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JOHN OF DAMASCUS, *De Fide Orthodoxa*; PSEUDO-DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE, *Opera*; BOETHIUS, *Opuscula sacra*  
In Latin; decorated manuscript on parchment  
Italy (Rome?), c. 1240-60

ii (paper) + 104 + iii (paper) on parchment (prepared in the manner of southern Europe, thin and even, but with some original holes and other imperfections, and some original sewn repairs, ff. 61-66, and 88), modern foliation in pencil, middle, top margin (collation, i-iv<sup>12</sup> v-vi<sup>10</sup> vii-ix<sup>12</sup>), boxed horizontal catchwords, lower margin, middle or slightly to the right in quires four-eight, quire one, very bottom margin, "con" abbreviation, possibly a signature (?), no other leaf or quire signatures, ruled very lightly in brown crayon or pencil with the top three and bottom three horizontal rules sometimes full across, and with single full-length vertical bounding lines inside and outside of each column, prickings, top and bottom margins, and outer margin on ff. 26-104, 93-104 in a markedly crooked vertical rows (justification, 207-204 x 132-130 mm.), written below the top line in a mature southern gothic bookhand, notes for rubricator and guide letters for initials, for example, f. 40v, bottom margin, f. 45v, bottom margin, majuscules within text stroked with red, running titles in red (roman numeral indicating the book), red rubrics and marginal headings, chapters numbered in roman numerals in margin, red or blue paragraph marks, one-line red or blue initials, three- to two-line alternately red and blue initials (blue is powdery light blue, red is orangey) with pen decoration in the opposite color, often extending full-length of the column, ff. 7, 19 [initial mostly missing], 34v, 46, 55, 95v, eleven- to three-line parted red and blue initials, with red and blue pen flourishes, f. 1, 6-line parted red and blue parted initial decorated with red and blue "J"-stroke pen flourishes initial, extending into top margin, and forming a C-shape frame, since the flourishes to the initial below extend into the lower margin; in addition to the usual penwork motifs, eleven charming figurative motifs are hidden within the decoration: f. 1, animal head and fish; f. 8v, top margin, a bird; f. 14v, dragon, lower margin; f. 16v, face in profile within the initial; f. 19, dog, vine and head of Silenus; f. 21, initial infilled with bird; f. 47v, very bottom margin, partially trimmed, wings; f. 75, red fish drawn around a correction; f. 81v, head; f. 93, bird; and f. 95v, a dog; f. 19, top half of one column missing, with loss of text and the initial, now repaired with blank parchment, f. 1, darkened, with stains in the outer margin and the first column, and with a sprinkling of small worm holes, ff. 71-72, very wrinkled, with no damage to text, some cockling throughout, but overall in excellent condition. Bound in half bound seventeenth-century decorated paper over pasteboard in Padua or Venice, smooth spine lettered in gold, "XVII/ S. JOA. DA/ DE FID/ ORTHO/ MS"; modern repair to lower spine, some wear to the upper and lower boards, especially in the corners, small modern repairs to the edges, but in very good condition, housed in a slip case. Dimensions 313 x 225 mm.

This is an elegant copy of texts central to the theological and philosophical foundations of thirteenth-century Scholasticism. These texts survive in numerous manuscripts, but most thirteenth-century copies are now in public collections. Beautiful penwork initials display humor in the small animals and faces hidden within the decoration. Prickings in all three margins indicate the

large-format manuscript retains its original size. A number of similar manuscripts copied in Rome in the mid-thirteenth century show strong northern French influence in their decoration.

## PROVENANCE

1. Written in Italy, as indicated by the parchment, which is typical of Italian books with a very white, slick, flesh side, and slightly darker and fuzzier hair side, sometimes yellowed or with dark speckles, and the style of the script, which is rounded, with very reduced ascenders and descenders, an uncrossed tironian "7" for "et," and usually, although not always, abbreviates "qui" in the southern manner, with a horizontal stroke through the descending stroke of the "q," rather than a stroke above the "q"; in addition to the alternate abbreviation for "qui" the script does betray some northern features, in particular the form of "a" and the abbreviation for "con" which is not the typical Italian reversed "c" copied on the line. The decoration in contrast is Northern French in style, typical of books copied in the late second quarter to the middle of the thirteenth century, c. 1240-60.

