

SAINT JEROME, *Epistulae* and *Contra Vigilantium*

In Latin, decorated manuscript on paper

Northern Italy (Venice or Udine?), c. 1450-85

ii + 94 + ii folios on paper, watermark, similar to Briquet Ciseaux de tondeur 3767, Venice 1483, Udine 1479, Naples 1482, and Piccard 122339, a. o. 1455, associated with Udine, modern foliation in pencil, top outer corner recto, text is complete, although the first quire is now lacking one leaf (collation, i²[-1, cancelled?] ii-vii² viii² [-12, cancelled, with no loss of text]), horizontal catchwords, middle lower margin, boxed in quires one through six, ruled in brown ink, with full-length vertical bounding lines in very faint lead, occasionally visible, for example on ff. 61 and 67 (justification, f. 1, 182 x 120 mm., remaining folios, 192 x 125-120 mm.), written below the top line by at least three scribes, as follows: ff. 1-59v, quires 1-5, ff. 60-83v, quires 6 and 7, and f. 84-end, quire 8, in a gothico-antiqua script in thirty-five long lines, guide letters for some initials, red rubrics, three- to two-line red or blue initials, imperfectly alternating, f. 26v, three-line red initial with decorative void space in the body of initial and simple pen decoration, f. 73, four-line red initial with decorative void, f. 1, four-line initial, erased, overall in good condition, but on ff. 53-59v, ink is slightly blurred and browned, ff. 60-94, written space damaged by poor ink and is now very dark brown, but text remains legible throughout, f. 60, small hole within text, slight stain, top outer corner in the first half of the manuscript, paper is cracking along the inner margins on some leaves, a few marginal comments partially trimmed. Attractively bound in eighteenth-century green leather over pasteboard, with thin gilt border, both covers, flat spine elaborately gold tooled with numerous narrow alternate bands of ribbons and chains, and with two red labels, "Hieron/ Sancti/ Opuscul" and "MSS/ Chartac/ Sec. XV," edges dyed yellow, marbled pastedowns and endpapers, a few worm holes on spine and slight wear to corners, lower board with damage to top, outer edge, revealing pasteboard, but in good condition, some wear near the sewing at the ends of the manuscript and to the endpapers. Dimensions 262 x 191 mm.

St. Jerome, translator of the Vulgate, was also the author of a large corpus of letters. This manuscript contains nineteen letters; two of the letters are lengthy treatments of questions about the interpretation of the Bible. Although Jerome's Epistles were popular during the Middle Ages, there was a renewed interest in them in the Renaissance. Humanist manuscripts of Jerome's letters are of special interest, since the choice and arrangement of the letters contributes to our understanding of their reception in the fifteenth century.

PROVENANCE

1. Written in Italy c. 1440-1450 as demonstrated by the script and watermark, the script, which is the type known as Gothico-Antiqua (alternatively, Gothico-Humanistica or Fere Humanistic; Derolez, 2003, pp. 176-180) with its mixture of humanistic and gothic traits remained popular in Northern Italy throughout the fifteenth century; the distinctive forms of the majuscule letters is also characteristic of scribes from this time period from northern Italy.

Marginal comments throughout in six or more hands; many of the comments are substantive and deserve closer study for what they tell us about the reception of this text in fifteenth-century Italy, and include notes on the definitions of difficult words (f. 27, discussing "cariosus"), on geography (for example, f. 81, "Terristrum paleolum est quod hodie arabice et mesopotanium . . ."), on Jerome's sources (f. 2v, mentioning Ovid), and on the content of the letters (f. 16v, "Hieronymus videtur se inter Virgines ponere. Sed de Eustochio et aliis virginibus proprie loquitur ut puto"), as well as variant readings, manicules, and short notes (f. 13, "luxoriosos").

