

# LES ENLUMINURES, LTD

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## Les Enluminures

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[ANONYMOUS, likely ANTONIO CORNAZZANO, *De laudibus Antonii Martinengii*]  
In Italian, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
Italy, Brescia, between 1470-1474

*27 folios, complete, in gatherings of 10 (i<sup>10</sup>, ii<sup>10</sup>, iii<sup>7</sup>), vertical catchwords, written in brown ink in a handsome rounded humanistic script, "terzine" verses copied on 21 long lines (justification 90 x 135 mm), ruled very lightly in ink, first letter of each terzina set off to the left of the column of text, rubrics in pale red in Latin (now faded to near illegibility), contemporary marginal annotations in Latin in pale red, opening initial painted in gold and decorated with white vine-stem (bianchi girari) on a multicolored red, green, and blue ground with hairline flourishing and gold besants in the margin, 2-line high painted gold initials opening each chapter on pink, green or blue grounds with hairline flourishing and gold besants in the margin (ff. 4v, 8v, 12v, 16v, 20v, 24), opening rubric and probably early traces of provenance have been scratched out, brown ink near contemporary annotations on fol. 27v [hardly legible: "[...] minores boromenis vochabitur / [...] cives milonii patricis regitores / omnes [...] et suis eliter / rusticis suis [...] / Fecit Agusti Corn[azzano](?) amicorum" and drawing of profile of a bearded man crowned in laurel, later pencil annotations on bottom pastedown: "Cornazzano. Poemetto de nobilità." Modern hard vellum binding, with original parchment covers and spine pasted onto new support, covers initially decorated with a frame of single gold filet and four floral motifs at angles, protected in a cardboard fitted slipcase. Dimensions 145 x 205 mm.*

Only known copy, probably a presentation copy, of this hitherto unrecorded and unpublished Italian poem in praise of and dedicated to Antonio Martinengo and attributed to the well-known Italian poet Antonio Cornazzano on circumstantial, stylistic, and textual grounds.

## PROVENANCE

1. Written by the Italian poet and dancing master Antonio Cornazzano in honor of Antonio Martinengo probably in Brescia, where they both lived from c. 1470. Cornazzano

moved to Ferrara in c. 1474-75, and where Martinengo died in c. 1473, providing a *terminus post* for the present composition. The date is consistent with the script and decoration.

2. Private Collection, Europe.

## TEXT

ff. 1-4v, *Proemium*; rubric in Roman capitals (hardly legible), *AD MAGNIFICI AC POTENT[...]*; incipit, "[P]erch'io veggio negli animi taliani una altereza indegna..." ; explicit, "...Ma colle prove hor vengho a quell chio scrivo..." ;

ff. 4v-8v, Chapter 1, rubric (hardly legible), *Questio [...] de scythas & egyptas de gene[ris] (?) excellent[?]*; incipit, "Son generation di genti al mondo..." ; explicit, "...Son da preporre a quei cinghani ladri" ;

ff. 8v-12v, Chapter 2, rubric (hardly legible), *Secundum capitulum quod vile[?] origine virtute sine nobilitate*; incipit, "Trombetta di virtu gran cose narro..." ; explicit, "...Di cielo in terra a suon di trombe ha tracto" ;

ff. 12v-16v, Chapter 3; rubric (hardly legible), *Capitulum tercium quod propria vicia de nobilibus ignobiles fci. (?) sf. (?)*; incipit, "Per che a ben giudicare occhio non falli..." ; explicit, "...Quello e proprio un dio in terra in carne humana" ;

ff. 16v-20, Chapter 4, rubric (hardly legible), *Quartum capitulum de quibusdam mulieribus [...] si virtute propria nobilita[...]*; incipit, "In cosa mai che faccia o chio comande..." ; explicit, "...Quell'altre per virtu saman da culla" ;

ff. 20v-24, Chapter 5, rubric (hardly legible), *Capitulum Vm [quintum] de auctoritatibus presbitorum (?) in hoc propositio*; incipit, "Credo ch'ormai restar deggia contenta..." ; explicit, "... A grande honor vien posto alla carretta" ;

ff. 24-27v, Chapter 6 , rubric (hardly legible), *Capitulum ultimum ... & de laudibus M. D. Antonii Martinengho*; incipit, "Parra forse ad alcun che troppo aceso..." ; explicit, "Pien di frutta con fiori uno aureo vaso / ti mando (guardal bene) accio che mai / quel que colmo ti do non ti sia raso / Sio t'amo, t'honoro a tal prova tul sai."

Antonio Cornazzano (1429/1430-1484) initially achieved popularity as a teacher, poet and dance master at the Sforza court in Milan, where he served Francesco Sforza (1401-1466). His well-known *Libro dell'arte del danzare*, written c. 1460, established the rules of body movements and fixed the principles of the composition of choreography. Forced to leave Milan shortly after 1466, he initially sought out protection in Venice. Between c. 1470 and

1474-75, he settled in Brescia, where he composed a small group of laudatory poems, including the *Vita di Pietro Avogadro*, a poem in eight chapters and proemium (presentation copy in Brescia, Biblioteca Civica Queriniana, MS. B. VIII. 13). (On Cornazzano's stay in Brescia see Crevatin, 1990, p. xlv). He finally settled at the court of Ferrara in 1474-75 in the service of Ercole I d'Este (1471-1505) and his wife Eleonora d'Aragona, duchess of Ferrara. There he composed his most famous work, *De modo di regere e di regnare*, known from the important manuscript illuminated for Eleonora d'Aragona (New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS. M.731; Harrsen and Boyce, no. 78, pp. 44-45, pl. 2.)

