

## *LES ENLUMINURES, LTD*

*Les Enluminures*

2970 North Lake Shore Drive 11B  
Chicago, Illinois 60657

tel. 1-773-929-5986  
fax. 1-773-528-3976  
chicago@lesenluminures.com

Le Louvre des Antiquaires  
2 place du Palais-Royal  
75001 Paris

tél : 33 1 42 60 15 58  
fax : 33 1 40 15 00 25  
info@lesenluminures.com

FIESSO, FRANCESCO DA, *Liber de visitatione*  
In Latin, illuminated manuscript on parchment  
Italy, Emilia-Romagna [Reggio nell'Emilia or Ferrara], c. 1460.

59 folios, on parchment, complete, mostly in quires of 10 (collation: i<sup>8</sup>, ii<sup>10</sup>, iii<sup>10</sup>, iv<sup>10</sup>, v<sup>10</sup>, vi<sup>10</sup>), written in a very fine and elegant rounded humanistic script, by a single scribe, on up to 26 long lines (justification: 80 x 140 mm) vertical catchwords, prickings still visible, ruled in leadpoint, opening rubric in pale red ink traced in capital letters, other rubrics also in pale red ink, numerous initials in red slightly set off to the left, 2 to 4-line high initials in highly burnished gold on pink, blue, green or orange grounds with yellow or white tracery ornamentation (some initials parti-colored), THREE-QUARTER BRACKET BORDER (fol. 18v), with white vine-stem against bright blue ground and colored infill of red and green [ornamentation left incomplete, providing insight on painter's technique and progression], LARGE 6-LINE HIGH OPENING INITIAL AND TWO-SIDE BORDER (fol. 1), initial painted in gold with white vine-stem (bianchi girari) ornamentation extending in the left and upper margin, vines reserved against colorful blue, orange, pink and green grounds highlighted with white speckling, gold besants and hair-line stem, initial inhabited with a bear-like figure and border animated with a green parrot, some marginal annotations in red ink, traces of previous bookplates on upper inner pastedown, manuscript in very fresh condition, a few wormholes on first five folios, never affecting text. Bound in a nineteenth-century full rigid vellum over pasteboards, back sewn on 4 thongs, spine decorated with floral and foliate motifs painted in black and red, title gilt, arms of city of Geneva painted on bottom of spine, double frames on boards traced in black and red ink, with four painted black fleurons at each corner of the inner frame. Dimensions 220 x 135 mm

Attractive, beautifully illuminated and written humanist manuscript, the only surviving copy of an unusual text written expressly for the important bishop Battista Marco Pallavicino by a local historian and archpriest, Francesco da Fiesso, although probably not the dedication copy which is now lost. The illumination, consistent with Ferrarese decoration, is of high quality but remains partially unfinished.

### PROVENANCE

1. Francesco Fiessi or da Fiesso, author of the present treatise, was archpriest of Bondeno (near Ferrara). See Potthast who refers to F. Fiessi in *Repertorium...* as the author of

a chronicle for Ferrara (*Diario Ferrarese*): "Francesco da Fiesso. Diario Ferrarese dall'anno 1409 all'anno 1502 ab. anon. auctore forsitan Francesco da Fiesso, notario, vulgari sermone exaratum; continent notitiae ad historiam civitatis Ferrariae." The work is dedicated to Battista Marco Pallavicino, son of Antonio, lord of Ravanero and from an important Parma family, bishop of Reggio Emilia in 1444 (fol. 1); see Eubel, C., *Hierarchia catholica Medii Aevi*, tome II, p. 222.

3. Comte Chandon de Briailles, Champagne, France, his bookplate pasted on front pastedown "Au Cte Chandon de Briailles. Mss. 47." This is probably Raoul Chandon de Briailles (1850-1908), historian and wine merchant (founder of the Chandon de Briailles mark of champagne), part of whose rich library was bequeathed to the Médiathèque at Épernay--20,000 items concerning the history of Epernay and wine, incunables, and books from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries--and part passed on through the family to his heirs Comtes Henri and François Chandon de Briailles.