A particularly interesting comment, betraying the writer's critical attitude towards the Franciscans is found on f. 18v, where alongside the passage from Jerome, Epistle 22, someone has written "contra fratres minores," that is, "against the Franciscans," mendicant friars who were sworn to strict vows of poverty: (St. Jerome, *Letters* 22.28.1) "But lest I seem to talk about women only, also avoid those men whom you see carrying chains, who have effeminate hair contrary to the apostle [1 Cor. 11:14], the beard of goats, a black cloak, and bare feet to withstand the cold" ("sed ne tantum videar disputare de feminis viros quoque fuge quos videris catenatos quibus feminei contra apostolum crines hircorum barba nigrum pallium et nudi in patientiam frigoris pedes").

2. It is possible that this manuscript was once owned by the Biblioteca Durazzo in Genoa, founded by Giacomo Flippo Durazzo III, marchese di Gabiano (1729-1812), a noted naturalist and bibliophile, his library included more than 4,000 volumes. The Durazzo family settled in Genoa in the middle of the fourteenth century, and became one of Genoa's wealthiest and politically important families especially from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries. The Durazzo collection formerly included a manuscript described as "Opuscula quedam S. Hieronymi" (Puncuh, 1979, p. 394, "Elenco dei manoscritto perduti ...," no. 7; and Durazzo, *Catalogo*, 1834, p. 249). A positive identification of this manuscript with the Durazzo copy is impossible from the general description in the 1834 catalogue, but if this manuscript is in fact from the Durazzo library, it was acquired in 1795 by Giacomo Filippo Durazzo with two other manuscripts (Puncuh, pp. 193-4, no. 130, B II 3, and pp. 210-2, no. 142, B III 2), from the library of the Convent of S. Maria della Cella di Sampierdarena in the diocese of Genoa.
3. Dealers' and owners' notes include, inside front cover, in pencil, "14," and notes in Italian on the contents, date, and watermark.

TEXT

ff. 1-4, *Exhortatoria Sancti Jeronimi ad heliodorum*, incipit, "[Q]uanto amore et studio contenderim ... labor durus est";

Jerome, Epistle 14; Hilberg ed., volume 54:44-62.

ff. 4-10, *Ad rusticum monachum Jeronimus*, incipit, "Nichil est cristiano felicius ...";

Jerome, Epistle 125; Hilberg ed., volume 56.

ff. 10-24, *Epistola beati Jeronimi presbiteri ad eustochium de uirginitate seruanda*, incipit, "[A]udi filia et vide et inclina aurem tuam et obliuscere ... et calicem demoniorum"; f. 19v [rubric lacking] incipit, "Referem tibi mee infelicitatis historiam ... et flumina cooperient eam";

Jerome, Epistle 22 (copied in two parts, with a initial on f. 19v at section 29,7); Hilberg ed., volume 54:143-211.

ff. 24- 26v, *Ad tyrasium Jeronimus*, incipit, "Caritatis tue scripta percepi ... non cesses amare";

Ps.-Jerome, Epist. supp. 40 ad Tyrasium; ed. Migne, PL 30:278-282; Lambert, *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana* 340, by Caelestio, also circulated as Ps.-Cyrianus, epistle 4, and Ps. Augustine.

ff. 26v-32v, *Ad nepotianum Jeronimus de uita clericorum et monachorum*, incipit, "Petis a me Nepotiane karissime litteris ... talis sit confitebitur." *Explicit ad nepotianum*;

Jerome, Epistle 52; Hilberg, ed., volume 54:413-441.

ff. 32v-34v, *Epistola beati Jeronimi ad castricianum de cecitate*, incipit, "Sanctus filius meus eraclius diaconus mihi ... auxilio deseruitur";

Jerome, Epistle 68; Hilberg ed., volume 54:675-678.

ff. 34v-36v, *Epistola beati Jeronimi ad oceanum de uita clericorum*, incipit, "Sofronius eusebius hieronimus oceano suo salutem, Deprecatus es ut tibi breuiter exponere ... confirmetur affectu";

Ps.-Jerome, Epist. supp. 42; ed. PL 30:288-292; Lambert, *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana* 342.

ff. 36v- 37v, *Ad paulam et filiam eius besilam [corrected from: bresilam]*, incipit, "Abraham temptatur in filio ... sit behelzebub";

