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[Miscellany] including *Notabilia biblie et aliorum sapientum*; *Index librorum Bibliae*; Rules of fencing; [*Dies Aegyptiaci*] etc.

In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment

Italy, perhaps Tuscany (Florence?), c. 1425-1450

157 ff., preceded and followed by a single parchment flyleaf, apparently complete (collation: i^s, ii^o, iii-xiv^s, xv^o, xvi-xvii¹⁰, xviii^s, xix-xx^o), written in a gothic cursive script, by at least three different hands, in brown ink (some ink fading, but generally legible), in a single column, parchment ruled in plummet (justification: 80 x 55 mm, but with text often overlapping ruling), some catchwords, contemporary foliation in Arabic numerals in upper righthand corner (doubled by a modern foliation preferred here), some paragraph marks in bright red, some capitals or letters touched in red. Bound in contemporary Italian blind-tooled brown calf over pasteboard, sides with triple blind fillets, central panel tooled with intersecting semi-circles filled with small circles, lacking clasp, chased brass catchplate on lower cover, spine sewn on two raised thongs (Binding scuffed with covers a bit worn, upper board completely detached, but manuscript and binding overall preserved in their original condition). Dimensions 110 x 80 mm.

Once part of the famous Fondo Sessoriano collection (Cistercians of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, in Rome), later owned by Thomas Phillipps, this uncommon manuscript consists primarily of a collection of biblical and patristic quotes organized thematically. The manuscript likely served as a useful "Vade mecum" probably for a letter-writer in need of the perfect quote. Unedited and in its original binding, the codex survives as a wholly intact example of texts compiled by a lay person for his personal use, prefaced by an index and a perpetual calendar and including a rare T-O map.

PROVENANCE

1. Script and some internal evidence all suggest an Italian origin for this manuscript, likely copied and used in Tuscany, in or near Florence. There is a reference to a certain Giovanni degli Albizzi (1385-1411), protonotario apostolico: "Reverendo in christo patri domino Johanni de Albitiis..." (fol. 157). The Albizzi family was a Florentine family based in Arezzo and rivals of the Medici and Alberti families. They were at the center of the Florentine oligarchy from 1382 to the rise of the Medici in 1434. Also noteworthy is a reference to a Canon of a church in Florence: "[...] dominis chanonicis et capitulo ecclesie florentine..." (fol. 157).
2. Former Sessoriani Collection, Cistercians of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, in Rome. The Cistercian monks of Santa Croce were the first owners of the famous collection "Sessoriana," founded by their abbot Ilarione Rancati (1594-1663), theologian, jurist and Orientalist. At the death of the abbot, the Fondo Sessoriano counted 171 manuscripts, all of great rarity. The

collection was later entrusted to and increased by Gioacchino Besozzi (1679-1755, cardinal in 1753), who also described the manuscripts in a catalogue. The somewhat "wandering" manuscripts of the Fondo Sessoriano left the Cistercian foundation of Santa Croce in 1810 for the Biblioteca Vaticana, then were housed in another Cistercian house, that of S. Bernardo alle Terme. It is in this last depository that an important theft took place, circa 1821, an inside job probably tied to the Roman antiquarian G. B. Petrucci. Amongst the stolen manuscripts, a number were sold by John Thomas Payne and Henry Foss to Thomas Phillipps in 1848: former Cessoriani manuscripts were to receive Phillipps shelfmarks between 12260-12313 (see below). Eventually, the remaining Cessoriani manuscripts were transferred to the Biblioteca nazionale di Roma between 1875 and 1885, where they are still housed today (on the Fondo Cessoriano, see Palma, 1980, "Cenni di storia dei codici sessoriani", pp. XIX-XXXII; see also Jemolo and Palma, 1984, "Sessoriani dispersi"). Today, the Fondo Sessoriano counts 590 manuscripts, mostly medieval, from the Cistercian monastery of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, now housed in the Biblioteca nazionale centrale di Roma based in the Collegio Romano till 1975, now in Castro Pretorio.

The present manuscript is one of the manuscripts included on the list of "membra disiecta" of the Fondo Sessoriano, which records those manuscripts that were once part of the Cistercian collection of S. Croce in Gerusalemme, before they went astray (this particular manuscript, former Phillipps MS. 12309 (see below), is included amongst the "codici non localizzati" in V. Jemolo and M. Palma, *Sessoriani dispersi*, 1984, p. 35, no. 16). The manuscript figures in G. Besozzi's 18th century catalogue (Rome, Biblioteca nazionale, Sess. 488 (2057)) as no. 2. It also figures in another 18th century *Indice* (Rome, Biblioteca nazionale, Sess. 490 (2112)), no. 317 and finally was included in a recension of "missing" manuscripts compiled by Alberico Amatori (librarian between 1835-1840 and 1845-1850) at the end of his catalogue (Amatori, no. 1) (Rome, Biblioteca nazionale, Sess. 534 [2121], p. 565). Over the years, certain of the Sessoriani manuscripts have been reintegrated into the collection in Rome, while others were acquired by other institutions (Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek and others, for a complete recension see Jemolo and Palma, 1984, p. 21ff.) and a few, such as the present manuscript, are still in private collections or resurface on the market (a list of "codici ritrovati" and "codici non localizzati" (65 codices in all) was established in Jemolo and Palma, 1984, p. 19 et sq).

