

# LES ENLUMINURES

PARIS CHICAGO NEW YORK

[www.lesenluminures.com](http://www.lesenluminures.com)

**PLUTARCH, *Life of Quintus Sertorius* in the Latin translation by LEONARDO BRUNI;  
DONATO ACCIAIUOLI, *Life of Charlemagne the Great***

**In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment**

**Italy (Florence), c. 1461-1463/4**

*i (paper) + 56 leaves + i (paper) on parchment (quite thick, very white, often rough on both sides, f. 53, large defect with early repair, occasional original holes and uneven edges), modern foliation in pencil top outer corner recto, complete (collation i-iii<sup>10</sup> iv-vi<sup>6</sup> vii<sup>8</sup>), vertical catchwords which read top to bottom in quires 1 and 2, and bottom to top in quires 4-6, leaf signatures bottom outer corners ff. 37 and 39, ruled very lightly in lead, usually indiscernible, it is possible this is frame ruled only, explaining the variation in the number of lines per page and unequal spacing (justification, ff. 1-30, 105-103 x 85-80 mm., ff. 31v-end, 110-105 x 85-80 mm.), written in 19-17 long lines through f. 30, and in 23-21 long lines from f. 31v to end in a cursive humanistic script, major section openings and names of crucial figures in the second text in ornamental capitals, a few words in Greek added by the scribe at the end of both texts, ff. 30v and 55v, diagram (seven circles of descending size) on f. 54v below the mention of Charlemagne's tomb, f. 1, "Ihesus" upper margin in gold (added), one three-line blue initial f. 34, f. 1, 5-line gold initial on rectangular blue ground with white floral tracery, two illuminated initials, likely later additions, f. 3, 4-line blue initial infilled with a blue flower on a red ground with white tracery, and f. 31v, 4-line blue initial infilled with a flower on a purple ground with white tracery, added coat of arms, f. 1 (described below, Provenance), enclosed in a red and blue laurel wreath with red and blue decorative tassels, f. 41, slight tear lower margin, overall, in excellent condition, a few leaves are unevenly trimmed presumably by a modern owner. CONTEMPORARY BINDING, although extensively repaired and restored, of tooled brown calf over wooden boards (surprisingly thick for a volume of this size), extending slightly beyond the book block at the top and bottom, ropework chevrons and clusters of flower beads, parchment label on front board lettered: "Vita quinti Sertorii / Et vita karoli magni" in black ink, two metal clasps and catches likely modern replacements, now lacking straps, once fastened back to front (unusual in an Italian binding), repairs to split in back board, spine with two raised bands, very good condition. Dimensions 184 x 136 mm.*

A newly discovered, hitherto unrecorded, manuscript of the *Life of Charlemagne* by Donato Acciaiuoli (who followed the ninth-century life of Charlemagne by Einhard), very close in date to the presentation copy made for Louis XI, the newly crowned king of France. Giovanni Marco, a well-known scribe, copied this beautiful humanist example at an early point in his career while he was still in Florence. The early date of this manuscript, and the close relationship between its scribe Giovanni Marco and the scribe of the presentation copy and our scribe's teacher, Piero di Strozzi, underline the importance of this important text by a leading humanist from Renaissance Florence.

## PROVENANCE

1. Written, almost certainly in Florence, c. 1461-1463/4; a manuscript of the *Life of Charlemagne*, the second text in our manuscript, was presented by the author, Donato Acciaiuoli (1429-1478) to King Louis XI of France (reigned 1461-1483) on January 2, 1462. Louis's manuscript, now in the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, copied by Piero di Strozzi and illuminated by Francesco di Antonio del Chierico, must date after Louis's coronation on August 15, 1461 and before October, 1461, when the Florentine

delegation set out for France (Online Resources). Our manuscript, which includes the author's preface to the king, is very close in date to this presentation copy; it certainly dates before Thomas de Debrenthe was appointed Bishop of Nirtra in 1463/4, and 1461-1462 seems likely. The partially erased inscription on f. 56rv (transcribed below, TEXT) states that it was copied by Giovanni Marco, a pupil of Pierro di Strozzi, for Thomas de Debrenthe, bishop of Zagreb.

