

GUILLELMUS PERALDUS, *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* (Treatise on the vices and virtues)

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment

France (Paris?), c. 1300

125 parchment folios, 6 unnumbered leaves + 117 leaves (foliated i-cxvii in contemporary red roman numerals center top margin rectos) + 2 unnumbered leaves, complete (i⁶ [unfoliated] ii⁸ [beginning with f. 1] ii-v⁸ vi-vii¹⁰ viii⁸ ix¹⁰ x⁸ xi-xii¹⁰ xiii⁸ xiv¹⁰ xv⁴ [lacking 4 presumably blank]), quire 1 (six leaves before f. 1): 32 horizontal lines and 5 full-height vertical lines very lightly ruled in lead, establishing a 5-column calendar (justification 127 x 97 mm), rubrics, days of the month and golden numbers in red, ff. 1-32: 38 lines and 4 full-height vertical lines lightly ruled in lead (justification 127 x 87 mm), copied a very small gothic script by a single hand in two columns of 38 lines, ff. 33-117v: 33-42 lines and 4 vertical full-height lines very lightly ruled in lead (justification 122-127 x 87-90 mm), copied by at least three hands in two columns of 33-42 lines in very small gothic scripts, rubrics in red, running titles in red top margins every page, red (occasionally blue) paragraph signs in text, 2-line initials alternately red flourished violet and blue flourished red, two 4-line initials parti-colored red and blue, flourished red (f. 1) or red and blue (f. 33), natural flaws to a few blank margins, two natural holes in text without loss (ff. 55, 94), some scaling of ink on various folios more pronounced towards end of text, some retracing of letters in the faded sections, slight worming to first and last several folios with minor damage to text. Sixteenth-century German binding of tawed skin spine (tooling illegible) with bare wooden boards, evidence of two clasps catching on top board, spine linings of slightly earlier manuscript waste text not extensive enough to be identifiable, marginalia often slightly cropped. Dimensions 160 x 115 mm.

Gulielmus Peraldus's treatise on the vices and virtues was one of the most widely known and greatly influential works of the later Middle Ages. Yet little is known about its author, and the manuscripts and the complex textual tradition of the work have never been studied in detail. A portable volume for ease of transport by itinerant friars, this manuscript, owned early on by a Franciscan, shows ample signs of use, frequently in the form of marginalia by various contemporary hands. Widely used by preachers, it also influenced John Wyclif, Dante, and Chaucer. The added astronomical calendar and other texts demonstrate continued active use into the sixteenth century.

PROVENANCE

1. Copied in France, c. 1300. The flourished initials, which differ slightly in style between the two parts of the text, closely resemble the flourished initials found in Paris manuscripts of the period 1270-1314 (Stirnemann, 1990), and it is possible this was copied in Paris. The use of violet in the pen decoration is not unknown in Paris at this time, but it is not usual, and it is more often seen in Southern France. This, together with the evidence of the script, might argue for an origin in the South, possibly in Toulouse.
2. Early, near contemporary, ownership inscription, f. 117: "Hic liber est ad usum fratris Francisci de Guerris[?] de Castr<...?>rio ordinis minorum sacrarum litterum professoris indigni quem emit tribus ducatis aureas." (This book is for the use of brother

Franciscus de Guerris[?] de Castr...rio[?] of the order of Friars Minor, unworthy professor of sacred letters, which he bought for three gold ducats.) Francisci is written over a deep erasure. Another deep erasure of several lines follows this inscription.

3. In Germany by the early sixteenth century, as witnessed by the binding. The calendar, which probably dates from the fifteenth century, may have been added to our manuscript when it was rebound at this time.
4. The manuscript was certainly in Germany in 1535; purchase inscription on front pastedown of present binding: "Emptus Hedelbergae pro 14 alb. Anno 1535." (Bought at Heidelberg for 14 albi in the year 1535.) The albus was a small silver coin. Another inscription below this one has been erased.
5. Private collection.

TEXT

[six unnumbered folios] Perpetual calendar, in Latin;

With five columns listing (1) the days of each month in numerical order using roman numerals, (2) the dominical letters, (3) the Golden Numbers, here represented not by numbers but by letters of the alphabet : a, i, r, f, o, c, l, t, h, q, e, n, b, k, s, g, p, d, m, (4) *Hora*e corresponding to each "golden letter," each assigned a number between i and xxiv, apparently to identify the time at which the new moon would become visible on that day, and (5) *Puncti*, with numbers representing further divisions of time.

