

LES ENLUMINURES

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Bartholomeo Sibylla, *Speculum peregrinarum questionum* (Mirror of Exotic Questions)
In Latin, imprint with inserted manuscript leaves on paper
France (Strasbourg), Johann Grüninger, 1499 (imprint); Germany (Bavaria?), c. 1500
(manuscript)

264 folios on paper, watermark in the manuscript section, diadem surmounted by a cross, Briquet 4903-4912, common in Germany c. 1492-1537, original printed Roman foliation, with errors, starting in quire C, I-CCLVIII, lacking ten original printed leaves that have been replaced by ten leaves in manuscript containing the missing text (collation A⁶ B⁴ C-P⁸ Q⁸ [lacking leaves 1, 2, 7 and 8, i.e. the two outer bifolia, with loss of text, replaced by four leaves in manuscript] R-Z⁸ AA-GG⁸ HH⁶ [lacking the entire quire HH, with loss of text, replaced by a quire of six leaves in manuscript] II-LL⁸), alphanumerical leaf signatures (Aij, Aijj, Aijj...LLijj, LLv), with errors, manuscript leaves mostly unruled (justification 146 x 92 mm.), written in brown ink in a small cursive gothic script in c. 31-32 long lines, imprint, 32 lines plus headline, roman letter (with headlines in gothic), woodcut illustration on title-page, capitals touched in red, 3- to 4-line red initials throughout, slight water damage in some outer margins, overall excellent condition. ORIGINAL BINDING of pigskin over wooden boards, blind-stamped with flowers and foliage, some wormholes and stains, lacking central clasp and catch, otherwise in very good condition. Dimensions 192 x 133 mm.

This is a curious hybrid volume – part incunable, part manuscript – that considers all sorts of unusual questions on the soul, angels, dreams and their interpretations, demonology, magic, astrology, and so forth. It offers a telling record of what must have happened from time to time during the printing process (and still does): ten contemporary manuscript leaves supply text presumably accidentally omitted during printing. The scribe tried his best to imitate the printed font, and decorative elements added by hand throughout partly help disguise the printing error. Only one manuscript survives, postdating the present example.

PROVENANCE

1. Johann Grüninger printed the book in Strasbourg in Northeastern France on August 19, 1499. Our copy is an interesting example of a book that left the printer missing ten leaves, four leaves (the two outer bifolia) from one quire early in the manuscript and one complete later quire. Ten manuscript leaves were subsequently added to complete the volume, presumably by the book's first owner, c. 1500 in Southern Germany, who also had the book bound. The two floral stamps decorating the binding are similar to those found in contemporary bindings made in Bavaria. Close comparisons can be made with the stamps used at the Cistercian Abbey of Kaisheim (cf. Einbanddatenbank, Online resources).
2. Occasional contemporary nota signs in the margins of our book, e.g. ff. 78-80, indicate the preoccupations of the early owners. An initial and name is inscribed in brown ink below the frontispiece on f. A1, perhaps an early owner (illegible).

3. At the Franciscan convent of St. Bernardine of Siena in Amberg, Bavaria, in the seventeenth century: inscribed "Ad Bibliothec[am] PP. Francis[canorum] Amberg[ae]" on f. A2. The library's circular stamp "S B A" with a Cross is found on the top-edge. Other incunabula from the library with identical seventeenth-century ownership inscriptions and stamps include Cambridge University Library, Inc.5.A.52.A9[1117] and Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Inc. 102052/131.

The Franciscan convent in Amberg was founded in 1452 by St. John of Capistrano (an earlier convent founded in Amberg in 1305 was abandoned in 1440 due to poverty; see Moorman, 1983, pp. 17-18). In 1555 it was taken over by the Protestants but was returned to the Franciscans in 1626. It is possible that our book (and others with the identical inscription) were given to the library when the convent was re-established in the seventeenth century, as suggested by the wording "Ad" (to).

TEXT

f. [unfoliated first leaf], Title page with a woodcut depicting the Creation and Fall of Adam and Eve, the redemption of the soul, and, in the foreground, the author offering his work to Alfonso of Aragon, Duke of Calabria; [verso, blank];

ff. [unfoliated second leaf]-CCLIII verso, *Speculum peregrinarum questionum*, incipit, "Index capitum Peregrinarum petitionum: Ac questiuncularum ... [colophon:] Speculum peregrinarum questionum Bartholomei Sybille Monopolitani ... Bene perspectum et emendatum opera et expensis circumspiciti viri Ioannis Grüninger civis Argentin[ensis]. Ad laudem dei ... finit anno Christiane salutis post Millesimum quadringentesimum nonagesimo nono, 14. Kalendas Septembres"; [unfoliated final leaf, blank].