These details suggest that the manuscript was copied in Italy in a center with French influence, possibly by a northern scribe copying in an Italian manner. The closest parallel is with a group of manuscripts copied in Rome in the middle to third quarter of the thirteenth century studied by Valentino Pace (cited below), including among others, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS lat. 16595, Boethius and Aristotle (see Avril, pp. 130-1, no. 157, pl. J and lxxxvi-lxxxvii), Vatican, Chigi C IV 174, and a copy of the Decretals, Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, Vind. 2149 lat. 41. These manuscripts include illumination by the Nicolaus Master; although our manuscript does not include painted initials, the pen initials appear similar. A related example is a Bible copied in Bologna in the middle of the thirteenth century, on Italian parchment, by an English scribe modeling his script on Italian scripts, and decorated in a Parisian style: Paris, BNF MS n.a.l. 3189 (studied by Rouse, cited below).

This is a formal, carefully prepared manuscript. Note that all the texts were carefully corrected after they were copied. The content of the manuscript—essential texts for the learned theologian—and the quality suggests it was owned by someone of rank within the Church. The text by John of Damascus was probably the most accessible and practical of these texts, and it includes the most numerous notes from contemporary and later readers, including extensive marginal identification of the biblical citations.

2. Early shelf-mark (?), "C 3," ff. 1, 70 and 285.
3. In Northern Italy, Padua or Venice, when the manuscript was bound in the seventeenth century; owners' or booksellers' notes, inside back cover, "Leguato PAP," "<F..?> N 100," "Tuizial N. 6."
4. French Private Collection since the mid-1980s.

## TEXT

ff. 1-46, *Jobannis presbiteri damasceni liber primus incipit in omnino [sic, for "quo"] est tradicio certa orthodoxe fidei capitulis diuisa . c . a burgundione iudice ciue pisano de greco in latinum domino tercio eugenio beate memorie pape translatus. Quoniam incomprehensibilis est deus et quoniam non oportet querere et scrutari que non sunt tradita nobis a sanctis patribus prophetis apostolis et euangelistis, incipit, "Deum nemo uidit unquam unigenitus dei filius qui est ... gaudium id est quod ab ipso est fructificantes." Explicit damascenus.*

John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa*, translated into Latin by Burgundio of Pisa; book two begins f. 7, book three, f. 19, book four, f. 32v; edited by Eligius M. Buytaert, St. Bonaventure, N. Y., Franciscan Institute, 1955; Greek text in Migne, *Patrologia greaca* 94:790-1227.

Saint John Damascene, or John of Damascus (c. 675- ca. 749) is known as the last of the Greek Fathers of the Church. He was born in a Christian family in Damascus and served as a high official in the court of the Muslim caliphate, before entering the monastery of St. Sabas near Jerusalem. The *De fide orthodoxa* (*On the Orthodox Faith*) is part of his longer work, *The Fountain of Wisdom*. In it he presented the main teachings of the Greek Fathers in a comprehensive treatise that discusses the existence of God, the Divine nature, the physical world, angels and demons, human nature, the nature of Christ and the Scriptures. *De fide orthodoxa* was translated from Greek into Latin in 1153-4 by Burgundio of Pisa at the request of Pope Eugenius III. Peter Lombard cites it extensively in the *Sentences*, and it became a standard work among western theologians, including Thomas Aquinas, transmitting to the West teachings from the Greek Fathers including Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Alexandria, Leo the Great, Athanasius and Chrysostom. Burgundio's translation remained in use even after the work was re-translated by Robert Grosseteste in the thirteenth century.

The modern edition of this work lists 117 manuscripts (Buytaert, ed., pp. xx-xli), not including this one. Although translated around 1153-4, diffusion was very slow until about 1200, "then very steady and lasting," according to the editor (p. xlii). Only one twelfth-century copy survives (Vat. Lat. MS 313). This and other surviving manuscripts, mostly in public institutions, testify to the work's popularity after c. 1200 (about 42 manuscripts are assigned to the thirteenth century), and only a handful of manuscripts appear to date from the fifteenth century (around 15).

This copy includes formal subject headings in red, for example, f. 45, "de resurrectione mortuorum," and corrections, both integral to the text as it was originally copied. This was clearly a text that was read; thirteenth- and fourteenth-century readers added annotations and nota-marks throughout; f. 7v, "Nota hic quod est angelus," (bottom margin, the chapter beginning in that column is "De Angelis"); f. 10v, "vtilia pro fide", "Notabilia valde"; another hand, "de stella, apparuit magis", and a longer note, f. 18. Biblical citations are identified in margins throughout in two hands, the earliest dating from the thirteenth-century hand; cf. f. 30v, with numerous identifications of the biblical books, with tie marks added within the text, and f. 36, numerous annotations.