By the later Middle Ages, it was common knowledge that the ecclesiastical calendar was seriously out of sync with the lunar calendar, with the result that the date of Easter (and the other moveable feasts) often fell at the wrong time of the year. From the late thirteenth century on, there were numerous attempts to identify solutions to this problem (Nothaft, 2018). Such efforts appear to have centered on consideration of the Golden Numbers, which serve to identify the dates of the new moons, and thereby of Easter. The present calendar, which proposes a new arrangement of the 19-year cycle of the "golden letters," deserves to be analyzed in detail, as presumably representing a contribution to these discussions.

ff. 1-32, *Incipit summa de virtutibus*, incipit, "Cum utilia studere debemus exemplo salomonis dicens cogitavi corde meo abstrahere a vino carnem meam ut animam mei transferrem ad sapienciam ... Principales vocantur quia certe virtutes ab eas aliquo modo reducentur vel quia motus virium anime dirigunt," *Explicit summa de virtutibus*. [f. 132v, blank];

Guillelmus Peraldus, *Summa de virtutibus*. Apparently an unidentified and unrecorded summary of this treatise. There is no modern edition. Verweij, 2006, discussed multiple versions of the work but does not provide enough information to permit the identification of our text with any of the versions known to him.

ff. 33-117, *Incipit summa de vitiis vii mortales et primo de vicio gule*, incipit, "Dicturis de singulis meus est oportunitas se offerret incipiemus a vicio gule quia locus se offert et propter quod dicit glossa super Mattheum iiii In pugna Christi prius contra gulam agitur ... tacere vero numquam. *Explicit*

summa de viciis abbreviata. Amen. Littera iam lasso police sistat opus." [The final verse is from Ovid, *Heroides* XVII l.265, "let the letter stop the work, because my thumb is now tired"].

Guillelmus Peraldus, *Summa de vitiis*. The closing rubric identifies this as an abbreviation of the full treatise. There is no modern critical edition; Newhauser et al. provide a detailed summary in English of the contents of the full treatise (see Online Resources).

Peraldus's *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* was phenomenally popular in the later Middle Ages and beyond. Kaeppli lists nearly 700 manuscripts, of which 137 contain both treatises, 360 only the treatise on vices, and 189 only the treatise on virtues (Kaeppli, no. 1622; and Dondaine, 1948, pp 193-197). Neither scholar distinguishes consistently between complete texts and the numerous summaries or extracts that are known to exist, but that have never been tallied or analyzed (abbreviations of the *summa de virtutibus* are discussed in Verweij, 2006). Dondaine lists thirteen incunable editions, eleven sixteenth-century editions, and ten seventeenth-century editions (Dondaine, 1948, p. 189; see also Roth, 1999). Once again, these have never been examined to determine which versions of the texts are included, or what manuscripts they may be related to.

The "pecia" system was a special method of producing manuscripts at medieval universities, including the universities of Paris and Toulouse (and others), where booksellers rented exemplars to scribes, divided into small sections (each section known as a *pecia*). It is known that the *Summa de vitiis* could be copied from *pecia*; Destrez identified two exemplars, Bibliothèque nationale, lat. 3238C, and Bibliothèque Mazarine, MS 794 (Destrez, 1953, p. 73). Evidence in our manuscript raises the possibility that it may have descended from a manuscript copied from *pecia*. Note that there is a major disturbance in the text pertaining to *luxuria*, in that the second column of f. 41, and both the recto and verso of f. 42 have been left blank. Although there is a reference mark from the end of the text on f. 41 to the beginning of text on f. 43, without further research, it is not clear what the significance of this lacuna may be. In addition, at the end of the second quire (ff. 43-52) a contemporary hand has noted in the bottom margin "hic deficit." Richard and Mary Rouse identified and discussed the kinds of problems that could occur in copying from *pecia* (Rouse and Rouse, 1988), and further study of the text of our manuscript with this question in mind, would certainly be of interest.

ff. 117v-119v, Notes added in hands of the 14th-15th centuries, including a medical recipe, the transcription of an indulgence granted in 1398 by Pope Urban VI to a monastery of the Cistercian order, a medical aphorism expressed in rhyme ("Si vis incolumem Si vis te ducere sanum ..."), various meteorological observations, pen trials, and miscellaneous other notes.

Guillelmus Peraldus, also known as Guillaume Peyraut, was a French Dominican friar. There are few specific dates associated with his life. Born probably c. 1200 in southern France, he may have studied in Paris, although he does not appear in the matriculation lists of the university. Most of his life was spent in the Dominican community in Lyon, where he earned a reputation as a preacher and was attested as prior in 1261. He is thought to have died at Lyon in 1271. (Dondaine, 1948; Delhay, 1967; Roth, 1999).

