

**ANONYMOUS, Index to the *Catena aurea in quattuor Evangelia* of THOMAS AQUINAS
In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment
France (Paris), c.1300-1325**

42 folios on parchment, original foliation, with gaps, in roman numerals top right corner rectos, viiii, xvi, xxv-xxxii, xcvi-ciiii, cv-cxii, cxxxvii-cxliiii, cxcii-cc, incomplete at beginning, end and internally; see discussion below (present collation: i^s [missing 2-7] ii-vi^s; originally gathered in at least 26 eight-leaf quires: original collation: [i^s, lacking] ii^s [= present quire i, missing 2-7] [iii^s, lacking] iv^s [= present quire ii], [v-xii^s, lacking] xiii-xiv^s [= present quires iii-iv], [xv-xvii^s, lacking], xviii^s [= present quire v], [xix-xxiv^s, lacking], xxv^s [= present quire vi], [lacking at least one quire at end]), catchwords in decorated red and brown cartouches lower right last folios, 6 full-height vertical lines defining 3 columns per page, 4 full-width horizontal lines defining empty spaces above and below the text, all lines lightly ruled in ink, 2 columns of 44 lines written under the top line in gothic textura script by a single hand, the third narrower outer column of each page reserved for decorated initials ('A', 'B', 'C', etc.) designating the subdivisions of each main entry, similar decorated letters in first lines of many columns (justification 218 x 128 mm.), red initial strokes in text, paragraph signs alternating red and blue in left margins and occasionally in text, many indexed words identified by red underlines, main indexed words in larger script and identified by two-line initials alternating red flourished blue and blue flourished red, small natural flaws to a few blank margins, minor soiling to first leaf, slight cockling and unobtrusive stains to upper margins throughout. Nineteenth-century binding of half purple sheep, embossed cloth over pasteboards, gilt spine title, marbled endleaves. Dimensions 350 x 200 mm.

The alphabetical manuscript index was born, not with the printed book, but in the thirteenth century, responding to the needs of scholars, preachers, and students, who needed quick and efficient access to information. This manuscript index, despite its incomplete state, offers a significant, apparently unrecorded, and possibly unique witness to the creative process of index-making in the Middle Ages. It survives as a testament to the popularity and usefulness of Thomas Aquinas's *Catena aurea in quattuor Evangelia*, a commentary on the four gospels formed by creating a chain of quotations from patristic writers and other doctors of the church.

PROVENANCE

1. Written and decorated in Paris, in the early 14th century, as indicated by the evidence of the script and decoration. The evidence of the decoration points strongly to Paris. For each of the more than two hundred flourished initials, the flourishing is underlaid by a pattern of three tiny dots arranged in a small triangle; although these indicate the color of the flourishing, they bear no relation to its design. The *Catalogue des manuscrits datés* for France includes at least four manuscripts showing this pattern of dots underneath similar flourishing, the first three securely localized to Paris: BNF, MS lat. 14889, copied by several different hands and including two sermons preached at Saint Victor in 1305 and 1307 (*Mss datés France*, vol. 3, p. 389, pl. LXXXIV); Vendôme, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 181, copied in 1309 from pecia by Pierre Bonenfant, identified among the booksellers and stationers (*librarii and stationarii*) of the University of Paris in lists dating

from 1316 (*Mss datés France*, vol. 7, p. 399, pl. LXXV; Stirnemann, 1990, p. 71, no. 47; Denifle and Châtelain, vol. II/1, 1891, nos. 724, 733); Troyes, Bibliothèque municipale, MS 1476, copied in Paris in 1346 by Johannes Yuisani of the diocese of Troyes (*Mss datés France*, vol. 5, p. 507; pl. LIV); BNF, MS lat. 6641, copied in 1383 by Daniel An Ravaeur for Nicolas Fayell, master of theology (*Mss datés France*, vol. 2, p. 359, pl. LXV).

2. Occasional contemporary corrections or notations in margins.
3. Lot 145 in an unidentified sale (clipping tipped to flyleaf; description in English suggests a sale in London, possibly Sotheby's).
4. Unidentified slip of paper laid in annotated with number "921" and the additional note "42 pages."
5. Belonged to W. A. Foyle, Beeleigh Abbey (bookplate). William Alfred Foyle (1885-1963) was a noted London bookseller who also collected extensively, forming an important collection of manuscripts that were offered in a dedicated sale, *The Library of William Foyle*, at Christie's London in July 2000 and in subsequent auctions.

TEXT

ff. viiii-cc, [begins incompletely] incipit, "//aliquis commutare animam vero perdens aliam animam dare non potest. Marcus viii. p. v. d. Crisostomus. Si de civitate in civitatem transeuntes ... Lucas xii. p. v. e. Crisostomus ... [f. viiii^v]. Anima Christi. Absit ab fidelibus ista suspicio ut sic Christus senserit mortem nostrum ... [f. cc^v] Veritas. Secundum providenciam dei nominatus est Zorobabel id est doctor babylonis ... Omnis qui male agit odit lucem etc. Quia enim falli volunt et fallere//." [ends incompletely with catchword for the following, missing quire].