Jerome, Epistle 38; Hilberg, ed., volume 54:289-293.

ff. 37v-40v, *Exposito fide niceni concilii*, incipit, "Credimus in unum deum patrem omnipotentem, omnium uisibilia ... non ambigua sunt sortiti";

Ps.-Jerome, Epist. Supp. 18, *Explanatio fidei ad cyrillum*, or *Exposito fidei niceni concilii*; author uncertain; ed. PL 30:176-81; Lambert, *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana* 317.

ff. 40v-41, *Jeronimus exuperantio*, incipit, "Inter omnia que michi sancti fratris quintiliani .. nos crebro habebis hospites";

Jerome, Epistle 145; Hilberg, ed., volume 56.

ff. 41-45, *Ad rusticum exhortatoria super penitentem*, incipit, "Quod ignotus ad ignotum audio scribere ... non sum oblitus";

Jerome, Epistle 122, Hilberg, ed., volume 56.

f. 45rv, *Jeronimus ad desiderium*, incipit, "Lecto sermone dilectionis tue quem michi nec opinanti tua ... si uoueris";

Jerome, Epistle 47; Hilberg, ed., volume 54:345-347.

ff. 45v-49, *Jeronimus de tribus uirtutibus*, incipit "Tres quodammodo uirtutis dei assumens ... et imperium in secula seculorum";

Ps.-Jerome, Epist. supp. 8; from Origen, *Homilia V in Jeremiam*; ed. PL 30:116-122; Lambert, *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana* 308.

ff. 49-52v, *Jeronimus ad dardamum de terra repromissionis*, incipit, "Queris dardane christianorum nobilissime nobilium christianissime ... caritatis est";

Jerome, Epistle 129; Hilberg, ed., volume 56.

ff. 52v-60v, *Jeronimi epistola ad cellantiam ne uxor suum maritum dimittat propter religionis causam sine eius consensu*, incipit, "Uetus scripture celebrata sententia est ... iusticia est. Amen";

Ps. Jerome, Epistle 148 (Pelagius or Julianus Aeculanensis); Hilberg, ed., volume 56.

ff. 60v-73, *Incipit de mansionibus israelitici populi*, incipit, "In septuagesimo psalmo septimo psalmo quem iuxta matheum euangelistam ... in illis. Amen";

Jerome, Epistle 78; Hilberg, ed., 55:49-87.

ff. 73-78v, *Item sancti Jeronimi aduersus uigilantium*, incipit, "Multa in orbe monstra generata sunt ... Christi ministerio arbitrantur indignos. Amen";

Jerome, *Contra Vigilantium ad Riparium et Desiderium presbyteros*; ed. PL 23:339-352; Lambert, *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana* 253.

ff. 78v-83v, *Ad atletam de institutione filie*, incipit, "Apostolus paulus scribens ad corinthios et rudem Christi ecclesiam sacris instruens ... et sponsam Christi erudiam regis celestibus offerendam. Laus deo amen yesus christus filius dei";

Jerome, Epistle 107; Hilberg, ed., 55:290-305.

ff. 83v-94v, *Ad edibiam liber duodecim questionum*, incipit, "Ignota uultu fidei michi ardore notissima es et de externis gallie ... et extinguntur in nobis." *Explicit*.

Jerome, Epistle 120; Hilberg, ed., 55:470-515.

Fourteen epistles by Jerome, Letters 14, 125, 22, 52, 68, 38, 145, 122, 47, 129, 148*, 78, 107 and 120 (148 is now considered Ps-Jerome but was edited in Hilberg's edition) together with four pseudonymous letters by various authors that circulated as Jerome's (Epist. supp. 40, 42, 18, and 80), and Jerome's treatise, *Contra Vigilantium*.