Of his works represented in this manuscript, the treatise on the vices was written first, c. 1236, and the treatise on the virtues c. 1248. The *Summa de vitiis* begins with a general consideration of sin and its causes, then treats the seven deadly sins in this order *gula* (gluttony), *luxuria* (lust),

avaritia (greed), *accidia* (sloth), *superbia* (pride), *invidia* (envy), and *ira* (anger); to this the author added a further section treating twenty-four sins of the tongue (Casagrandi and Vecchio, 1987; Gerardi, 2017). The *Summa de virtutibus*, after a general prologue, discusses the three theological virtues, *fides* (faith), *spes* (hope), and *caritas* (charity), followed by the four cardinal virtues, *prudentia* (prudence), *temperantia* (temperance), *fortitudo* (fortitude), and *justitia* (justice); two final sections concern gifts (*De donis*) and blessings (*De beatitudinibus*).

The two works were copied together as early as 1250 (Dondaine, 1948, p. 187) and frequently thereafter. Because the treatise on virtues has a prologue, it was often copied before the treatise on vices, as is the case in the present manuscript. Under each topic Peraldus provided examples of the kinds of sin or virtue and documented his discussion with practical illustrative material that included quotations from the Scriptures, from the Doctors of the Church (especially Augustine and Bernard,) and from classical authors such as Seneca, Ovid, and Horace. He also provided numerous *exempla* consisting of anecdotes and stories drawn from various sources.

Singly or together, the two works constituted a vade-mecum for preachers and confessors, who could readily find material for use in sermons or relevant to hearing confessions and assigning penance. It was undoubtedly this suitability for practical use that led to the creation of multiple abbreviated versions, of which the present manuscript is one, and of collections of extracts. A portable volume for ease of transport by itinerant friars, the manuscript shows ample signs of use, frequently in the form of marginalia by various contemporary hands which provide *nota bene* marks, identify sources quoted and topics discussed, mark the locations of exempla, and supply corrections to the text. Such corrections are particularly apparent in the first quires of the *Summa de vitiis* (ff. 33-42), where, in addition to marginal notations, there are gaps left in individual lines within the text and phrases within the text that have been expunctuated.

In addition to his influence within the church, Peraldus's works also attained broader cultural significance. John Wyclif, the English reformer, quoted from his works (Loserth, 1916). Dante, in *Purgatorio* XVII, made use of his rationale for the seven deadly sins (Wenzel, 1965; Wenzel, 1968; Wenzel, 1974; Mancini, 1968; Delcorno, 1989), and in the *Parson's Tale* Chaucer drew on works that depended in part on Peraldus (Wenzel, 1971; Wenzel, 1981).

The great majority of the known manuscripts belong to institutional libraries in Europe, from Western Europe into Northern and Central Europe. Kaeppli identifies eleven manuscripts in American collections, most of them containing only the *Summa de vitiis*: University of Chicago; University of Iowa (fragment only); Collection of Roger W. Barrett (present whereabouts unknown); New York Public Library (2 manuscripts, one containing both treatises); New York, Columbia University, Plimpton Collection; New York, P.W. and H.L. Goodhart (now presumably Bryn Mawr); Philadelphia Free Library, Lewis Collection (2 manuscripts, one containing both treatises); University of Pennsylvania; and Washington DC, Library of Congress (Kaeppli, no. 1622). To this can be added a codex at the University of Notre Dame (Roth 1999). Nonetheless, the work is rare on the market; the Schoenberg Database lists copies sold at Sotheby's in 1980 and 2005 (see Online Resources). The present copy appears to be unrecorded.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

ARLIMA: Archives de littérature du Moyen Âge

https://www.arlima.net/eh/guillaume_peyraud.html

[Guillelmus Peraldus, *Summa de vitiis et de virtutibus*](#)

[FAMA - Œuvres latines médiévales à succès: *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* \(cnrs.fr\)](#)

"How to read a medieval astronomical calendar"

<https://www.sebfalk.com/post/how-to-read-a-medieval-astronomical-calendar>

"William Peraldus, *Summa on the vices: An outline*," ed. Richard Newhauser et al.

<https://www.public.asu.edu/~rnewhaus/peraldus/>

Schoenberg Database of Manuscripts

<https://sdbm.library.upenn.edu/>

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