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[Anonymous], Collection of Miracles of the Virgin and Exempla
 In Latin, decorated manuscript on parchment
 Northern Italy, c. 1375-1400

199 ff., missing last two leaves (collation: i-xix10, xx8 [of 10, missing last 2 leaves of quire]), catchwords, written in a rounded gothic script (*littera textualis*), in brown ink on up to 31 long lines (justification: 126 x 77 mm), parchment ruled in plummet, catchwords, rubrics in red, running titles and chapter numerals in red, numerous capitals touched in red, paragraph marks in alternating red or blue, initials in alternating red or blue with opposing penwork, opening initial in blue with more elaborate filigree penwork in red and blue, some contemporary or near-contemporary annotations and/or corrections. Bound in later (late 16th c.?) dark brown calf over wood boards, covers with double frame composed of triple blind fillets, back sewn on three raised thongs, blind fillets in the compartments, parchment pastedowns from late 16th c. notarial documents copied in pale brown ink (Some staining to parchment, strip of parchment missing at the bottom of fol. 195 [no loss of text]; first leaf a bit rubbed; last 20 leaves with marginal damage to parchment (but never hindering legibility)). Dimensions 175 x 115 mm.

This manuscript contains a collection of religious and edifying tales or *exempla*, preceded by a group of Marian stories, widely used in popular preaching. Taken from a variety of sources, the *exempla* are organized and classified thematically to allow for easy reference and use. By an unknown compiler, this collection is apparently recorded in only two other manuscripts and has never been studied or edited. Collections of *exempla* are not common in the trade and often yield exciting potential for research and editing.

PROVENANCE

1. Stylistic and codicological elements all suggest an Italian origin for this manuscript, most likely northern. Dating the present manuscript can only depend on paleographical comparison with other dated manuscripts of Northern Italian origin such as Paris, BnF MS lat. 8687, Colutus Salutati, *De nobilitate legum et medicinae*, dated 1399; Paris, BnF MS lat. 6342, Cicero, *Opera*, dated 1374-1376; Paris, BnF, MS lat. 6444, Henricus Herefordiensis, *Catena aurea* (manuscript belonged to the Dukes of Milan in Pavia), dated 1374. Further research and comparisons might yield a better dating and localization for this manuscript.
2. Erased inscription, still partially legible: "Liber Felipe Gothiez", indicating a Spanish ownership?

TEXT

ff. 1- 33, Collection of Miracles of the Virgin, heading, *De miraculis beate marie*; rubric, *Incipit principale capitulum hujus operculi est de miraculis beate virginis. Incipit prima divisio habens .vii. capitula dividitur .ii. primam capitulum in tres divisiones*; incipit, "Fuit in toletana urbe quidam archiepiscopus qui vocabatur hyldefonsus religiosus valde et bonis operibus in Tornatus..." [recorded in Mussafia (1887), I, 23-24 [937-938]; Poncelet (1902), no. 590; BHL, 5357]; before-last Miracle, incipit, "In territorio lugdunensi vir quidam cum coniuge sua filiam..." [recorded in Poncelet (1902), no. 867; Isnard, *Miracles* (1887), 114-116]; incipit of last Miracle: "Istud quoniam non est o mittendum de egnes..."; explicit, "[...] cum patre et spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in secula seculorum. Amen" [this last Miracle apparently not in Poncelet (1902)];

ff. 33-39, Exempla relating to the Holy Cross, heading, *De sanctu cruce*; rubric, *Secundum capitulum principale quod est de cruce et eius virtute habet capitula .xvi.*; incipit, "Legitur in libro primo tripartite hystorie quod cum quidam tyrannus rome nomine maxentius adulteria cum multis matronis...";

ff. 39-42, Exempla relating to the Angels, heading, *De bonis angelis*; incipit, "Legitur in vitis patrum quod quidam vir magnus de sanctis senioribus...";

ff. 42-61, Exempla relating to Saints, heading, *De sanctis*; incipit, "Beatus gregorius papa narrat super omnia levangelia si quis vult venire post me...";

ff. 61-66, Exempla relating to the Church, heading, *De ecclesia cum adiunctis*; incipit, "Legitur in .vii. ecclesia hystoria [...] de imperatore aureliano...";

ff. 66-70, Exempla relating to Faith, heading, *De fide*; incipit, "Legitur in .v. libro ecclesiastice hystorie de quadam puella nomine blandina...";

ff. 70-71, Exempla relating to Baptism, heading, *De baptesimo*; incipit, "In tripartita hystoria legitur vel .xi. Quod quidam iudeus cum esset paraliticus in lecto iacens et nulla ei medicina seu iudeorum oratio valere...";

ff. 71-74v, Exempla relating to the Eucharist, heading, *De eucharistia*; incipit, "Ut in dyalogi legitur vel quidam venerabilis episcopus cotidianum sacrificium offerens...";

ff. 74v-75, Exempla relating to Excommunication, heading, *De sacramentis de excommunicatione*; incipit, "Comes quidam sicut narrat beda libro .3....";

ff. 75-83, Exempla relating to Contrition, Confession and Good Behavior, heading, *De contritione, de confessione, de satisfactione*; incipit, "Paulus simplex discipulus beati antonii...";

ff. 83v-85, Exempla relating to Marriage, heading, *De matrimonio*; incipit, "Legitur in vita beati adriani martiris...";

ff. 85-86v, Exempla relating to the Decalogue (Ten commandments), heading, *De precepti decalogi*; incipit, "Legitur in tripartita hystoria...quod imperator theodosius...";

ff. 86v-90, Exempla relating to Humility, heading, *De humilitate*; incipit, "Legitur in vitis patrum quod interrogatus senex que esset humiltas maxima..."