#### TEXT

ff. 1-3, Fiessus, Franciscus, *Liber de visitatione*; rubric [Dedication to Battista Marco Pallavicino, bishop of Reggio nell'Emilia]: *Ad reverendum in Christo Patrem & Dominum Baptistam Marchionem Palavicinum episcopum reginensium et principem ac sanctissimi Domini nostri papae refedarium Francisci Fiessi de visitatione liber incipit. De visitatione*; incipit, "Quam fuerit utilis quamque necessaria venerande presul ad bene beateque vivendum illa visitationum institutio que singulis annis a sanctissimis patribus de una quaque ecclesia facienda maturo consilio decreta est rerum ipsa experientia declarat..."; explicit, "[...] cui me commendo";

ff. 3v-4v, "Antequam latiore visitationis materiam de variis locis...";

ff. 4v-5, rubric, *Quid sit visitatio*; incipit, "Juxta premissum igitur ordinem...";

ff. 5-7, rubric, *Quis possit visitare & qualis debeat esse visitor*; incipit, "Videndum est igitur secundo quis possit...";

ff. 7-11v, rubric, *Que persone sive loca debeant visitari*; incipit, "Quero itaque tertio...";

ff. 11v-14v, rubric, *Quid & quale sit officium visitoris & qualiter exerceri debeat*; incipit, "Quarto loco sequebatur...";

ff. 15-18v, rubric, *Quinto: quando et quotiens fieri debeat visitatio & que preambula sint necessaria ad inquisitionem causa visitationis faciendam*; incipit, "Quinta tractandum est...";

ff. 18v-20, rubric, *Sexto que sint capitula super quibus visitor debet inquirere*; incipit, "In superiori proxima parte...";

- ff. 20-25, rubric, *Que debeant inquiri ab archiepiscopis de personis episcoporum suffraganeorum suorum;* incipit, "Cognita differentia inter patriarchas...";
- f. 25, rubric, *Que ab episcopis & aliis visitantibus de personis clericorum inferiorum & laicorum subclitorum suorum inquirenda sunt;* incipit, "Expeditis his que ab archiepiscopis...";
- ff. 25-26v, rubric, *De his ergo querendum est. De laicis;* incipit, "Quo ad laicos querendum est de vita...";
- f. 26v, rubric, *De clericis;* incipit, "Jam tempus adest...";
- ff. 26v-28, rubric, *De personis clericorum;* incipit, "Quo ad personas autem...";
- ff. 28-30v, rubric, *Et hec de personis & eorum honestate sufficiant. De officiis clericorum;* incipit, "De pertinentibus ad personas...";
- ff. 30v-31, rubric, *De articulis fidei;* incipit, "Vigesimo septimo interrogetur...";
- ff. 31-31v, rubric, *De .X. preceptis legis;* incipit, "Vigesimo octavo interrogetur...";
- f. 31v, rubric, *De sacramentis ecclesie;* incipit, "Vigesimo nono interrogetur...";
- ff. 31v-33, *De Baptismo;* incipit, "Verum quia baptismus...";
- f. 33, rubric, *De confirmatione;* incipit, "De confirmatione vero peti non debet...";
- ff. 33-34, rubric, *De penitentia;* incipit, "De sacramento penitentie diligenter...";
- ff. 34-34v, rubric, *De eucharitia;* incipit, "Quadragesimo quinto de eucharistia...";
- ff. 34v-36v, rubric, *De extrema unctione;* incipit, "De sacramento extreme unctionis de quo habetur .lxxxv. ...";
- ff. 36v-37v, rubric, *De matrimonio;* incipit, "Circa matrimonium autem quod est maris...";
- ff. 37v-38v, rubric, *De ordine;* incipit, "De sacramento vero ordinis satis supra...";
- ff. 38v-40v, rubric, *De beneficiis clericorum;* incipit, "Supra in .c. iam tempus adest...";

ff. 40v-45, rubric, *Qualiter in recipiendis procurationibus visitator se gerere debeat*; incipit, "Septimo loco principali nunc...";

ff. 45-51v, rubric, *Constitutio seu extravagans Benedicti .xii. de procurationibus a visitatis exigendis & de subsidiis charitativis*; incipit, "[B]enedictus piscopus servus servitorum Dei..."; dated: "[...] Datum Avinionensis quinto kalendas januariis pontifici nostri anno secundo"; explicit, "Et hec de procurationibus iam longo sermone recitata sufficiant. Nunc vero octavo loco sequitur iuxta ordinem permissum ut de natura & potestate Massariorum tractetur";

