2016, pp. 46-47, and p. 47 note 26). Colonna expressed reluctance to have her poems circulated (a statement which may have been prompted more by the modesty expected of a woman author, than by her actual viewpoint), but nonetheless, both her earlier love poetry, and these spiritual poems, did circulate in both print and manuscript during her lifetime. Colonna's poems were first printed, apparently without her permission, in 1538 in Parma; this edition was reprinted many times, and from 1539 included some of her *Rime spirituali*. The first complete edition of the *Rime spirituali* is the Venice 1546 edition. Colonna gave a manuscript of 103 of her spiritual poems to her close friend, the artist Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475-1564) in 1540; that manuscript, now Vatican Library, MS lat 11539, was published by Brundin with a facing translation in English (Colonna, 2005). The version of the poems there often differs from that of the *editio princeps* of 1546.

The text in our manuscript appears to be a careful copy of the printed edition of 1546; all the errors noted on the *errata* slip in that edition are here copied correctly by the scribe (ie. he or she copied the text with the corrections incorporated from the outset into this copy, with no further need of correction). The scribe did introduce at least one new error and omitted ff. 18v-19 of the printed edition (in our manuscript, following f. 29v). The layout of this manuscript

conforms to the sense of the text much better than the printed edition does, with almost every sonnet beginning at the top of a new page (the sonnets are unnumbered here and in this edition).

Vittoria Colonna (1490-1547), was born to a noble family in Italy; after the death of her husband, Ferdinando (Ferrante) Francesco d'Avalos, the Marquis of Pescara, in 1525, she remained unmarried. She wrote love poems for her husband expressing longing and loss in the manner of Petrarch, and also serious religious poems, the *Rime spirituali* copied here.

Colonna was an important member of the group known as the *spirituali*, a group of churchmen, as well as scholars, poets, and artists, who advocated a view of religion that was centered on the individual's personal relationship to God, and grounded in the Gospels. Many of these reform-minded Catholics gathered around the Cardinal Reginald Pole (d. 1558) in Naples, and then in Viterbo in the 1540s, including Jacopo Sadoletto (d. 1547), and Antonio Fiordibello (d. 1574), the author of the first text in this volume, a close associate of Sadoletto for most of his life, and later a member of Reginald Pole's household. Colonna herself lived in Viterbo at the convent of Santa Catherina from 1540-1544. Colonna was promoted by Pietro Bembo, who admired her skill as a poet and her religious fervor, and was a close friend with Michelangelo Buonarroti, both important *spirituali*.

The invention of printing c. 1455 did not mean the end of manuscript production; many genres continued to circulate as manuscripts throughout the sixteenth century. This manuscript of Vittoria Colonna's *Rime spirituali*, bound together with two printed texts, is an excellent demonstration of this coexistence of print and manuscript. As was true of many authors in sixteenth-century Italy, in particular poets, Colonna's poetry was disseminated in both formats during her lifetime and after her death (this topic discussed at length by Brundin, 2016).

## LITERATURE

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

EDIT 16: Censimento nazionale delle edizioni italiane del XVI secolo

[http://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/web\\_iccu/eimain.htm](http://edit16.iccu.sbn.it/web_iccu/eimain.htm)

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"Vittoria Colonna," Italian Women Writers

<https://www.lib.uchicago.edu/efts/IWW/BIOS/A0011.html>

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