Jerome was a prolific letter writer, and some 154 epistles are attributed to Jerome's pen (modern scholars generally accept 123 as genuine), composed between 370 and 419, and varying in length from a few lines to several thousand words, which in Hilberg's monumental edition fill nearly 1600 pages; edited in CSEL 54 (1910), Epistles 1-70; 55 (1912) Epistles 71-120 and 56 (1918), Epistles 121-154, and in PL, vol. 22; good introductions in Labourt, vol. I, pp. XLI-LVI, Cain 2009, and Conring, 2001. There is a complete translation in French (Labourt, 1949-1963), and partial English translations of the Letters are available online (see below); editions and translations are listed in Pentiti and Cerroni, 1990, pp. 31-5.

The census of manuscripts conducted by B. Lambert (1969) lists more than 7,000 manuscripts including at least one or more of Jerome's Epistles (Lambert, *Bibliotheca Hieronymiana Manuscripta*, 1969, volumes 1A and B). Hilberg consulted more than 139 manuscripts when preparing his edition; there is, however, still no complete scholarly study of the manuscript transmission of the Epistles (see discussion in Cain, appendix III, pp. 223-228). The history of the fifteenth century printed editions is equally complex. The *editio princeps* of some of the Letters appeared first in Rome, Sweynheym and Pannartz, 1468 (Goff H-161). This and four subsequent editions between 1468 and 1470 included between 70 and 130 letters. In contrast, Schoeffer's Mainz edition of 1470 contains over 200 letters, a selection unique in the fifteenth century, which was arranged thematically. Schoeffer stated in a printed advertisement for the edition that ecclesiastical and monastic libraries were searched to uncover more letters and to establish an authentic canon (see Rice, 1985, pp. 116-125, for an account of Erasmus's 1516 edition and earlier editions).

The Renaissance revived the classical tradition of letter writing, and admired Cicero and Jerome. Their popularity in Renaissance is demonstrated by the manuscripts included in the Schoenberg Database; of 419 total manuscripts, 309 are from the fifteenth century, eight from sixteenth, and 102 from earlier centuries. Seven manuscripts of collections of Jerome's Epistles, all Italian from the fifteenth century have been sold since 2000.

The short treatise, *Contra Vigilantium* (ed. PL 23:339-352), was a work written by Jerome in response to a treatise composed c. 406 by Vigilantius, a priest who once stayed with Jerome in Bethlehem, but who subsequently disagreed with Jerome on a number of matters. Jerome's response to Vigilantius's criticisms of prayers for the dead, veneration of the saints, and aspects of the monastic life is notable for its intemperate tone.

Among the letters included in this manuscript is Jerome's famous letter to Eustochium on Virginité (letter 22), and other letters praising the monastic and clerical life. Letter 78 to Fabiola is a treatise on Numbers, chapter 33, describing the forty-two stops (*mansiones*) of the Israelites on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land, and treating them as emblems of Christian pilgrimage from earth to heaven. Jerome explains in this letter that his commentary is based on his study of the original Hebrew, since the Greek and Latin manuscripts were too corrupt to be useful. Also included is letter 120, the twelve questions to Hedibia, a lady of Gaul, on exegetical questions concerning passages from the Gospels and Epistles.

The Church Father Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus (c. 347- c. 419) was known as "vir trilinguis" due to his knowledge of Hebrew, Greek and Latin. In 382 Pope Damasus commissioned him to write a new translation of the New Testament and the Psalms. This translation, together with his subsequent translation of most of the Old Testament books from Hebrew, was his greatest achievement, and forms the core of the biblical translation that is now known as the Vulgate.

His letters gives us insight into his character and his intellectual concerns, revealing a gifted scholar and devout Christian, who was interested in a wide variety of subjects, and one who did not hesitate to offer criticisms and who certainly did not shy away from intellectual fights. Jerome was a master of style and epistolary art. Addressed to colleagues, including women from his circle in Rome, many of them to female nuns and to monks, his letters discuss exegetical questions as well as practical matters of everyday life, Christian education, the fight against heresies (especially Origen, Apollinaris, etc.), asceticism, and the translation of the Bible. Although they originated as personal epistles,

Jerome edited them during his lifetime, and intended them for a wider audience (he included his Epistles in his lists of works in his own comprehensive account of authors from St. Peter to Jerome, the *De viris illustribus*).

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