Thomas de Debrenthe (Tamás Döbrenthei, or de Dabrencza; Branche; d. 1482) was the commendatory abbot of the Benedictine abbey of St. Martin in Pannonhalma, Hungary from 1447-1467. Although he was appointed to the bishopric of Zagreb in 1454 by Ladislavus V (László V), King of Hungary, Croatia and Bohemia, it was a position he never actively held. The bishopric was disputed, and Debrenthe travelled to Italy to plead his case perhaps as early as 1455. His long petition to the pope, which survives as Paris, BnF, MS lat 7844, sought to justify the legitimacy of his claims to the bishopric (Samaran, 1962, p. 433, suggesting it is datable 1461-1464; published in Béla, 1889. pp. 211-117.) How long Debrenthe remained in Italy is unclear, but perhaps until 1463/4, when he relinquished his claim on the bishopric of Zagreb and was appointed to the bishopric of Nitra in Hungary. Another manuscript from his library, a Life of Alexander the Great, said to be preserved in Vienna in the library of the German Order of Knights, includes a colophon stating that it was copied in 1462 by Giovanni Marco, the scribe of our manuscript (Szinneyei, 1893, v. 2, pp. 712-713).

Giovanni Marco Cinico (Johannes Marcus Cynicus or Giovanmarco Cinico, c.1430-after 1503) was born in Parma. He was a pupil of Messer Piero di Benedetto Strozzi (1416-c.1492), the finest Florentine scribe of the time, and was likely in Florence c. 1460-1463 (de la Mare, 1976, p. 243), although perhaps only part of the time, since he is known to have been in Naples as early as 1458. He was in Naples full time from 1463, additional evidence that our manuscript dates before then, and was paid by the royal court from 1469-1498. He is certainly most famous for his work for the Aragonese Court in Naples (De Marinis, 1947-1950, I, pp. 42-51, lists 71 manuscripts in his hand, and more are now known, both for the court and for others; see also de la Mare, 1985, pp. 439, 503, no. 30; Derolez, 2018, pp. 187-199). He died sometime after 1503.

2. A few contemporary corrections and occasional "nota bene" marks; otherwise wide and clean margins.
3. Unidentified coat of arms, lower margin, f. 1: party per pale, in the first half or a demi-eagle displayed argent; in the second sable 3 bars or. There is some similarity to the blazons of the Duchy of Guastalla and Cadet lines, Northern Italy, near Mantua, all of which feature black eagles on silver, and bars of gold and black (Online Resources), and later ownership by a noble family from this region is therefore possible, but by no means certain. The coat of arms appears to be a late addition, perhaps from the eighteenth century (the "109," added in ink on the verso of the front flyleaf may also date from this time). The inscription on f. 56rv was likely erased when the coat of arms was added.

TEXT

ff. 1-29v, *LEONARDI ARETINI PROLOGVS IN VITAM QUINTISERTORII AD ANTONIVM LVSCVM INCIPIT FOELICITER*, incipit, "CREDO NON NVMQVAM TIBI euenisse Antoni carissime mihi ... obiurgare possis, Vale"; [f. 3], *Q. SERTORII VITA EX PLVTARCHO IN LATINVM TRADUCTA PER LEONARDVM ARETINVM INCIPIT FOELICITER*, incipit, "Non est fortasse mirandum ... barbarie [sic] villa inops inuisusque consenuit, φηνις [i.e. *finis*, in Greek characters]; [f. 30 blank];

Plutarch's *Life of Quintus Sertorius* from his *Lives of the Noble Greeks and Romans*, often called the *Parallel Lives*, in the Latin translation by Leonardo Bruni (1370-1444), preceded by Bruni's letter dedicating the text to the prominent Milanese scholar and historian Antonio Loschi (1368-1441); see Giustiniani, 1961, p. 31, no. 15a, and Baron, 1928, pp. 123-125 (Bruni's preface). Bruni, not unlike Donato Acciaiuoli, the author of the second text in this volume, was both a statesman and man of letters, who used his learning in service of his city. He was chancellor of Florence from 1427-1444. His translation of the life of Quintus Sertorius dates from 1408-9 or 1410. Like all of Bruni's works it was popular throughout the Renaissance. Printed, Rome, 1470, Plutarch's *Lives* in Latin, where it is the final life in volume one (an edition which also included Donato Acciaiuolo's *Life of Charlemagne*).