3. Sir Thomas Phillipps (1792-1872), as noted in brown ink on back of the upper board: "Phillipps MS 12309". Sir Thomas Phillipps was an English antiquary and famous book collector who amassed the largest collection of manuscript material in the 19th century. Fittingly self-described as "vello-maniac," he collected over 100,000 manuscripts, and in doing so nearly bankrupted himself and his family. The present manuscript was sold in the 27 April-2 May 1903 sale at Sotheby's (see *Bibliotheca Phillippica...*, London, Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 1903, no. 151: "This manuscript appears to have belonged to some church at Florence" [p. 19]). Phillipps is known to have owned quite a number of Sessoriani manuscripts which he acquired as early as 1827 (Phillipps 2701, acquired from Thomas Thorpe, in London), again in 1833 (Phillipps 6546-6548, acquired by John Thomas Payne through G. B. Petrucci) and finally in Rome in 1848, where Phillipps bought MSS 12260-12313, of which at least 22 were former Sessoriani manuscripts. The present manuscript with its shelfmark Phillipps 12309, was part of

this last acquisition realized through Payne and Henry Foss (see Palma, 1980, pp. XXI-XXII; see also Jemolo and Palma, 1984, p. 19 and p. 21).

TEXT

ff. 1-5v, Table of contents: "In nomine domini nostri Yhesu. Incipiunt rubrice notabilium biblie et aliorum sapientum. Primo ad commendandum officiales [f. 9] / Ad reprehendum quando se male gesserunt in officio [f. 11] / Ad commendandum iustos et iudicia regis et officiales [f. 12]...";

f. 6, Small T-O *mappa mundi* included in a perpetual calendar for the years 1424 to 1444, preceded by heading: "amargo (?) aetis mundi per calendarium de mensis sempiternis";

In the T-O map, the disc of the world is divided into three zones separated by a T-shaped Mediterranean Sea, with Asia uppermost, and Europe and Africa in the lower two sections [this T-O map was first printed in Isidorus of Seville, *Etymologiae*, [Augsburg], 1472];

ff. 6v-8, blank;

f. 8v, Added inscription (15th c.): "Ede cibo venereque certant animalia queque / Propter aidum escam et cortum omnia animalia certant", followed by a long inscription in a different hand, now effaced;

ff. 9-103, *Notabilia biblie et aliorum sapientum* [Notable quotes from the Bible and other wise words], heading, *In nomine domini amen notabilium biblie et aliorum sapientum et primo ad commendandum officialem*; incipit, "Execielis tertio .c°. [Ezechiel, 3]..";

The majority of the present manuscript contains a selection of quotes from the Old and New Testaments, as well as some Patristic citations, chosen and arranged according to well-defined themes and occasions, such as the reception of a new king: "In adventu Regis" (f. 2); consolation following the destruction of a city: "Ad consolandum de civitate destructa vel desolata..." (f. 2); glee following a victory over one's enemy: "Ad gaudium faciendum de victoriam hostium..." (f. 2); reception of the legate of a king: "Ad recipiendum legatum regis" (f. 2v); consolation for all tribulations and persecutions: "Ad consolandum de omni tribulatione et persecutione" (f. 3); plea for the liberation of imprisoned friends: "Ad impetrandum relaxationem amicorum detentorum" (f. 5v). Such a selection of quotes allowed for easy reference when composing a speech or letters for specific occasions. The pocket-size format of this manuscript, with its other practical components (perpetual calendar, "bad-luck days" etc.), allowed for easy transportation and reference, making it a sort of ready *vademecum* for the speech, letter, or possibly for a sermon-writer.

