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PSEUDO-PLINY, [PSEUDO- SEXTUS AURELIUS VICTOR], *De viris illustribus urbis Romae* (On the Illustrious Men of the City of Rome); GUARINUS VERONENSIS, *Carmina septem sapientum Graecie* (Song of the seven wisemen of Greece); short quotations from OVID, *Remedia amoris* (Love's Remedy), MARTIAL, *Epigrams*, and JUVENAL, *Satires*.
In Latin, illuminated manuscript on paper
Northeastern Italy (Venice?), c. 1475-1485

i (modern paper) + 18 + *i* (modern paper) folios on paper, early foliation in ink top outer corner recto [cited] as follows: 1 (unnumbered), 1bis-9, 12-18, 19 (unnumbered), unidentified watermark, a clerical hat/cardinal's hat with squared ties, of the same type as Briquet, 3382, Venice, 1483, 1478, 1478, and Treviso, 1486, in general cf. Briquet 3377-3382, most Venice from 1477-1487, with one 1497, lacking two leaves (collation *i*¹⁰ [first unnumbered leaf through f. 9] *ii*¹⁰ [-1 and 2, ff. 10-11], frame ruled(?) in blind (usually indiscernible) with double horizontal rules at the top and bottom, and full-length vertical bounding lines (justification 148 x 90-88 mm.), written in a cursive humanistic script in 29 long lines, table of contents copied in two columns, f. 18, in another hand, copied in a humanistic minuscule (bookband); f. 19v, perhaps two additional hands, copied in an Italic script and in a humanistic minuscule (bookband), majuscules stroked with red f. 1bis and 3 only, one marginal chapter heading in red f. 1, opening rubric f. 1 begins in decorative majuscules with a red paragraph mark, two-line initials, red through f. 3, black ff. 3v-12, and then left blank until the end (guide letters for initials visible in the blank spaces), one 3-line red initial, f. 1bis, infilled with simple penwork motif in ink, on a blue ground with fleshy blue acanthus leaves extending from the initial (possibly added, or at least painted later, the 2-line red initial below it has also been clumsily painted blue), opening folio is darkened and stained (although legible), stain on f. 19v has bled through to f. 13, decreasing in size on each successive folio and never causing illegibility, otherwise apart from some minor darkening at the edges, in very good condition. Bound in a modern vellum binding over pasteboard, smooth spine with a red leather label lettered in gilt, "Plinius. De Gestis Romanorum," excellent condition. Dimensions 217 x 149 mm.

Widely read by the Italian humanists of the fifteenth century, this short history of Rome affirms the humanist desire to resurrect a glorified Roman past. This classical text is currently undergoing its own scholarly re-birth, bringing to light its importance as a source for the history of Rome that is independent of the famous history by Livy. Short additions in Latin (with a few words of Greek thrown in to impress) illustrate the interests of its early owners. This is a quintessential humanistic manuscript not only for its text but for its wide margins, introductory decoration, and range of script (minuscule, cursive, and italic).

PROVENANCE

1. Written in Northeastern Italy, possibly in Venice, c. 1475-1485, as indicated by the evidence of the script and watermark. The watermark, although not securely identified with a specific example, is the same type of clerical hat that was found in paper recorded in Briquet, primarily in Venice, with a few examples from Verona, Udine, and Treviso, from 1477 through the 1480s (with one example 1496), dates also supported by the evidence of the script.

2. Short additions to the main text on f. 18 and f. 19v include a poem by the Italian humanist scholar and teacher, Guarino da Verona (1374-1460), and brief quotations from classical sources; these are probably in several hands (certainly in different types of humanistic script), and illustrate the interests of this manuscript's early owners. Foliation was also added to the manuscript and to the table of chapters early in its history.
3. Private European collection.

TEXT

f. 1 [Unnumbered leaf], *Tabula*, incipit, "De proca rege albanorum, fo. i; De Romulo et Remo, fo. i; ... De Cn̄eo pompeio Magno, *Finis* [below, 78];

Table of contents with unnumbered descriptive titles followed by a folio reference for chapters 1-41; the remaining chapters do not include the folio reference. The chapter list is complete and does include the titles of the chapters on the now missing leaves, but it is interesting that the folio references stop at the point where the leaves are now lost, suggesting the loss may date back early in the manuscript's history.

ff. 1 bis-17v, *PLINIVS PRIMUS De præclare gestis Romanorum*, incipit, "Proca rex Albanorum Amulium et Numitorem filios habuit ... [f. 9v] Marcus Atillius Regulus ... Oppida ducenta et hominum ducenta millia//; [f. 12] //exempta metia condemnatus ...; Quintus Flamminius Flamminii ...; ... [f. 17v, Chapter 77, Pompey the Great] [C or G]neus pompeius magnus bello ciuili ... qui non continens lachrymas illud plurimis et preciosissimis odoribus cremandum curavit," *Explicit Plinius primus de rebus præclare gestis illustrium Romanorum, Finis, τὲλὸς*;