ff. 90-92v, Exempla relating to Obedience, heading, *De obedientia*; incipit, "Legitur in vitis patrum quod quidam secularis receptus in frenni habuit filium..." ;

ff. 92v-94, Exempla relating to Charity and Peace (Concord), heading, *De caritate et concordia*; incipit, "Legitur in vitae patrum quod cum frater..." ;

ff. 94-97, Exempla relating to Patience, heading, *De patientia*; incipit, "Legitur in vitae patrum quod quidam commiserat..." ;

ff. 97-108v, Exempla on Compassion and Alms giving, heading, *De compassione et elemosina*; incipit, "Beda in .3. li[bro] anglicane hystorie refert quod oswaldus rex..." ;

ff. 108v-114v, Exempla on Prayer, heading, *De oratione*; incipit, "Legitur in vitis patrum quod interrogatus abbas qualiter est orandum..." ;

ff. 114v-116v, Exempla on the Active and Contemplative Life, heading, *De vita activa et contemplativa*; incipit, "Letania maior dicitur ad differentiam (?) minoris..." ;

ff. 116v-118v, Exempla relating to Fasting, heading, *De ieiunio*; incipit, "Legitur in vitis patrum quod quidam frater singularis abstinentie..." ;

ff. 118v-123v, Exempla relating to Chastity, heading, *De castitate*; incipit, "Legitur in vitis patrum de quadam puella..." ;

ff. 123v-127v, Exempla relating to Predication and the Word of God, heading, *De predicatoribus et verbo dei*; incipit, "Legitur in vitis patrum quod sanctus apollinus..." ;

ff. 128-131v, Exempla relating to Prelates, heading, *De prelati ecclesie*; incipit, "Legitur in .9. li[bro] tripartite hystorie...cum imperator theodosius..." ;

ff. 131v-132v, Exempla relating to Rulers, heading, *De principibus*; incipit, "Legitur in .xi. li[bro] tripartite hystorie...de theodosio quod ita sapiens fuit..." ;

ff. 132v-133v, Exempla relating to Lords and their Ministers, heading, *De dominis et eorum ministris*; incipit, " Legitur in .xi. li[bro] tripartite hystorie c. .4. quod eutropius consul habens dignitatem..." ;

ff. 133v-135v, Exempla relating to Devotion and Pilgrimage, heading, *De voto et peregrinatione*; incipit, "Legitur in vita sancti nicholai quod quidam vir cum uxore sua..." ;

ff. 135v-141, Exempla relating to Religion, heading, *De religione*; incipit, "Legitur in vita sancti Johannis ewangeliste quod duo ditissimi ephesiorum..." ;

ff. 141-149v, Exempla relating to the Death of the Righteous, heading, *De morte iustorum*; incipit, "Legitur in vita Iohannis...quod cum consuetudo laudabilis fidelium...";

ff. 149v-151, Exempla relating to Purgatory, heading, *De purgatorio*; incipit, "Beda in .4. li[bro] hystorie anglorum narrat quod quidam pater fam[ilias] in partibus northumbrorum...";

ff. 151-159, Exempla relating to the Devil and his Temptations, heading, *De dyavolo et temptationibus eius*; incipit, "Gregorius in sermo .li. dyalogorum narrat quod quidam religiosus solebat singulis annis...";

ff. 159-173v, Exempla relating to the Seven Sins, heading, *De .vii. criminalibus*; incipit, "Gregorius in .4. li[bro] dyalogorum narrat de quondam monacho qui magne opinionis...";

ff. 173v-184, Exempla relating to the Death of the Damned, heading, *De morte dampnandorum*, incipit, "Beda in .v. li[bro] ecclesiastice hystorie anglorum narrat quod quidam miles erat qui per industria exteriori placuit regi..."; explicit, "[...] in eudem civitatis episcopum unanimes elegerunt";

ff. 184-185, Prologue, rubric, *Incipit prologus in hoc opusculum*; incipit, "In hoc consequenti opusculo ordinantur in certis titulis...";

ff. 185-199, Table of contents (incomplete, wanting last two leaves).