Quintus Sertorius (c. 123-73 BC) was a talented Roman general who lived during the tumultuous years near the end of the Roman Republic (which disintegrated thirty years after his death). He was a supporter of the popular party in the first civil war. He then retreated to Spain, where he continued to fight against the winning Senatorial faction and became the leader of what amounted to an independent state for almost eight years. The biography of Sertorius in the *Parallel Lives* by Plutarch (c. 45-c. 119 AD), written after A.D. 96, is one of the principal historical sources for the general's life.

ff. 30v-56v, *Donati Acciaoli florentini probemium in uitam Caroli magni ad lodouicum christianissimum francorum regem*, incipit, "Cum oratores omnium christianorum priuatique etiam homines undique ad re concurrant serenissime rex ... amplitudini tuae uehementer commendat," IN PROHEMIVM VITAE CAROLI MAGNI CHRISTIANISSIMI FRANCORVM REGIS AC ROMANORVM IMPERATORIS, φηνις [i.e. *finis*, in Greek characters]; [f. 33v], *CAROLI MAGNI VITA A DONATO ACCIAOLO FLORENTINO COMPOSITA FOELICITER INCIPIT*, incipit, "Karolo Francorum Regi cui postea ex magnitudine rerum gestarum ... Caroli mortem diligentissime sanctissimeque servavit," φηνις λαως δεω [i.e. *finis laos [sic] Deo*, in Greek characters]; [f. 56, erased, but largely legible, especially under ultraviolet], "IOHANNES MARCVS CLARISSIMI ET/ VIRTUTE. ET NOBILITATE VIRI/ PETRI STROCCII DISCIPVLVS PAR/-MAE ORIVNDVS PIENTISSIMO SEMPER/ DOMINO SVO THOME DE DEBRANTHE/ AECCLESIAE AGRABIENSIS EPISCOPO/ REVEREND<ISSIMO?> LIBENTI AC TRAN/-QVILLO TRANSSCRIPSIT ANIMO/ [in smaller script] DOMINE M<E...?> EI [f. 56v], VALEAS QUI LEGIS/ ET QUI PRO MUNUSCULO CAPIS.

Donato Acciaiuoli, *Life of Charlemagne the Great, presented to King Louis XI of France on January 2, 1462* (see *Provenance, above*); modern edition, Gatti, 1981; a new critical edition, with English translation, is being prepared by Wolfgang Strobl, Teubner, 2022 (not available for consultation). The text was printed very early in its history in the two-volume Latin edition of Plutarch's *Lives* edited by Johannes Antonius Campanus, Rome, 1470 (ISTC ip00830000, GW M34472), where it is the final life in volume two. It also survives in around 22 manuscripts (Strobl, 2010, p. 302, note 9),

including the author's autograph, Biblioteca Nazionale, Prin. II, II, 10 (see Gatti, 1981), and in vernacular translations (for the Spanish translation, see Torrent, 2010). It is very uncommon on the market; a copy sold at Parke-Bernet, New York, November 12, 1963, lot 252 (Schoenberg Database no. 15023) and the Fitzwilliam presentation manuscript are the only two manuscripts listed in the Schoenberg Database.

The emergence of a hitherto unrecorded copy of this text is significant; its early date and the close relationship between its scribe, Giovanni Marco, and Piero di Strozzi, the scribe of the presentation copy, underline its importance for future studies.

Donato Acciaiuoli (or Acciaiuoli, 1429-1478), was one of the preeminent humanists, politicians, and orators in Florence in the age of Lorenzo de' Medici (1449-1488). His scholarly works include commentaries on the *Ethics* and *Politics* of Aristotle, and he was also active in the public life of Florence. These two sides of his career are united in his *Life of Charlemagne the Great* which he personally presented to the French King, Louis XI in 1462, when he accompanied the Florentine delegation, led by his father-in-law, Piero de' Pazzi, to France. The *Life of the Charlemagne the Great* follows the famous ninth-century life of the Charlemagne (748-814) by Einhard, and was clearly meant to win the new king's favor by comparing him favorably with the founder of the Carolingian Empire, who was crowned Emperor in 800. Acciaiuoli's text, expressed in the proper Ciceronian Latin admired by the humanists, underlines Charlemagne's role as the precursor to the French kings, and as the second founder and restorer of Florence after its destruction by the Goths.

In addition to Einhard, Acciaiuoli also drew inspiration from Plutarch's *Lives*. Early in the Middle Ages, Plutarch was best known for his moral writings, but c. 1400 and on, his biographical works drew increased attention, as they circulated and were translated into Latin in Italy. Acciaiuoli translated the lives of Alcibiades and Demetrius from the Greek into Latin (1454-1459). His *Life of Charlemagne*, like his later lives of Hannibal and Scipio (both datable to 1467-1468) are all compositions following Plutarch's model. Thus, it is not surprising to see his *Life of Charlemagne* copied here along with Leonardo Bruni's translation of Plutarch's life of Quintus Sertorius.