ff. 46-55, *Omnis diuine illuminatio manet simpla secundum bonitatem uarie in prouisa proueniens, incipit, "Omne datum optimum et omne donum perfectum desursum est descendens a patre luminum. Sed et omnis patre moto manifestationis luminum processio in nos optime ... nos secretum silentis honorificantes";*

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De caelesti hierarchia*, translated from Greek into Latin by John Scottus Eriugena; Migne, *PL* 122:1058-1070, edited in P. Chevallier, *Dionysiaca: Recueil donnant l'ensemble des traditions latines des ouvrages attribués au Denys de l'Aréopagite*, Bruges, Desclée de Brouwer, repr. Stuttgart, 1989 volume 2, pp. 727-1039.

The text includes original, formal corrections, as well as a few variant readings added by a reader (for example f. 48), nota marks and other references, see ff. 48, 48v, and 50 "Hic exponit geraracheos."

ff. 55-67v, *Incipit ecclesiastica ierarchia que sit ecclesiastice ierarchie traditio et que eiusdem speculatio*. Incipit, "Quia quidem secundum nos ierarchia diuinorum puerorum sacratissime intenta atque diuina ... in te diuini ignis ascendens usque [rubbed but legible:] uapores";

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De ecclesiastica hierarchia*, translated from Greek into Latin by John Scottus Eriugena; Migne, *PL* 122:1070-1111; ed. in Chevallier, *Dionysiaca*, volume 2 1071-1476.

ff. 67v-85, *Incipit liber de diuinis nominibus. Que sit rationis interpretatio et que de diuinis nominibus traditio*, incipit, "Nunc autem o beate post theologicas ypotyposes ad diuinorum nominum reseruatiōem sicut est possibile transibo ... ad symbolicam autem theologiam duce deo transibimus";

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De diuinis nominibus*, translated from Greek into Latin by John Sarracenus; cf. Migne, *PL* 122:1114-1172; ed. in *Dionysiaca* volume 1, pp. 5-561.

ff. 85-86, *De mystica theologia que diuina caligo*, incipit, "Trinitas supersubstantialis et super dea et superbona inspectrix ... absoluti et super tota";

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *De mystica theologia*, translated from Greek into Latin by John Sarracenus; cf. Migne, *PL* 122:1171-1176; ed. in *Dionysiaca* volume 1, pp. 565-602.

ff. 86-91v, *Epistole beati dyonisii diuerse. Gayo monacho epistola prima*, incipit, "Tenebre occulstantur lumine et magis multo lumine ignorantiam occultant cognitiones ..."; f. 86, *Eidem secunda*, incipit, "Quomodo qui est super omnia et super ierarchiam ..."; f. 86, *Eidem tertia*, incipit, "Subito est quod est preter spem ..."; f. 86v, *Eidem quarta*, incipit, "Quomodo dicit Ihesus qui est super omnia ..."; f. 86v, *Dorotheo ministro*, incipit, "Diuina caligo est inaccessibile ..."; f. 86v, *Sosiprato sacerdoti*, incipit, "Ne opineris hic uictoriam sancta sosipatris quod contra religionem ..."; ff. 86v-87, *Policarpo summo sacerdoti*, incipit, "Ego quidem non sum aduersus grecos ..."; ff. 87-89, *Demophilo therapente de propria mansuetudine*, incipit, "Hebreorum ystorie dicunt o nobilis domophile [sic] ..."; ff. 89-90v, *Thito pontifici que sapientie domus quis crater et quis cibum*, incipit, "Sanctus quidem thymotheus o pulcherimme tyte nescio ..."; ff. 91v-92, *Johanni theologo apostolo et ewangeliste*, incipit, "Saluto te sanctam animam o dilecte .."; f. 91v, *Apollophanio con creto et con philosopho*, incipit, "Nunc nunc [sic] mihi sermo ad te diricitur precor ... in eo uiues." *Expliciunt epistole beati dyonisii*;

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *Epistolae diuersae*, translated from Greek into Latin by John Scottus Eriugena; Migne, *PL* 122:1175-1191; ed. in *Dionysiaca*, volume 1:605-669 and volume 2:1479-1578,

and the Letter to Apollophanus, printed in Migne, *PL* 106:33-34, which also follows the ten Pseudo-Dionysian letters in Paris, BNF MS lat. 17341 (see Dondaine, p. 16).

ff. 91v-93, *Incipit epistola dyonisi de morte Pauli*, incipit, "Saluto te diuinum discipulum et filium spiritualis et ueri patris ... Recepisti etiam fames et sitim et suscepisti omnia .. quem decet gloria laus et cultus cum patre et spiritu sancto nunc et semper et per omnia secula seculorum. Amen.

Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, *Epistola de morte Pauli*; this letter does not seem to have been printed in a modern edition, but it circulated commonly with the works of Pseudo-Dionysius in medieval manuscripts.

ff. 93-94v, *Prologus per versus*, incipit, "Hanc libam sacro grecorum nectare fartam. Aduena iohannes spondeo meo ...," *Epistola*, incipit, "Ualde quidem admiranda dignisque ... et ad eam creatam sunt per excellentiam essentie recurrere. Dionisii ariopagite episcopi athenarum ad tymotheum episcopum de celesti ierarchia";

Letter of John Eriugena, prologue to his translation of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite; Migne, *PL* 122:1029-1037.

ff. 94v-95v, *Apostolice sedis bibliotecarii ad excellentissimum et christianissimum regem Karolum prefatio anaxtaxii*, incipit, "Angelice sapientie fulgores multos ...," *Prologus*, incipit, "Inter cetera studia que tam laudabilis actio quam saluberrima ... ad celeste regnum transferat quinque";

Anastasius the Librarian, preface to the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite; Migne, *PL* 122:1026-1030.

Dionysius, or Pseudo-Dionysius, as he has come to be known in the contemporary world, was a Christian Neo-Platonist who wrote in the late fifth or early sixth century, probably between 485 and 518-28 CE. His works, the three long treatises, *The Divine Names*, *The Celestial Hierarchy*, and *The Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*, the shorter *The Mystical Theology*, and ten letters, all included in this manuscript, were written by an unknown author who adopts the identity of Dionysius the Areopagite, the Athenian member of the judicial council, the Areopagus, who was instantly converted by St. Paul in Athens (cf. Acts 17:34). Modern scholars accept ten letters as authentic, but medieval manuscripts often include additional letters, and this manuscript includes twelve (the usual ten, together with the Letter to Apollophanio, and the Letter on the death of Paul). This manuscript also includes the prologue to his translation by John Scottus Eriugena and the preface by Anastatius the Papal librarian, who revised Eriugena's translation in 875, adding clarifying remarks.

During the Middle Ages his works were accepted as having apostolic authority, second only to that of the Scriptures. From the ninth century on, his identify was also conflated with that of the third century martyr, St. Denis, bishop of Paris, lending his writings even greater authority. He is known to modern scholars as Pseudo-Dionysius, since his actual identify is unknown. His works, which are complex and often difficult to understand, are an expression of Christian Neo-Platonism that has become a classic of spirituality. Sarah Coakley has poetically summarized the current, and past,

fascination with this corpus, remarking on "... its ontology of an ecstatic intermingling of divine and human 'eros'; its vision of a "hierarchical cosmos conjoining the angelic as well as the human; its ecclesiastical anchoring in its acts of liturgical praise; and its alluring invitation to an unspeakable 'union' with the divine by means of mystical contemplation" (p. 2). The importance of these writings in the history of medieval philosophy and theology can hardly be exaggerated.

Louis the Pious was given a manuscript of the Pseudo-Dionysian Works by the Byzantine Emperor Michael Palaeologus (Michael the Stammerer) in 827, and a translation into Latin was made around that time by Hilduin. It was largely regarded as incomprehensible, and a second translation was made by Johannes Eriugena (c. 800 - c.877), or John Scottus ("the Irishman"), commissioned by Charles the Bald. This remained a standard translation, although many others were made, including that of Johannes Sarracenus, who dedicated his translations to John of Salisbury and Abbot Odo II of St. Denis in the 1160s. Our manuscript draws on both of these traditions.

There is no modern census of the manuscripts. The Schoenberg Database shows 146 results when searched by the author's name, and a similar search of the online catalogue of manuscripts in German library, "Manuscripta Mediaevalia," produces 249 results. The importance of these works is attested by their inclusion in the 1275 list of exemplars available for rent at the University stationer's, where the "liber Dyonisii cum commentis," follows works by Augustine, and precedes the works by Thomas Aquinas (Chevallier, volume one, p. lxxvii). Beginning in the twelfth century, there were numerous medieval commentaries, translations, and paraphrases of the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus by authors ranging from Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141), Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173), Robert Grosseteste (ca. 1175-1253), Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), Bonaventure (1221-1274), and Denys the Carthusian (1402-1475) (on the medieval reception, see Boiadjev, Dondaine, and Harrington, cited below).