This manuscript contains a fourteenth-century collection of *exempla*, consisting of miracles of the Virgin, and other tales derived from a variety of sources including Gregory of Tours's *Vitae Patrum* [Lives of the Church Fathers], Gregory the Great's *Dialogues* and his *Homilies*, Augustine's *City of God*, Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*, Eusebius of Caesarea's *Historia ecclesiastica*, Cassiodorus's *Historia ecclesiastica tripartita* and of course from Scriptural sources or Saints Lives (the prologue quotes a "passional" [f. 184]). The collection is divided into twenty sections. Section 1 (*divisio*), devoted strictly to Miracles of the Virgin (ff. 1-33), starts with the popular story of how Hildebrands of Toledo used to wear an alb that had been given to him by the Virgin and how his successor Siagrius died when venturing to put it on. The following sections (*divisiones*) contain a varying number of chapters and are planned thematically as detailed above.

The word "exemplum" is employed by ecclesiastical writers in two meanings: first our "example" in a general sense; second, an illustrative story. This second meaning of the word apparently dates no earlier than the end of the twelfth century or the beginning of the thirteenth century. Indeed, about the beginning of the thirteenth century, preachers began to see the importance of making their sermons appeal more directly and forcibly to their hearers, and the practice of using *exempla* to illustrate arguments, or to rouse the attention of a drowsy audience, became widespread.

Amongst the tales retained in this collection, some are part of the Marian legends or Miracles of the Virgin that were very popular during the Middle Ages. Students of Western medieval literature and art are well familiar with the different collections in Latin and the vernacular translations of the Miracles of the Virgin, most famous of which are the "Miracles of Notre Dame" by the

Benedictine monk Gautier de Coincy, composed in the early thirteenth century. Titles of some of these collections (sometimes referred to as "mariales") suggest that they were used as source books of *exempla* or sermon anecdotes. The tales are an interesting cross section of medieval thought, culture, narrative and religious faith. The manuscript tradition of these collections is extremely complex and somewhat confusing. The known collections are often of a varied nature. A. Mussafia conducted a comparative study of all the collections of miracles of the Virgin then known (see Mussafia, Vienna, 1887-1898) and observed that most collections contain three nuclei of similar tales. More recently, R. W. Southern has studied the place of England in the propagation of the earliest collections of Miracles of the Virgin and showed that the collections that became the foundation of most of the later ones were made in England between about 1100 to 1140 (see Southern, 1958, pp. 176-216).

Miracles of the Virgin are tales of wonders attributed to Mary's intercession. Little is really known about their origin except that they arose in the eastern Mediterranean region. Many deal with themes such as the acts of early saints and patriarchs, deeds of emperors, conversions amongst pagans and Jews. When this agglomeration of stories began to migrate and drift into Western Europe, there developed along with the older ones tales of local origin. The *Libri miraculorum* of Gregory of Tours (c. 538-c. 594) are the earliest writings in the West which contain miracles of the Virgin (see PL, LXXI, 1879, col. 713-716).

This particular collection of Miracles of the Virgin and various *exempla* is, to the best of our knowledge, found in only two other recorded manuscripts, respectively Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 327, ff. 171-226 (13th c. or 15th c.?) and Florence, Biblioteca nazionale centrale, Conv. Soppr. D. 8. 1128, ff. 109-204v (14th c.). Both these manuscripts contain the prologue found here on ff. 184-185. It is interesting to point out that the prologue is here placed well after the collection of *exempla*, before the index rather than at the outset as one would expect.

For the Cambridge Corpus Christi College codex, see James, vol. II, no. 327, "Sermones Abiiciamus," pp. 146-148: "Opusculum compilatum de libris sanctorum patrum sive de miraculis operibus et conversione sanctorum etc. cap. xx." - incipit: "Prologus in opusculum quod est compilatum de literis (libris?) sanctorum patrum / In hoc consequenti opusculo ordinantur in certis titulis ut patebit in sequentibus quedam narrationes ad predicationem verbi necessarie.../ There are twenty sections. i. de miraculis b. marie. xx. de morte dampnandorum". The work is preceded by Sermons by William de Mauli: it is unclear from the catalogue entry whether the manuscript dates from the thirteenth or fifteenth century (contradictory references in James, 1912, p. 146).

For the Florence, Biblioteca nazionale centrale codex, see Pomaro, 1980, p. 387, Firenze, BNF, Conv. Soppr. D. 8. 1128, ff. 109-204v: "Flos florum / Incipit Prologus in hoc opusculum. In hoc consequenti opusculo ordinantur in certis titulis ut patet...[...] f. 119 / Incipit principale capitulum huius opusculi et est de miraculis beate Virginis. Incipit prima divisio habens VII capitula, dividitur enim primum capitulum in tres divisiones. Fuit in tolletana urbe...".

LITERATURE

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Tubach, F. C. *Index exemplorum. A Handbook of Medieval Religious Tales*, Helsinki, 1969.

ONLINE RESOURCES

Sites provided by the GAHOM (Groupe d'Anthropologie du Moyen Age), EHESS (Paris):

<http://gahom.ehess.fr/sommaire.php?id=58>

ThEMa: Thesaurus Exemplorum Medii Aevi

<http://gahom.ehess.fr/thema/>

Bibliographie internationale des exempla:

<http://gahom.ehess.fr/bibliex/Bibliex.php>