Our manuscript is a new addition to the manuscripts copied by Giovanni Marco, and a particularly interesting one, given its early date in his career when he was still in Florence, and perhaps still learning his craft as a scribe under the direction of Piero di Strozzi—could our manuscript have been copied under Piero's supervision while Piero was working on the presentation copy for Louis XI? Although it is certainly by a talented scribe, in some respects our manuscript does look like the work of a scribe who is still learning, evident in the uneven formatting of a number of pages, where the final lines are notably closer together. This manuscript is also of interest as an example of Giovanni Marco's cursive script (many of his most well-known manuscripts, in contrast, are copied in a more formal humanistic book hand). Finally, we may observe that the fact that Giovanni Marco copied two manuscripts for the Hungarian bishop, Thomas de Debrenthe is quite fascinating. How did they meet? What sort of relationship existed between these two men?

The political implications that arise when we contemplate the personalities connected with our manuscript are many and intriguing. Think of it. Shortly after Giovanni Marco copied our

manuscript, he left Florence for Naples, and then spent most of his career at the Aragonese Court there. He was copying it for Thomas de Debrenthe, a Hungarian, who is said to have sided with the Emperor Frederick III against King Matthias Corvinus. Corvinus definitively favored the Papal-Neapolitan alliance against the Holy Roman Empire and France when he married Beatrice of Aragon in 1474. It includes a *Life of Charlemagne*, which had been presented by a Florentine delegation to the Angevin King of France, Louis XI, to win the king's favor, probably only a short time before our manuscript was copied. This presentation copy was itself prepared under the supervision of the Florentine bookseller Vespasiano da Bisticci (1421-1498), who at many times in his life was a supporter of the Aragonese cause. This single manuscript mirrors in a microcosm the complicated politics of fifteenth-century Italy.

## LITERATURE

H. Baron, *Leonardo Bruni Aretino humanistisch-philosophische Schriften*, Leipzig, 1928.

Béla, Majláth. "Debrenthei Tamás búcsúbeszéde II. Pius pápához a párisi nemzeti könyvtárban," *Magyar könyvszemle* 14 (1889), pp. 208-217 (transcription of Paris, BnF, MS lat 7844, Thomas de Debrenthe's *Oratio* for the pope).

Davie, M. "Biography and Romance: The *Vita Caroli Magni* of Donato Acciaiuoli and Luigi Pulci's *Morgante*," in *The Spirit of the Court: Selected Proceedings of the Fourth Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, Toronto 1983*, Woodbridge, Suffolk and Dover, New Hampshire, 1985, pp. 137-152.

De la Mare, A. C. "The Book Trade," in de la Mare and A. M. Brown. "Bartolomeo Scala's dealings with Booksellers, Scribes and Illuminators, 1459-63," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 39 (1976), pp. 239-245.

De la Mare, A. C. "Messer Piero Strozzi, a Florentine priest and scribe," in A. S. Osley, ed., *Calligraphy and Palaeography. Essays Presented to Alfred Fairbank On His Seventieth Birthday*, London, 1965, pp. 55-68.

De la Mare, A. C. "New Research on Humanistic Scribes in Florence" in Annarosa Garzelli, *Miniatura fiorentina del Rinascimento, 1440-1525. Un primo censimento I*, Florence, 1985, pp. 393-600.

Derolez, Albert. *Archaeology of The Manuscript Book of The Italian Renaissance*, Unione internazionale degli istituti di archeologia, storia e storia dell'arte in Roma 32, Rome, 2018.

De Marinis, Tammaro. *La Biblioteca napoletana dei re d'Aragona*, 4 vols., Milan, 1947-1950.

Ganz, Margery A. "A Florentine friendship: Donato Acciaiuoli and Vespasiano da Bisticci," *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990), pp. 372-383.

Gatti, D. "*Vita Caroli* di Donato Acciaiuoli," *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo* 84 (1972-1973), pp. 223-274.

Gatti, D. *La Vita Caroli di Donato Acciaiuoli: la leggenda di Carlo Magno in funzione di una historia di gesta*, Il mondo medievale. Sezione di storia delle istituzioni, della spiritualità e delle idee 7, Bologna, 1981.

Giustiniani, V. R. "Traduzioni latine delle *Vite* di Plutarco nel Quattrocento," *Rinascimento*, ser. 2, no. 1 (1961), pp. 3-62.

Lukinović, A. "Toma de Debrenthe," in F. Mirošević, ed. *Zagrebački biskupi i nadbiskupi*, Zagreb, 1995, pp. 199-201.

Margolis, O. "The 'Gallic Crowd' at the 'Aragonese Doors': Donato Acciaiuoli's *Vita Caroli Magni* and the Workshop of Vespasiano da Bisticci," *I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance* 17, no. 2 (2014), pp. 241-282.

