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PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE, *Opera*; JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *De Fide Orthodoxa*; BOETHIUS, *Opuscula sacra*

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment

Italy (Rome?), c. 1240-60

iii (paper) + 104 + iii (paper) on parchment (prepared in the manner of southern Europe, thin and even, but with some original holes and other imperfections, and some original sewn repairs, ff. 61-66, and 88), modern foliation in pencil in the middle of the upper margin (collation, i-iv¹² v-vi¹⁰ vii-ix¹²), boxed horizontal catchwords, lower margin, middle or slightly to the right in quires four-eight, no other leaf or quire signatures, ruled very lightly in brown crayon or pencil with the top three and bottom three horizontal rules sometimes full across, and with single full-length vertical bounding lines inside and outside of each column, prickings, top and bottom margins, and outer margin on ff. 26-104, 93-104 in markedly crooked vertical rows (justification, 207-204 x 132-130 mm), written below the top line in an early rotunda in two columns of 44 lines, notes for rubricator and guide letters for initials, for example, f. 40v, bottom margin, f. 45v, bottom margin, majuscules flashed in red, running titles in red (roman numeral indicating the book), red rubrics and marginal headings, chapters numbered in roman numerals in margin, red or blue paragraph marks, one-line red or blue initials; 2-3-line red and blue alternating ink initials flourished in alternate color, often extending full-length of the column; 3-11-line red and blue puzzle initials with red and blue flourishing, ff. 7, 34v, 46, 55, 95v; 6-line red and blue puzzle initial with partial ink border, ff. 1, 19 [initial mostly missing]; flourishing inhabited by zoomorphs and anthromorphs typical of the era; f. 19, top half of one column missing, with loss of text and the initial, now repaired with blank parchment, f. 1, darkened, with stains in the outer margin and the first column, and with a sprinkling of small worm holes, ff. 71-72, very wrinkled, with no damage to text, some cockling throughout, but overall in excellent condition. Bound in seventeenth-century half-leather over patterned paper over pasteboard; back pastedown inscribed "foglie # 100/iniziale # 6 Segnato N AP," smooth spine lettered in gold, "XVII/ S. JOA. DA/ DE FID/ ORTHO/ MS"; modern repair to lower spine, some wear to the upper and lower boards, especially in the corners, small modern repairs to the edges, but in very good condition. Dimensions 313 x 225 mm.

Elegant copy of texts central to the theological and philosophical foundations of thirteenth-century scholasticism. These texts survive in numerous manuscripts, but most thirteenth-century copies are now in public collections. Small animals and faces peak out of the beautiful penwork initials. Prickings in all three margins indicate this large-format manuscript retains its original size. Moreover, while most of the North American manuscripts known from the library of San Domenico, Gaeta, arrived before World War I, this volume is identified with that monastery here for the first time, and it has only now come to these shores.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in Italy, as indicated by the parchment, which is typical of Italian books with a very white, slick, flesh side, and slightly darker and fuzzier hair side, sometimes yellowed or with dark speckles. The script is also clearly southern, though this manuscript is early enough that the characteristic roundness is less evident. Rotunda's horizontal d, nearly closed h, two-stroke final-s, and an uncrossed tironian "7" for "et," and "qui" abbreviation all occur regularly. Yet, the script also betrays occasional northern features, including a closed a. Whilst this might suggest instead a southern

French rotunda, all other features are Italian. Moreover, the decoration is French in style and is typical of books copied in the late second quarter to the middle of the thirteenth century, c. 1240-60 (Fleming, 1989, p. 74).