f. 52, rubric, *Octavo dicitur de natura & potestate Massariorum qui constituuntur in ecclesiis per dioceses & quod alio nomine hiconomi nuncupantur*; incipit, "Quoniam in diversis ecclesiis secundum earum consuetudinem quae est optima...";

ff. 52v-53, rubric, *Qui sint Massarii*; incipit, "Primo itaque videndum est...";

ff. 53-53v, rubric, *Quis debeat constitui Massarius*; incipit, "Secundo vero convenienter queritur quis possit constitui Massarius...";

ff. 53v-55, rubric, *Qualiter & a quibus constituatur Massarius*; incipit, "Tertio autem queritur...";

ff. 55-55v, rubric, *Quid & quale sit officium Massariorum*; incipit, "Nunc quarto & ultimo loco...";

ff. 55v-57, rubric, *Nono & ultimo quis teneatur ad fabricam ecclesiarum & de [...] ad eam pertinente*; incipit, "Quoniam episcopi providentia...";

ff. 57-57v, no rubric; incipit, "Omnes rationes que ad officium..."; explicit, "Valeat semper tua R. D cui me quam plurimum commendo. Finis";

f. 58, *Letter of Battista Marco Palavicino, bishop of Reggio to the author F. Fiessi, dated 12 october 1460*; incipit, "Baptista Marchio Palavicinus episcopus Reginensis immeritus venerando ac excellenti juris pontificii doctori D. Francisco Fiesso archipresbitero plebis de Bondeno salutem & synceram in Domino caritatem. Accepi mi Francisce opusculum tuum in quo maxime oblectatus sum, tum ipsius elegantiam & varias subtilitates per ingenio tuo admirans tum animi tui in me fidem & dilectionem plurimam amplexatus. Pro qua re tibi immortales habeo gratias. Maximo enim me onere levasti tuis istis lucubratiunculis ne longius mihi inquirendum sit cum injuncti mihi officii pastoralis non facilis cura habenda fuerit. Itaque [...] bonis avibus & cum his maiora aggredere. Ut quod saluti animarum cedit tuo labore ut consuevi adjutus facile in multis occupationibus intelligere possim ad instructionem populi mihi commissi. Vale in Domino amantissime frater. Regii .xi. october MCCCCLX [1460]".

Divided in thirty chapters, Fiesso's treatise is concerned with the order and purpose of the bishop's visits to cloisters. It begins with "What is a visitation," followed by "Which person should be visited," "What is the prerogative of visitors," "The frequency of visits," "Questions to be asked of the laity and the clerics," and continues with chapters on the Articles of Faith and the Sacraments. A final section of six chapters treats the nature and the functions of the "massarius," a lay official who governs the agricultural terrain of the cloisters.

## DECORATION

Compare the white-vine decoration in Ferrarese codices, e.g., Modena, Bibl. Estense Universitaria, MSS lat. 145 and It. 101 (Iotti, 1997, pp. 290, 294). Further research is necessary to situate the manuscript precisely in the artistic milieu of Ferrara.

## LITERATURE

[Fiessi, Francesco], *Diario ferrarese dal 1409 sino al 1502 di autori incerti*, ed. G. Pardi, in Muratori, L. A., *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, 24, 1738, pp. 173-408.

Iotti, Roberta, ed. *Gli Estense, prima parte, La Corte di Ferrara* (exhibition), Biblioteca Estense Universitaria di Modena, 12 dicembre 1997-31 marzo 1998, Modena, 1997.

"Pallavicini (Pallavicino)," *Enciclopedia italiana di scienze, lettere et arti*, Rome, 1935, vol. 26, pp. 122-124.

Pallavicino, P. *Notizie sulla famiglia dei P. dell' Emilia*, Florence, 1911.

Potthast, A., *Repertorium fontium historiae Medii aevi. Fontes [...] primum ab Augusto Potthast digestum, nunc cura collegii historicorum e pluribus nationibus emendatum et auctum...*, tome, IV, Romae, 1976.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

On Bondeno and Francesco Fiesso, author of the *Diario Ferrarese*:

<http://spfm.unipv.it/zanella/Bondeno/Bondeno.html>

<http://spfm.unipv.it/zanella/Bondeno/Bondeno06.html>