<https://doi.org/10.1086/678254>

Pade, M. "A Checklist of the Manuscripts of the Fifteenth-Century Latin Translations of Plutarch's Lives," in *L'eredità culturale di Plutarco dall'antichità al Rinascimento*, Naples, 1998, pp. 251-287.

Pade, M. "The Latin Translations of Plutarch's Lives in Fifteenth-Century Italy and their Manuscript Diffusion," in *The Classical tradition in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, Proceedings of the First European Science Foundation Workshop on "The Reception of Classical Texts,"* eds. C. Leonardi and B. M. Olsen, Florence and Spoleto, 1995, pp. 169-183.

Pade, Marianne. "The Reception of Plutarch from Antiquity to the Italian Renaissance," *Companion to Plutarch*, ed. Mark Beck, Malden, Mass. and Oxford, 2014, pp. 531-543.

Pade, Marianne. *The reception of Plutarch's Lives in Fifteenth-century Italy*, Copenhagen, 2007.

Samaran, Charles and Robert Marichal. *Catalogue des manuscrits en écriture latine : portant des indications de date, de lieu ou de copiste. Tome II, Bibliothèque Nationale, fonds latin Nos.1 à 8000*, Paris 1962, p. 433, and pl. CXXXI

<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k4827f/f452.item>

Strobl, Wolfgang, ed. *Vita Caroli Magni*, Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana, De Gruyter, 2022.

<https://www.degruyter.com/view/title/35644>

Strobl, Wolfgang. "Zur Geschichte von Hs. Strozzi 53 (Florenz, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana)," *Scriptorium* 64 n°2 (2010), pp. 301-304.

[https://www.persee.fr/doc/scrip\\_0036-9772\\_2010\\_num\\_64\\_2\\_4097](https://www.persee.fr/doc/scrip_0036-9772_2010_num_64_2_4097)

Szinnyei, József. "Debrenthei, Tamás," *Magyar írók: élete és munkái a Magyar tudományos akadémia megbízásából II. (Caban-Exner)*, Budapest, 1893, vol. 2, pp. 712-713.

Torrent, S. S Allés, "The *Vita Caroli Magni* of Donato Acciaiuoli, Translated by Alfonso de Palencia (1491)," in *Humanism and Christian Letters in Early Modern Iberia (1480-1630)*, eds. Barry Taylor and Alejandro Coroleu, New Castle upon Tyne, 2010, pp. 61-74

**ONLINE RESOURCES**

"Döbrenței Tamás, Debrenței"

<https://www.arcanum.hu/hu/online-kiadvanyok/Lexikonok-magyar-eletrajzi-lexikon-7428D/d-750BB/dobrenței-tamas-debrenței-752A3/>

"Tamás Debrenței"

[https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debrenței\\_Tam%C3%A1s](https://hu.wikipedia.org/wiki/Debrenței_Tam%C3%A1s)

Mauro De Nihlo, "Cinico, Giovan Marco," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, vol. 25 (1981)

[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovan-marco-cinico\\_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giovan-marco-cinico_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

European heraldry: Duchy of Guastalla and Cadet lines

<https://www.europeanheraldry.org/italy/mantua1/duchy-guastalla-and-cadet-lines/>

Perseus Digital Library, Plutarch, *Life of Sertorius*, Bernadotte Perrin, trans., Plutarch's Lives, v. 8, reprint, Cambridge and London, 2004

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2008.01.0062%3Achapter%3D1>

Mirabile, Plutarch, *Life of Sertorius*, Latin translation by Leonardo Bruni, listing c. 20 manuscripts

<http://www.mirabileweb.it/risultati.aspx?csel=6&psel=2>

British Library, Incunable Short Title Catalog, Plutarch, *Vitae illustrium virorum* [Latin], ed. J. A. Campanus, Rome, Ulrich Han, 1470 (ISTC ip00830000, GW M34472)

<https://data.cerl.org/istc/ip00830000>

Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, "Illuminated Manuscripts in the Making," MS 180, Donato Acciaiuoli, *Charlemagne's Life*

<https://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/illuminated/manuscript/discover/donato-acciaiuoli-charlemagnes-life/folio/folio-2r-271>

Arnaldo D'Addario, "Acciaiuoli, Donato," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, v. 1, 1960

[https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/donato-acciaiuoli\\_res-8c2cd168-87e5-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51\\_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/](https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/donato-acciaiuoli_res-8c2cd168-87e5-11dc-8e9d-0016357eee51_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/)

"Donato Acciaiuoli," ARLIMA (Archives de littérature du Moyen Âge)

[https://www.arlima.net/ad/donato\\_acciaiuoli.html](https://www.arlima.net/ad/donato_acciaiuoli.html)

TM 1063