2. These details suggest that the manuscript was copied in Italy in a center with French influence, possibly by a northern scribe copying in an Italian manner. The closest parallel is with a group of manuscripts made in Rome in the middle to third quarter of the thirteenth century studied by Valentino Pace (cited below), including among others, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 16595, Boethius and Aristotle (see Avril, 1984, pp. 130-1, no. 157, pl. J and lxxxvi-lxxxvii), Vatican, Chigi C IV 174, and a copy of the *Decretals*, Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, Vind. 2149 lat. 41. A related example is a Bible copied in Bologna in the middle of the thirteenth century, on Italian parchment, by an English scribe modeling his script on Italian scripts and decorated in a Parisian style that more closely relates to the present volume: Paris, BNF MS n.a.l. 3189 (studied by Rouse, cited below).
3. Eventually owned by the Dominican convent of San Domenico, Gaeta. The present volume is bound in a similar fashion to a group of a dozen manuscripts, including Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Library, MS Oversize Codex 1271, New Haven, Beinecke, MS 1207, and TM1416 elsewhere on this site. Beinecke 1207 shows a fifteenth-century ownership inscription: f.1, "Iste liber est conventus sancti dominici de gayeta ordinis predicatorum [this book belongs to the convent of San Domenico of Gaeta of the Order of Preachers]." In addition to uniform bindings, the manuscripts in this group share at least one of the following features: an inscription with a brief title and shelfmark, an inscription on the back pastedown of the number of leaves ending "Segnato N. A P," a loose slip of paper with an inscription similar to the title on the spine, and finally, a loose slip of paper with a nineteenth-century description in French. These dozen manuscripts were acquired by the Hispanic Society of America in the early twentieth century. This present manuscript includes most of the notable physical features of the manuscripts from this group, including binding, back pastedown inscription, and the early shelf-mark, "C 3" (ff. 1, 70 and 285). The present manuscript was not owned by the Hispanic Society of America, however, and may therefore have stayed in France or Italy until recently. How San Domenico's manuscripts left Italy remains unknown.
4. French private collection since the mid-1980s.
5. Private sale in 2011 to a private continental collection.

TEXT

ff. 1-46, John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa*, incipit, "Deum nemo uidit unquam unigenitus dei filius qui est ... gaudium id est quod ab ipso est fructificantes. *Explicit damascenus*,"

John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa*, edited by Eligius M. Buytaert. The modern edition of this work lists 117 manuscripts, not including this one (Buytaert, 1955, pp. xx-xli). About 42 manuscripts, mostly in public institutions, are assigned to the thirteenth century.

ff. 46-93, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *Opera*; ff. 46-55, *De caelesti hierarchia*, incipit, "Omne datum optimum et omne donum perfectum desursum est descendens a patre luminum... nos secretum silentis honorificantes"; ff. 55-67v, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, incipit, "Quia quidem secundum nos ierarchia diuinorum puerorum sacratissime intenta atque diuina ... in te diuini ignis ascendens usque [rubbed but legible:] uapores"; ff. 67v-85, *De diuinis nominibus*, incipit, "Nunc autem o beate post theologicas ypotyposes ad diuinorum nominum reseruatiorem sicut est possibile transibo ... ad symbolicam autem theologiam duce deo transibimus"; ff. 85-86, *De mystica theologia*, incipit, "Trinitas supersubstantialis et super dea et superbona inspectrix ... absoluti et super tota"; ff. 86-91v, *Epistolae diversae*, incipit, "Tenebre occulstantur lumine et magis multo lumine ignorantiam occultant cognitiones ..."; f. 86, *Eidem secunda*, incipit, "Quomodo qui est super omnia et super ierarchiam ..."; f. 86, *Eidem tertia*, incipit, "Subito est quod est preter spem ..."; f. 86rv, *Eidem quarta*, incipit, "Quomodo dicit Ihesus qui est super omnia ..."; f. 86v, *Dorotheo ministro*, incipit, "Diuina caligo est inaccessibile ..."; f. 86v, *Sosiprato sacerdote*, incipit, "Ne opineris hic uictoriam sancta sosipatris quod contra religionem ..."; ff. 86v-87, *Polycarpo summo sacerdote*, incipit, "Ego quidem non sum aduersus grecos ..."; ff. 87-89, *Demophilo therapente de propria mansuetudine*, incipit, "Hebreorum ystorie dicunt o nobilis domophile [sic] ..."; ff. 89-90v, *Thito pontifici que sapientie domus quis crater et quis cibum*, incipit, "Sanctus quidem thymotheus o pulcherimme tyte nescio ..."; ff. 91v-92, *Johanni theologo apostolo et ewangeliste*, incipit, "Saluto te sanctam animam o dilecte .."; f. 91rv, *Apollophanio con creto et con philosopho*, incipit, "Nunc nunc [sic] mihi sermo ad te dirigitur precor ... in eo uiues." *Expliciunt epistole beati dyonisii*"; ff. 91v-93, *Epistola de morte Pauli*, incipit, "Saluto te diuinum discipulum et filium spiritualis et ueri patris ... quem decet gloria laus et cultus cum patre et spiritu sancto nunc et semper et per omnia secula seculorum. Amen."

