

**PIERRE DU CHAFFAULT, Statutes; JEAN D'ESPINAY, Statutes; *Casus episcopales*
In Latin and French, decorated manuscript on parchment
France, Nantes, c. 1500**

10 folios on parchment, modern foliation in red pencil, 1-10 (collation i⁶ ii⁴), ruled in hard point with full-length vertical and horizontal bounding lines, prickings in upper, outer, and lower margins (justification 138 x 84 mm.), written in brown ink in a careful and compact bâtarde script in thirty-four long lines, red rubrics, capitals highlighted in red, red paraps, underlining, and line-fillers, guide letters for initials, one- to two-line plain red initials, space left for two-line initial on f. 9v, in one instance, extensive marginal annotations in an elegant and minute seventeenth- or eighteenth-century(?) italic cursive hand, modern marginal annotation in pencil, some slight staining and browning on some pages, f. 10v is slightly rubbed but still legible. Bound in limp parchment with green backstrip, with some staining and rubbing on the outside. Dimensions 198 x 140 mm.

Known in only two other manuscripts, this important collection of unedited, and in some cases unprinted, statutes and regulations was produced to document the rights and privileges of the diocese of Nantes, probably shortly after the marriage of Anne of Brittany and Louis XII of France. Issued by two bishops of Nantes, Pierre du Chaffault and Jean d'Espinau, between 1478 and 1499, the text is of particular interest in light of the protracted struggle over the sovereignty of Brittany. The inclusion of statutes in French as well as Latin suggests an effort to reach a larger, French-speaking constituency.

PROVENANCE

1. Evidence of script and textual contents suggests that this manuscript was produced in Nantes, most probably around 1500, shortly after the promulgation of Jean d'Espinau's 1499 statutes, the latest of the book's dated contents. At least two other manuscripts containing a similar range of statutes were produced around the same time and quite possibly for a similar purpose, namely the documentation of the rights and privileges of the diocese of Nantes at a time when the duchy of Brittany was on the verge of being incorporated into the kingdom of France.

Signs of use include marginal *notae* and marks in a roughly contemporary hand.

2. A later owner of this manuscript has systematically annotated the statutes, indicating the date and author of the first three and adding an extensive supplement to the fourth, drawn from the episcopal register of Nantes (see f. 9v).
3. Belonged to Joseph Arnoult (late eighteenth century), a book collector and professor of medicine at Nantes; his inscription, "Ce manuscrit est tres rare et tres precieux pour [written over crossed-out text: "le clergé"] de Nantes / Ex lib. josephi Arnoult D. M. N," in the upper margin of f. 1.

TEXT

ff. 1-2v, *Statuta petri episcopi nannetensis*, incipit, "Petrus dei et apostolice sedis gratia Episcopus Nannetensis vniuersis et singulis presentes litteras visuris et audituris Salutem in domino sempiternam ... Datum in nostra ecclesia nannetensis sub sigillo camere nostre die Jouis post festum penthecostes domini quartadecima mensis maij Anno domini millesimo quadringentesimo septuagesimo octauo [1478]";

The 1478 statutes of Pierre du Chaffault, bishop of Nantes; printed in Morice, vol. 3, 1746, cols. 328-330.

ff. 2v-4v, *Statuta iohannis*, incipit, "Iohannes dei et sancte sedis apostolice gratia episcopus nannetensis vniuersis et singulis presentes litteras visuris et audituris Salutem in domino sempiternam ... Datum nannetis die Jouis post festum beati luce vicesima tertia mensis octobris Anno domini millesimo quadringentesimo nonagesimo quarto [1494]";

The 1494 statutes of Jean d'Espinay, bishop of Nantes have not been printed.

f. 4v, "Casus episcopales non comprehenduntur in quali confessione," incipit, "De omicidio voluntarie cum Insidus pensatis ... et etiam in consuetudine deductis in quibus satisfacio publica requiritur faciliter non absoluant";

This list enumerates sins qualifying as episcopal cases, cases in which a sinner confessed a transgression so severe that only a bishop had the authority to grant absolution and assign penance.