ff. 95v-97v, *Incipit liber Boecii de trinitate personarum et unitate essentie*, incipit, "Inuestigatam diutissime questionem quantum nostre mentis igniculum illustrare lux diuina ...., [text] Christiane religionis reuerenciam plures usurpant. Sed ea fides pollet ... quantum inbecillitas subtrahit uota subplebunt";

Boethius, *Opuscula sacra*, I (*De trinitate*) edited by E. K. Rand and S. J. Tester, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, Mass, 1978, pp. 2-31; Migne, *PL* 94:1247-1256; and by Claudio Moreschini, Munich, K.G. Saur, 2000.

ff. 97v-98, incipit, "Quero an pater et filius et spiritus sanctus de diuinitate substantialiter ... et fidem si poteris rationemque coniuge";

Boethius, *Opuscula sacra*, II (*De trinitate ii*); Rand and Tester, eds., pp. 32-37.

ff. 98-99, *Incipit liber Boecii de hebdomadibus*, incipit, "Postulas ut ex hebdomadibus nostris eius questionis ... idcirco alia quidem iusta ac alia [added: aliud] omnia uero bona";

Boethius, *Opuscula sacra*, III (*De hebdomadibus*); Rand and Tester, eds., pp. 38-51.

ff. 99-101, *Incipit Boecii de duabus naturis et una persona Christi*, incipit, "Christianam fidem nobis sane noui et ueteris testamenti auctoritas pandit ... laus perpetua creatoris";

Boethius, *Opuscula sacra*, IV (*De fide catholica*); Rand and Tester, eds, pp. 52-71; Migne, *PL* 64:1333-1338.

ff. 101-104v, incipit, "Anxie quidem te diuque sustinui ... sententiam eo modo [*sic*, for "nominee"] quod cum tribus modis//;"

Boethius, *Opuscula sacra*, V (*Contra Eutychem et Nestorium*), here ending imperfectly, Rand and Tester, eds, pp. 72-114.

Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius (c. 480-ca. 525/6) was one of the most important intermediaries between ancient philosophy and the Latin Middle Ages, expressing philosophical ideas in a way that made them interesting and accessible to a wider public. His writings drew extensively on the thinking of Greek Neoplatonists such as Porphyry and Iamblichus, and included works on logic and music, as well as numerous translations of Greek works into Latin, including works of Aristotle, Euclid and Ptolemy. Boethius was born into a wealthy, politically influential family. He became a Senator at the age of twenty-five and later served as a Consul in the Ostrogoths. In 524, he was arrested for treason, imprisoned and eventually executed by Theodoric the Great. He wrote his most famous work, the *Consolation of Philosophy*, while he was in prison waiting execution.

The five works known as Boethius's *Opuscula sacra*, or the *Theological Tractates*, were embraced by medieval theologians, and exerted considerable influence on Carolingian and Scholastic authors. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, they were regarded as inauthentic, and were only accepted as genuine again in 1877 when Heinrich Usener published a fragment from Cassiodorus that describes these works among Boethius's writings. Scholars today generally accept all five of these short works as genuine. Their popularity during the Middle Ages is amply demonstrated by the manuscripts described in the volumes that have appeared so far of the census of the surviving manuscripts which include works by Boethius (*Codices Boethiana*, cited below); the first three volumes include 143 manuscripts of the *Opuscula sacra* (the Census is still incomplete and does not yet include manuscripts in French and German libraries); and E. K. Rand, knew of 200 manuscripts (his list was not published). Very few of the manuscripts of the *Opuscula sacra* are early; most are twelfth and thirteenth century in date. These treatises are brief, but dense, and discuss theological issues—in particular the nature of the Trinity and the nature and persons of Christ—using a purely philosophical method; through the twelfth century, they were valued as central texts for logic, ontology and metaphysics. During the thirteenth century, they were not taught formally in the schools, but Thomas Aquinas did compose a commentary on them.

This is an elegant, large format, copy of texts that were central to the theological and philosophical foundations of thirteenth-century Scholasticism. Its contents point to an owner of considerable learning, with a strong interest in Neo-Platonism and Greek philosophical writings, who was serious enough to own complete copies of these foundational texts—"originalia" rather than extracts. Although these texts survive in numerous manuscripts, most thirteenth-century copies are in public

collections and are infrequently available for sale. The Schoenberg Database lists only four sales of manuscripts including works by Pseudo-Dionysius since 1978, and only two sales of John Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa* (one of which was in a French translation). Most of the available Boethius manuscripts have been copies of his *Consolation of Philosophy*.

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