P. Chevallier, *Dionysiaca: Recueil donnant l'ensemble des traditions latines des ouvrages attribués au Denys de l'Aréopagite*, Bruges, 2 vols. repr. Stuttgart, 1989 edited the following: *De caelesti hierarchia*, vol. 2, pp. 727-1039; *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, vol. 2 1071-1476; *De diuinis nominibus* vol. 1, pp. 5-561; *De mystica theologia*, vol. 1, pp. 565-602; *Epistolae diversae*, vol. 1:605-669 and vol. 2:1479-1578, and the "Letter to Apollophanus," was printed in Migne, *PL* 106:33-34. This letter also follows the ten Pseudo-Dionysian letters in Paris, BNF MS lat. 17341 (see Dondaine, 1953, p. 16). The *Epistola de morte Pauli* does not seem to have been printed in a modern edition, but it circulated commonly with the works of Pseudo-Dionysius in medieval manuscripts.

ff. 93-94v, John Eriugena, *Prologus per versus*, incipit, "Hanc libam sacro grecorum nectare fartam. Aduena iohannes spondeo meo ...," *Epistola*, incipit, "Ualde quidem admiranda dignisque ... et ad eam creatam sunt per excellentiam essentie recurrere. Dionisii ariopagite episcopi athenarum ad thymotheum episcopum de celesti ierarchia";

Letter of John Eriugena, prologue to his translation of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite; Migne, *PL* 122:1029-1037.

ff. 94v-95v, Anastasius the Librarian, *Apostolice sedis bibliothecarii ad excellentissimum et christianissimum regem Karolum prefatio anaxtaxii*, incipit, "Angelice sapientie fulgores multos ...," *Prologus*, incipit, "Inter cetera studia que tam laudabilis actio quam saluberrima ... ad celeste regnum transferat quinque";

Anastasius the Librarian, preface to the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite; Migne, *PL* 122:1026-1030.

There is no modern census of manuscripts, but the Schoenberg Database shows 146 results when searched by the author's name, and this is likely a small fraction of the extant corpus.

ff. 95v-104v, Boethius, *Opuscula sacra*, I-V, ending imperfectly, Book 1, *Incipit liber Boecii de trinitate personarum et unitate essentie*, incipit, "Inuestigatam diutissime questionem quantum nostre mentis igniculum illustrare lux diuina . . . quantum inbecillitas subtrahit uota subplebunt"; ff. 97v-98, Book 2 incipit, "Quero an pater et filius et spiritus sanctus de diuinitate substantialiter . . . et fidem si poteris rationemque coniuge"; ff. 98-99, Book 3, *Incipit liber Boecii de ebdomadibus*, incipit, "Postulas ut ex ebdomadibus nostris eius questionis . . . id circo alia quidem iusta ac alia [added: aliud] omnia uero bona"; ff. 99-101, Book 4, *Incipit Boecii de duabus naturis et una persona Christi*, incipit, "Christianam fidem nobis sane noui et ueteris testamenti auctoritas pandit . . . laus perpetua creatoris"; ff. 101-104v, Book 5, incipit, "Anxie quidem te diuque sustinui . . . sententiam eo modo [sic, for "nominee"] quod cum tribus modis," ends imperfectly.