Liber de viris illustribus urbis Romae, chapters 1-77; here missing two leaves (ff. 10-11), so that the text ends imperfectly in chapter 41 after f. 9v (Pichlmayr, 1911, p. 48), and begins abruptly on f. 12 in chapter 51 (Pichlmayr, 1911, p. 53); ed. Franz Pichlmayr, Leipzig, 1911; latest edition, Martin, Paris, 2016; first printed probably in Rome, Sixtus Riessinger, c. 1470, GW M50384; commonly attributed since the sixteenth century to Sextus Aurelius Victor (discussed in detail below); the text circulated widely and survives in over 150 manuscripts (Reeve and Tarrant, 1983, p. 151). Although a very popular text, especially in the fifteenth century, this is relatively uncommon on the market; only seven sales are recorded since 1900, including three manuscripts recently on this site (TM 371, 984, and 1001).

f. 18, *Nomina sapientum*, incipit, *Nomina septenum sapientum grecia cantat ... Lindon et in cęlum cum laude cleobole tollis*"; [f. 18v-19, blank but ruled];

Widely disseminated short poem with nine verses on the seven wisemen of Greece by Guarino da Verona (1374-1460); ed. Manetti, 1985, carmen 35; Sabbadini, 1896, p. 232, states the autograph manuscript is found in Milan, MS Ambr D 267 inf., f. 98v.

f. 19v, incipit, "Impatiens animus et adhuc tractabilis arte/ Reposuit atque odio uerba monentis habet" [Ovid, *Remedia amoris*, book 1, vv. 123-4; Online Resources]; "Felix quem faciunt aliena pericula cautum" [Latin proverb sometimes attributed to Horace]; "*Martialis xi libro*, incipit, "Rebus in angustis facile est contemnere mortem/ Fortiter ille facit qui miser esse potest"

[Martial, Epigrams 11.56.15-16]; *Iuuenalis*, Intollerabilis nichil est quam foemina diues"
[Juvenal, Satire VI, v. 460]; *μαλλὸν μάλιστα τέλος ἀμήν*.

Four brief sayings in Latin from Classical authors. The phrase from the Epigram, "The Poor Philosopher" of Martial is interesting since it appears to be misquoted here. The text correctly reads, "Rebus in angustis facile est contemnere vitam/ Fortiter ille facit qui miser esse potest" (In misfortune it is easy to despise life, but he is truly brave who can endure misery), but our scribe has replaced "life" with "death." The Greek added at the end may be translated, "Most certainly. The End. Amen"; we thank Georgi Parpulov for his help translating the phrase; he notes that the beginning does not make perfect sense, and that the first three words are stressed incorrectly; suggesting that our writer was not fully proficient in Greek.

De viris illustribus urbis romae tells the story of Roman history (and pre-history) in a series of biographies. Exemplary literature intended that lives of their subjects would serve as moral examples of leadership, civic duty, and ethical conduct. This genre, popular during the classical period, was in turn adopted by early Christian writers, who used it to recount the lives and deaths of Christian martyrs. In the early Italian Renaissance classical exemplary texts were sought out by scribes and readers and emulated by authors such as Petrarch and Boccaccio. This text is currently having its own scholarly re-birth, including a new edition (Martin, 2016), and a series of extensive monographs by Joachim Fugmann, bringing to light its importance as a source for the history of Rome that is independent of the famous history of Rome by Livy (Fugmann, 1990-2003, 2016).

Since the sixteenth century, *De viris illustribus* has usually been attributed to Sextus Aurelius Victor (c. 320-390 CE), a Roman historian and politician, because it was frequently presented alongside two of his histories in the manuscript tradition. It has also been attributed to various Roman authors of similar texts, including Cornelius Nepos, Suetonius, and Pliny the Younger and Pliny the Elder (23-79 CE), an attribution also found in the Venice 1475 edition printed by Jenson (ISTC ia01384000), which begins, as does our manuscript, "Plinius primus de preclare gestis romanorum." Braccesi's argument that this text was in fact by Pliny the Elder (Braccesi, 1973) has not convinced other scholars (Sage, 1975), and the author of this work remains unknown, although scholars do agree that it was written in the fourth century.

There are two main textual traditions represented by the surviving manuscripts. In one (known as A), surviving in only three manuscripts, the text is transmitted alongside two similar exemplary texts by Sextus Aurelius Victor, the *Origo gentis Romanae* and *Caesares*, and contains chapters 2-86, ending with Cleopatra; the first chapter is excluded because it duplicates the narrative in Victor's *Origo gentis Romanae*. In the other, more popular tradition (B), *De viris illustribus* is transmitted independently and contains chapters 1-77, beginning with the mythological King Procas and concluding with Pompey the Great (Reed and Tarrant, 1983, p. 149-50; Sage, 1980, 83-84). The manuscript described here belongs to the latter tradition.

Our manuscript is copied by an unknown scribe in an attractive cursive humanistic script. Humanistic script was a clear, readable script "invented" in Florence at the beginning of the fifteenth century by the young humanist, Poggio Bracciolini (d. 1459). An early and enthusiastic user of this reformed script was the Florentine humanist, Niccolò Niccoli (d. 1437) (Ullman, 1960, pp. 59-77); Niccoli's distinctive hand was quicker than a formal bookhand and

included numerous cursive elements. Through the course of the fifteenth century, scribes across Italy embraced both formal humanistic minuscule scripts (like Poggio's script), and quicker cursive humanistic scripts (like Niccoli's), which eventually developed into its own formal bookhand, Italic script. The manuscript described here displays the whole arsenal of scripts available to humanistic scribes, a humanistic minuscule (f. 18 and 19v), a humanistic cursive (main scribe), and an Italic script (f. 19v).

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