ff. 4v-8, incipit, "Yvo du quirissec vtriusque iuris doctor scolasticus venetensis illiusque ac nannetensis ecclesiarum Canonicus reuerendi in christo patris et domini domini Johannis despinay ... Datum in ecclesia nannetensis Sub sigillo vicariatus nostri die vigesima tertia mensis Maij Anno domini millesimo quadringentesimo nonagesimo nono [1499]. Sic signat J de fitaly[?];

These 1499 statutes of Jean d'Espinay, bishop of Nantes, were issued in his name and that of Yves de Quirissec, vicar general of Nantes; printed in Morice, vol. 3, 1746, cols. 820-824. They were first printed in 1499 as part of the *Statuta synodalia celebrata in ecclesia Nannetensi*, either in Paris by Jean du Pré for Etienne Larcher, a printer in Nantes, or by Larcher himself in Nantes (see Booton, 2010, pp. 109-110).

ff. 8-9v, *Statuta petri*, incipit, "Petrus dei gratia episcopus nannetensis vniuersis et singulis presentes litteras inspecturis et audituris salutem in domino sempiternam ... Datum in ecclesia nostra nannetensis sub sigillo camere nostre die Jouis post festum penthecostes domini decima quarta mensis Junij Anno domini millesimo quadringentesimo octuagesimo primo [1481]. Sic signatum Ra. monachi";

The 1481 statutes of Pierre du Chaffault; printed in Morice, vol. 3, 1746, cols. 400-402.

ff. 9v-10v, incipit, "[C?]onnue ainxi soyt que dieu nest pas accepteur des personnes ... sur paine de cessacion des diuins offices. Quelles cessacions [crossed out: "font"] //."

A translation of the 1481 statutes of Pierre du Chaffault into French, now lacking an ending. This translation has not been printed.

This manuscript contains statutes and regulations issued by two bishops of Nantes, Pierre du Chaffault and Jean d'Espinay, between 1478 and 1499. Chaffault's statutes were printed by the eighteenth-century antiquarian Hyacinthe Morice (1746), but neither Chaffault's nor d'Espinay's statutes appear in modern critical editions. Statutes issued by Chaffault survive in at least two other manuscripts, Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS 796 B (written in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries), which also includes statutes issued by d'Espinay, and Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 1597, written in the fifteenth century, and like this manuscript, with both Latin and French translations of some of the statutes.

Pierre du Chaffault served as bishop of Nantes from 1477 to his death in 1487. Appointed at a time when the duke of Brittany and king of France were contesting rights over the temporalities of Breton churches, as well as Brittany's independence from France more generally, Chaffault distinguished himself from the two bishops that preceded him when he offered his allegiance to the Duke of Brittany, Francis II, in an effort to restore peace to his diocese. He was accorded almost saint-like status after his death in 1487, with several miracles attributed to him.

Jean d'Espinay served as bishop of Nantes from 1493 to 1500. He was selected for this position against the wishes of Anne of Brittany, Francis's daughter and the queen of France, whose preferred candidate, Guillaume Guéguen, would eventually succeed d'Espinay as bishop of Nantes in 1500. In the meantime, d'Espinay's appointment represented a victory for Anne's husband, Charles VIII of France, and d'Espinay had to struggle against the queen's opposition. Shortly after Anne's subsequent marriage to Louis XII of France in 1499 and her official assumption of the title and rights of the Duchess of Burgundy, d'Espinay was transferred to Léon, where he would remain until his death in 1503, and Guéguen became the bishop of Nantes.

Building on earlier synodal statutes promulgated in Nantes, this collection of statutes upholds the statutes issued by earlier bishops, maintains ecclesiastical discipline, and defends the liberties of the diocese of Nantes. Issued in a period of in which synodal legislation was seeing a renewal, it constitutes a response, in part, to political insecurities of the time. It is quite probable that this volume of statutes was prepared shortly after the marriage of Louis XII and Anne of Brittany. Though Anne's marriage contract with Louis contained provisions for maintaining the autonomy of the duchy of Brittany, her marriage to Louis granted him sovereignty in Brittany during his life, and within only two further generations the duchy had been wholly incorporated into the kingdom of France. In anticipation of this incorporation, it would have made sense to assemble recent episcopal statutes in order to delineate the rights and privileges of the diocese of Nantes in respect to the city and to the duchy of Brittany. The temporal scope of the statutes included within this volume would then suggest it was compiled shortly after the spring of 1499.

LITERATURE

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