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Life of St. Walter of Pontoise
In Latin, manuscript on paper
France, c. 1475-1500 (?)

i (paper) + 6 leaves, modern foliation in pencil, upper, outer corner, which includes the flyleaf as f. 1, earlier foliation in pen numbers the first folio as f. 3, one quire of six leaves, no signatures or catchwords, written below the top line in a good hybrida script in thirty long lines, with the outer bounding lines in ink (some extending partly into the margins), and the remaining horizontal rules in lead, (justification 133 x 87-85 mm.), copied on paper (watermark, partially obscured, similar to Briquet 1655: Rouen, 1477, Paris, 1480, Anvers, 1481, Bellebranche, 1493), majuscules in text stroked with red, red paragraph marks, four-line plain red initial at the beginning of the text, text is very legible and in excellent condition, with some dirt in the margins (especially f. 2), and a small fragment of paper torn away, bottom, inside corner. One quire, once crudely tacked into stiff yellow-brown Middle Hill boards; covers are now completely detached along spine, and fragile sewing is tacked into the covers at one point only. Dimensions 178 x 132 mm.

This small-format quire preserves the text of the life of the eleventh-century Saint Walter of Pontoise. The Bollandists edited this life in the seventeenth century in the *Acta Sanctorum*, but it is preserved in only two other manuscript copies, both in Paris. This manuscript is the only copy of the text listed in the Schoenberg database of auction sales.

PROVENANCE

Written in France in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, as indicated by the script and the watermark; the watermark is very similar to Briquet 1655 (armoires compliquées où les 1 et 4 sont a la Fleur de lis, aux 2 et 3 au dauphin); varieties of this watermark are listed by Briquet from Northern France in the last quarter of the century.

Belonged to Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872; his manuscript 4337. Verso of front flyleaf, the famous stamp from Phillipps' library, with the number recorded in ink below; also small printed label and number recorded in another hand in ink on f. 2, in ink, "Phillipps MSS 4337." Bought from Thorpe (old sale number 4439 on flyleaf "in quodam catalogo," added in Phillipps' hand in pencil). Initials of Thomas Fitzroy Fenwick (1856-1938), the grandson of Sir Thomas Phillipps, December 1893, at top right corner of last page. Phillipps Sale, London, Sotheby's, March 6, 1895, lot. 1230. Sir Thomas Phillipps was probably the greatest manuscript collector the world has ever known. By the end of his life his collection contained tens of thousands of manuscripts. He

was famous for rescuing manuscripts that were regarded as valueless scrap and wastepaper; this small fragment may owe its preservation to such an action.

Sir Clive Coates (1879-1971), of Helperby Hall, North Yorkshire, with his book label "CC" on the inside front pastedown; he married Lady Celia Crewe-Milne in 1946, and changed his surname to Milne-Coates; sale by his executors at Sotheby's, London, 24 June 1986, lot 71.

TEXT

[f. 1rv, blank flyleaf];

f. 2, *De sancto Waltero abbate et confessor. Beatus Walterus in ambianensium finibus territorio minacensi [sic] pago qui ... tenebantur gauisi sunt sibi sancti huius suffragium valuisse. Explicit vita sancti Walteri abbatis et confessoris.* (Ed. AASS, April I, col. 754-757.)

[ff. 6-7v, blank but ruled].

The Life of Saint Walter of Pontoise encapsulates the struggle between the monarchy and the Church at the height of the investiture controversy in eleventh century France. Saint Walter was born in Andainville in Picardy in Northeastern France, and taught rhetoric and philosophy. He entered the monastery at Rebais-en-Brie, but was later chosen as the first abbot of the Benedictine Monastery of St. Martin near Pontoise by King Philip I (reigned 1060-1108). He objected on the grounds of simony (the control of a church office by a secular ruler), and tried, unsuccessfully and repeatedly, to resign. His feast day is April 8; he died in around 1095 (the year of his death is recorded variously as 1092, 1095, and 1099).

His life was edited in the seventeenth-century in the great edition of Saints' Lives compiled by the Bollandists, the *Acta Sanctorum* (April I, col. 754-757). It seems to survive in only two manuscripts in addition to this one, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 13776, and Paris, Bibliothèque Mazarine, MS 1737, f. 199. See *Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis*, ed. Socii Bollandiani (Brussels 1901), pp 1269-1270, number 8798. Only the Paris copies are cited in Drumm's study (below), which is not itself a much-needed new edition.

LITERATURE

Acta sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur : vel à catholicis scriptoribus celebrantur quae ex latinis & graecis aliarumque gentium antiquis monumentis collegit, digessit, notis illustravit Ioannes Bollandus, Societatis Iesu theologus ... operam et studium contulit Godefridus Henschenius ..., Antwerp, 1643- 1670.

Bibliotheca hagiographica latina antiquae et mediae aetatis, ediderunt Socii Bollandiani, Brussels, Socii Bollandiani, 1898-1901).

Drumm, Joachim. *Walter von Pontoise--Ein Leben in wachsenden Ringen.* Mit einem Nachw. von Walter Kasper, Ostfildern 1993.

Munby, A. N. L., *Portrait of an Obsession. The life of Sir Thomas Phillipps, the World's Greatest Book Collector*, London, Constable, 1967.

Thomas, Alan G., *Great Books and Book Collectors*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1975 ("Great Book Collectors," 261-265).

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Catholic Online, Saints and Angels, "St. Walter of Pontoise"

http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=596

Walter of Pontoise

http://www.bbkl.de/w/walter_v_poi.shtml

Internet Medieval Sourcebook: Saints' Lives

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/sbook3.html#int>

The ORB: Online Reference Book for Medieval Studies. Hagiography

<http://www.the-orb.net/encyclop/religion/hagiography/hagindex.html>

Société de Bollandistes. Christian Hagiography

<http://www.kbr.be/~socboll/>