Index to the *Catena aurea* of Thomas Aquinas, apparently unpublished and unrecorded, possibly unique. The *Catena aurea*, composed by Aquinas between 1262 and 1268, is a commentary on the four gospels in the form of quotations from Fathers and Doctors of the church, including Greek theologians in Latin translation. These were organized in the order of the Biblical text and edited in such a way that they could be read continuously. Aquinas himself referred to the work as *Expositio continua in Matthaeum, Marcum, Lucam, Johannem* (Benetollo, 2006, vol. 1, p. 7; Conticello, 1990, pp. 37-38), and made use of it in his subsequent writings and preaching (Torrell, 1996, p. 139). The title *Catena aurea* is documented as early as 1361 (Conticello, 1990, p. 37, n. 24). This was the title adopted by the publishers of the first edition, Rome: Sweynheim and Pannartz, 1470 (see online resources), and subsequent editors. The four books of the *Catena* itself were often copied separately and survive in at least 332 manuscript copies of complete books and an additional 40 manuscript copies containing fragments (Conticello, 1991, p. 42; Dondaine and Shooner, 1967-1985; Stegmüller, vol. 5, 1955, nos. 8044-8047; see also Benetollo, 2006, p. 10). There were ten incunable editions (see online resources), sixty editions between 1501 and 1550, and others thereafter (Benetollo, 2006, p. 11; Conticelli, 1990, p. 43). The work was translated into English in the nineteenth-century, edited by John Henry Newman (Newman, 1841-1845).

The present codex, an index organized alphabetically, is a remnant of a much larger work. Judging from the early foliation, it originally consisted of at least 26 eight-leaf quires. In the remaining text only five quires survive completely, and one more is defective. As a result, only certain subsets of words are indexed: *Anima Christi - Animus pius* [f. viiii], *Beneficiatus-Bonum vel bonus* [f. xvi], *Compunctio-Corpus Christi* [ff. xxv-xxxii], *Iustus-Maiestas* [ff. xcvi-ciiii], *Maledictio-Misericordia* [ff. cv-cxii], *Pater familias-Penitentia* [ff. cxxxvii-cxlv], *Testamentum-Veritas* [cxciii-cc].

Despite the incomplete state of the manuscript, it offers an excellent example of the sophisticated indexing techniques developed in the schools of thirteenth-century Paris for the purpose of enabling preachers to locate and easily obtain access to information about topics of importance for pastoral care and for developing sermons. These innovative techniques included alphabetical order used for indexes of various kinds, subdividing the texts indexed into sections identified by chapter numbers (already established for the Bible), and identification of subdivisions of texts by letters in the margins (Rouse and Rouse, 1991).

The words chosen by the anonymous compiler of this index as head-words for the principal entries are entered in slightly larger script, arranged in complete alphabetical order, and introduced by two-line flourished initials. Under each head-word a varying number of passages taken from the Fathers and Doctors of the church in the *Catena aurea* relating to that topic are quoted and presented in the order of the biblical text (without however quoting that text in full). Each quotation is identified according to the name of the gospel to which it refers (abbreviated M^t, M^r, Lu, and Io), by the number of the chapter to which it makes reference, by a reference which appears to be to the relevant section in the *Catena aurea*, and by the abbreviated name of the authority to whom it is credited. Each of these subsections is introduced by a red or blue paragraph sign and is identified in the margin by a large decorated letter of the alphabet ('A', 'B', 'C', etc., as far as needed), so that they can be referenced in their turn. At the end of the section for each head-word, the text includes related terms, with cross-references to the sections in which those concepts are treated. For example, under "Consentire vel consensus" (f. xxviii verso), there are two such cross-references: "Consequi .q. Venia .d. Verbum .k. Christus .t." and "Conservare .q. Pax .f. n. Sacerdocium .d. Sanguis Christi .f. Virtus .i. Ymago .b."

In a representative entry on f. xxvi, we find the head-word "Confessio" taken from *Catena aurea*, chapter 3, *lectio*, 3, on Mt. 3:5-6 from [Ps.-] Chrysostom: "Confessio. Confessio peccatorum testimonium est conscientie deum timentis ... pars iudicii est. Mt. iii. p. iii. e" (in English, "Confession of sin is the testimony of a conscience fearing God. And perfect fear takes away all shame. But there is seen the shame of confession where there is no fear of the judgment to come. But as shame itself is a heavy punishment, God therefore bids us confess our sins that we may suffer this shame as punishment; for that itself is a part of the judgment." Note the citation of the relevant Gospel passage (in this case Mt. 3:5-6), followed by a reference which is almost certainly to the relevant section of the *Catena aurea*. This entry is marked 'A', and it is followed on this page by eight further entries relevant to the topic of confession.

De Ricci lists only one manuscript of the *Catena*: *Catena aurea in Evangelium S. Matthei*, then in the library of Mrs. Milton E. Getz, Beverly Hills, CA, now Harvard University, Houghton Library, MS lat. 172, where the text of the *Catena* is copied as a commentary to the biblical text in the

format of a glossed Bible (De Ricci, 1935, p. 15; Light, 1995, pp. 269-271). The Schoenberg Database includes only the sale records for the manuscript now at Harvard. Since it appears that the important survey of manuscripts of the works of Thomas Aquinas by Dondaine and Shooner (1967-1985, vol. 1, p. viii) does not include ancillary texts such as tables, concordances, corrections, commentaries, and short extracts, it has proven difficult to trace the history of the present codex further.

LITERATURE

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ONLINE RESOURCES

Catena aurea online

[Glossae Scripturae Sacrae-electronicae \(Gloss-e\)](#)

GW: Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke

<https://www.gesamtkatalogderwiegendrucke.de/>

ISTC: Incunabula Short Title Catalogue

<https://data.cerl.org/iste/>

Mirabile: Archivio digitale della cultura medievale = Digital Archive for Medieval Culture

<https://mirabileweb.it>

Schoenberg Database of Manuscripts

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

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