The present manuscript contains the only known copy, probably a presentation copy, of a hitherto unrecorded and unpublished poem dedicated to Antonio Martinengo and attributed to Antonio Cornazzano on circumstantial, stylistic, and textual evidence. It must have been composed during the second half of Cornazzano's career between his stays in Milan and in Ferrara. In the poem, Cornazzano was visibly in search of a new protector, and he glorifies the famous Brescian *condottiero* and man-of-arms Antonio I Martinengo, son of Giovanni Francesco Martinengo di Padernello, who died in Brescia in October 1473; his son Gaspare was married to one of Colleoni's daughters. On f. 1v there is the following reference to Cornazzano's prolonged stay in Milan in the service of the Sforza court: "Chio mi ricordo al tempo che un bel volto / tenea l'aer sereno in Milanese / prima chel ciel di man mi fusse tolto." (See "Cornazzano" in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani*, p. 124: "In piu passi della sua opera il Cornazzano fa esplicito riferimento al servizio prestato per il duca di Milano..."). The references to Bergamo and Brescia all point to the second part of his life, after Cornazzano was forced to leave Milan: "Costretto a lasciare Milano, il Cornazzano riparo a Venezia e nel decennio successivo Venezia e Malpaga [fiefdom of Batholomeo Colleoni] furono i due poli della sua attivita letteraria..." (DBI, p. 128).

Antonio Martinengo is cited a number of times; see f. 1v: "A questa inclyta impresa a si bel passo / Antonio Martinengho amplo patricio / l'amor e l'honor tuo tracto m'ha casso / Che te intendendo per commun iudicio / esser l'honor della citta di Bressa [Brescia] / tacer sapendo dir mi pareo vicio."; on ff. 11v-12: "Et in questo arghuir gloria verace / ha quel gran berghamascho a te congiunto / chor chiara guerra ha mossa in foscha pace" (this is a reference to Martinengo's relative Bartholomeo Colleoni, *gran berghamascho*, protector of Cornazzano); on ff. 25-27v: "Non trovo campo alcuno essersi instrutto / sei cento anno e chel nome Martinengho / non gli facesse sença frasche frutto..." . Most rubrics and marginal annotations, ex-dono or ex-libris, have been scratched out.

This text is unrecorded in all the major reference books and specialized literature on Italian poetry (not in Carboni; not in Santagata, *Incipitario unificato della Poesia Italiana*; not in Bruni, [1992], who records all known manuscripts and editions of the works by Cornazzano). However, it can be compared to two works securely attributed to Antonio

Cornazzano, also composed in chapters of "terzine" or "terza rima" and written in honor of Pietro Avogadro and Bartholomeo Colleoni, who were both brothers-in-arms of Antonio Martinengo, all three of whom were allied to Venice who ruled over Bergamo and Brescia since 1427.

The first is his *Vita di Pietro Avogadro* (*Proemium*, followed by eight chapters), written after 1466 and before 1471. The presentation copy of this manuscript is in Brescia, Biblioteca Civica Queriniana, MS. B. VII. 13. (see Bruni, 1992, pp. 90-91: "L'opera scritta in terza rime ... narra principalmente le imprese del nobile Pietro Avogadro in difesa di Brescia et del dominio veneto nel Quattrocento. La data di composizione dovrebbe risalire ad un periodo non molto posteriore alla partenza del Cornazzano da Milano nel 1466, quando, come dichiara nella *Vita del Colleoni*, si rifugio nel Territorio Veneto soggiornando forse anche a Brescia, o comunque nel Bresciano e particolarmente ad Asola, "terra che m'è dell'amor suo stata si humana." Il tono fortemente pro veneziano dell'opera si riallaccia a quello che manifesterà di lì a pochi anni nel capitolo sulla presa di Negroponte che fa parte della *Vita di Cristo* completata nel 1470-1471).

The second is the *Vita di Bartholomeo Colleoni*. Interestingly Colleoni was also part of the Martinengo family (see Paecht and Alexander, *Illuminated Manuscripts in the Bodleian*, II, no. 125, owned by Bartholomaeus Martiningus de Coleonibus, conte di Malpaga]. This text was composed after Cornazzano's stay in the castle of Malpaga, c. 1468-1469, and was likely composed between 1473 and 1474 according to Crevatin (Bergamo, Biblioteca Civica Angelo Mai, Cassaf. 2.4 described in Gatti Perer and Marubbi, 1995, no. 48, pp. 143-145; edited by Crevatin, 1992, pp. 105-110).

Finally, another work by Cornazzano composed during his Brescian years (also referred to as the "periodo veneziano" by Bruni, pp. 46-47) is dated precisely 1472; this is the *Vita di Cristo* dedicated to Venice "Ad Serenissimum Venetorum Dominium...De fide & vita Christi Antonii Cornaciani Placentini..." (Brescia, Biblioteca Civica Queriniana, MS. A. VI. 24, ff. 1-68v).

#### LITERATURE

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

On the Martinengo family:

<http://www.saveriani.bs.it/S.Cristo/francese/sancristo.htm#LA%20FAMILLE%20MARTINENGO>

<http://www.condottieridiventura.it/condottieri/m/1019%20%20%20%20%20%20ANTONIO%20DA%20MARTINENGO%20%20Di%20Padernello.htm>