ff. 103v-104, *Index librorum Bibliae* [Index of the books contained in the Bible], explicit, "Finito libro[rum] biblie deo gratias amen";

ff. 104-108, Rules of fencing heading, *Hec sunt guardiae in dimicatione videlicet* [Here begin the postures of combat]; incipit, "Si magister in cauda longa, dissipulus in cruce / Si magister in alto, dissipulus in stoccho / Si magister in spatula sinistra, dissipulus in destra / Si magister in guardia falconis, dissipulus in sub ascella [...];

ff. 104v-108, Selection of Psalms, choice attributed to Saint Hilarius, incipit, "Beatus Ylarius episcopus extraxit hos psalmos..."; explicit, "[...] Finito libro sit laus semper christo. Amen amen";

f. 108v, heading, "Dictis de iustitia et iure";

f. 109, blank;

ff. 109v-111, *Dies Aegyptiaci* [Egyptian Days], heading, "Infrascripti sunt dies ytiachi et infelices quos greces dixerunt dies malos offe in hiis diebus non vendas non emas nisi aliquorm edificium facias nisi incipias iter nisi vestes novas induas...isti sunt .lx. [60] dies .xxiiii. [24] sunt ytiachi alii sunt infelices. Augurior decies...";

The unlucky or unpropitious *Dies Aegyptiaci*, or "Egyptian days," were originally two in each month. This superstitious belief goes back to before the third century A.D., and was well known throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, although belief in them was regularly condemned by the Church. On many medieval calendars, certain days were marked "Dies Aegyptiacus" or initials "D.E.," also known as "dies maledicti." Three sets of these days are known, with the oldest set of two days in each month, as is the case here. These days were held to be unlucky for beginning any enterprise (for traveling, for buying and selling, for building etc.). The earliest reference to them is found in the *Fasti* of Furius Dionysius Philocalus (published in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinorum*, I, pt. 1-2, 256. The Egyptian days were condemned by a number of Christian authors, such as Augustine who denounces their observance: "[...] Our congregation is full of people who obtain the times for their activities from astrologers. Moreover, these people often do not hesitate to warn us as well against starting work on a building or other structure on one of those days they call 'Egyptian'..." (Commentary on Galatians, 4: 11), and are discussed by such authors as Petrus Comestor in his *Historia Scholastica* (*Liber Exodi*, c. 24) or again by William Durandus, in his *Rationale divinorum officium* (Book 8). They are discussed in Du Cange, *Glossarium*, "Dies Aegyptiaci," vol. III, pp. 106-107; see also R. Steele, "Dies Aegyptiaci," in *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 1919, volume XIII, pp. 108-121.

ff. 111v-115v, [Continued] *Notabilia biblie et aliorum sapientum* [Notable quotes from the Bible and other wise words],

ff. 116-116v, blank;

ff. 117-157, [Continued] *Notabilia biblie et aliorum sapientum* [Notable quotes from the Bible and other wise words],

ff. 157-157v, Added notes, apparently protocol or formulae of address to notables, including reference (mentioned above in Provenance) to Giovanni degli Albizzi (1385-1411), protonotario apostolico: "Reverendo in christo patri domino Johanni de Albitiis..." (f. 157).

This unusual collection of texts appears to be entirely unique. Related to Commonplace Books—unrelated texts gathered together by a single author and composed for his own use—the present

manuscript, truly a "Vade mecum," was likely written out by a lay person for personal use. The writer-scribe could well have been a Tuscan speech- or letter-writer. The author's selection of themes and occasions provided in the index (see above, ff. 2-3) points toward such a use. Other features that confirm that someone compiled the manuscript for his personal use include the small size, the inclusion of the unedited short text on fencing, the addition of rules for protocol, and the listing of the "bad-luck" days. The T-O map is quite unusual. Such compilations are still poorly studied, because they do not fit easily into any single genre of works. None of the texts in the present manuscript can be readily identified in standard resources of incipits, so they appear to be unedited.

LITERATURE

Du Cange, Charles du Fresne. *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis...*, Paris, Librairie des sciences et des arts, 1937-1938 (ed. Henschel and Favre), vol. III.

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Munby, A.N.L. *Portrait of an Obsession: The Life of Sir Thomas Phillipps, the World's Greatest Book Collector*, New York, 1967.

Palma, M. *Sessoriana. Materiali per la storia dei manoscritti appartenuti alla biblioteca romana di S. Croce in Gerusalemme* [Sussidi eruditi, 32], Rome, 1980.

[Phillipps]. *Bibliotheca Phillipica: Catalogue of a Further Portion of...Manuscripts...of the Late Sir Thomas Phillipps...which will be sold by auction...on Monday 27th Day of April 1903...*, London, 1903, no. 151.

ONLINE RESOURCES

On Santa Croce in Gerusalemme:

<http://www.domussessoriana.it/index.php?pag=storia>

Article by R. Steele, "Dies Aegyptiaci," in Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine (1919):

<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=2067117>

Biblioteca nazionale Centrale di Roma:

<http://www.bncrm.librari.beniculturali.it/>

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