Bartholomaeus Sibylla, *Speculum peregrinarum quaestionum*, Strasbourg, Johann Grüninger, August 19, 1499, ISTC is00492000, GW 3460, Kristeller, 1883, p. 89, no. 86; this imprint survives in numerous copies. In our copy, folios Q1, Q2, Q7, and Q8, and folios HH1-6 are manuscript leaves which supply missing text. The text on the pages in manuscript appear to reproduce the printed edition exactly. It would be interesting to know whether this is a unique defective copy, or whether other extant copies of this imprint are missing these same pages; further research is needed.

Printed by the famous printer Johann Grüninger (c. 1455-c.1533). Grüninger was established in Strasbourg by 1481. He became one of the most important printers in this city, publishing 389 titles in the course of his career. He is well-known for his illustrated books, a feature seen here in the attractive woodcut used for the title page (Kristeller, 1883; Morford, 2009).

Bartholomeo Sibylla was a Dominican friar and author. He was born in the early 1440s in Monopoli in Apulia, southeastern Italy. In 1469 Bartolomeo is attested at the convent of S. Domenico Maggiore in Naples and in 1474 at the convent of S. Domenico in Bologna. In 1478 he obtained his doctorate in theology from the University of Ferrara. In 1479 Leonardo Mansueti, the Master General of the Dominican Order, appointed Bartolomeo temporary prior of S. Domenico in Palermo, and later in the same year, vicar for Apulia. Soon after, Ferrante, King of Naples, appointed him General Commissioner for the war against the Turks. In 1486, Bartolomeo was elected prior of the convent of S. Domenico Maggiore in Naples. In August

1488 he was called to Monopoli by the city's captain Fabrizio de Scorciatis to pronounce the funeral eulogy for Ippolita Sforza, Duchess of Calabria, wife of Alfonso of Aragon. Bartholomeo died in 1493 (Cinelli, Online Resources).

The *Speculum peregrinarum questionum* is Bartholomeo's major work. It was dedicated to the Duke of Calabria, Alfonso of Aragon, and first printed on August 27, 1493 in Rome by the German printer, Eucharius Silber. It continued to be printed in numerous editions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The *Speculum* is an encyclopedic work, with the text divided into three parts, or decades of ten chapters each. The first part concerns the nature of the soul, its immortality and incorruptibility, hell, limbo, purgatory, the Elysian Fields, paradise, and the beatitudes. The second part concerns the good angels, their *esse* and *essentia* (being and essence), knowledge, powers and attributes. The last part concerns the fallen angels, the apparitions of the dead, as well as dreams and their interpretation, and is of particular interest as it relates to demonology, astrology, and magic. Among the authors he cites are Hermes Trismegistus, Apuleius, Ptolemy, and Seneca. In his prefatory dedication to Alfonso of Aragon, Bartholomeo makes particular reference to the magnificent library of Alfonso's father, Ferdinand.

Although the work is not so rare in print, it is extremely rare in manuscript form. Kaeppli lists only one manuscript copy, and it dates from the sixteenth century (Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana III. 70 (2620), see Kaeppli, 1970, vol. 1, p. 169, no. 448).

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Einbanddatenbank

<https://www.hist-einband.de/de/>

Franziskanerkloster Amberg (Wikipedia)

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franziskanerkloster_Amberg

Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke, no. 3460

<http://www.gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/docs/GW03460.htm>

ISTC (Incunabula Short Title Catalogue), is00492000

<https://data.cerl.org/istc/is00492000>

E-rara-ch, digital facsimile, Zentralbibliothek Zürich, Raa 65: a, Bartholomaeus Sibylla, *Speculum peregrinarum questionum*

<https://www.e-rara.ch/id/8027761>

Luciano Cinelli, "Bartholomaeus Sibylla," *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, volume 92 (2018)

[http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bartolomeo-sibilla_\(Dizionario-Biografico\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bartolomeo-sibilla_(Dizionario-Biografico)/)

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