The five works known as Boethius's *Opuscula sacra*, or the *Theological Tractates*, were embraced by medieval theologians, and exerted considerable influence on Carolingian and Scholastic authors. Their popularity during the Middle Ages is amply demonstrated by surviving copies, which number in the hundreds according to extant censuses (*Codices Boethiani*, 1999-2009, Rand, 1978). *Opuscula sacra* was edited by E. K. Rand and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass, 1978, pp. 2-114.

This volume attests to the deep interest scholasticism had in the writings of the Greek and Latin thinkers of the late Antique and early medieval period. Saint John Damascene, or John of Damascus (c. 675- ca. 749) is known as the last of the Greek Fathers of the Church. He was born in a Christian family in Damascus and served as a high official in the court of the Muslim caliphate, before entering the monastery of St. Sabas near Jerusalem. The *De fide orthodoxa* (*On the Orthodox Faith*) beginning the present volume is part of his longer work, *The Fountain of Wisdom*. In it, Damascene presented the main teachings of the Greek Fathers in a comprehensive treatise that discusses the existence of God, the Divine nature, the physical world, angels and demons, human nature, the nature of Christ and the Scriptures. Peter Lombard cites it extensively in the *Sentences*, and it became a standard work among western theologians, including Thomas Aquinas, transmitting to the West teachings from the earlier Greek Fathers including Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Alexandria, Leo the Great, Athanasius and Chrysostom.

The heart of the volume is devoted to a comprehensive anthology of the works of St. Dionysius, or Pseudo-Dionysius, as he has come to be known in the contemporary world. Pseudo-Dionysius was the pseudonym of an otherwise unidentified Christian Neo-Platonist who wrote in the late fifth or early sixth century, probably between 485 and 518-28 CE. The volume's compilers also included both the prologue of John Scotus Eriugena's translation of Pseudo-Dionysius' corpus into Latin from the original Greek, and the preface by Anastasius the Papal librarian, who revised Eriugena's translation in 875. During the Middle Ages all these works were accepted as having apostolic authority, second only to that of the Scriptures, and the importance of these writings in the history of medieval philosophy and theology can hardly be exaggerated.

Though mainly focused on the Greek Fathers, the volume ends with a brief section drawn from the works of Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (c. 480-c. 525/6). Boethius was one of the most important intermediaries between ancient philosophy and the Latin Middle Ages, expressing philosophical ideas in a way that made them interesting and accessible to a wider public. His writings drew extensively on the thinking of Greek Neoplatonists, and included works on logic and music, as well as numerous translations of Greek works into Latin, including works of Aristotle, Euclid and Ptolemy. Born into a wealthy, politically influential family, Boethius too entered politics, but in 524, he was arrested for treason, imprisoned and eventually executed by Theodoric the Great. He wrote his most famous work, the *Consolation of Philosophy*, while he was in prison awaiting execution.

This is an elegant, large-format copy of texts that were central to the theological and philosophical foundations of thirteenth-century scholasticism. Its contents point to a commissioner of considerable learning, with a strong interest in Neo-Platonism and Greek philosophical writings, and marginal notes demonstrate its continued use for several hundred years. Although texts collected in this volume survive in numerous manuscripts, most thirteenth-century copies are in public collections and are infrequently available for sale. Indeed, while individual Pseudo-Dionysius works have come to market regularly since 1980, large anthologies of them are considerably rarer. Further, the Schoenberg Database lists just two modern sales of John Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa* (one of which was in a French translation). Most of the Boethius manuscripts available on the market have instead been copies of his *Consolation of Philosophy*, and while individual books of the *Opuscula* have circulated, according to the Schoenberg Database, only two copies of the entire work have sold in the last century, and one of those sales was the present volume over a decade ago. Moreover, this is both the latest of the manuscripts from San Domenico, Gaeta to reach North America and the first volume in over a century.

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