

Miscellany of devotional, moralising and theological texts, including [Anonymous] *Visio Philiberti*; legends of S. Patrick; PSEUDO-BERNARDUS, *Epistola ad Raymundum de cura rei familiaris*; ALBERTANUS BRIXIENSIS, *Liber consolationis et consilii*; NICOLAUS MAGNI DE IAWOR (?), *De accessu altaris seu praeparatione ad missam*; ANDREAS DE ESCOBAR, *Modus confitendi*; PELAGIUS (dubium; PSEUDO-AUGUSTINUS), *De vita christiana*.

Low Countries, c. 1450-1475

ii (modern paper) + 48 + ii (modern paper) folios on paper (two watermarks: ff. 1-36: see Briquet, no. 8519-8541: "lettre P gothique simple" especially 8523, Colmar, 1447-50, Bâle, 1449/52, Pays-Bas, 1448, and 8528, Siegen, 1467, Stauffenberg, 1467, Rufach, 1469, Nantes, 1469, Douai, 1471, Colmar, 1471, Mayence, 1471-77, Aeren, 1473, Berne, 1474, Luxembourg, 1475, Soleure, 1476, Bruges, 1476-77, Prény, 1479, ff. 37-48: see Briquet, no. 14232-14235: "tête de boeuf" especially 14232, Bruxelles, 1440, Bouvignes, 1449, Utrecht, 1453), modern foliation in pencil bottom outer recto, incomplete, loss of text between quires iii and iv (collation, i-iii<sup>12</sup> iv<sup>12</sup>) quires i-iii have catch words at the inner lower margin (ff. 12, 24, 36), single full length vertical and horizontal bounding lines, prickings visible on most folios (e.g. f. 40) (justification, ff. 1-36: 156 x 91 mm., ff. 37-48: 162-160 x 101-98 mm.), written below the top line in a gothic cursiva currens by two different hands (second hand starting at f. 37) in thirty-two to thirty-six long lines (ff. 1-36) and thirty to thirty-two long lines (ff. 37-48), ff. 1-36: red rubrics, majuscules in text stroked in red, three- to one-line plain red initials, red paragraph marks, underlining in red within text, annotations structuring the text in outer margins (e.g. f. 8), roughly drawn contemporary pointing bands with sleeves in red and black (e.g. f. 11), ff. 37-48: majuscules in text stroked in red, underlining in red within the text, no lines left blank, in excellent condition, minor signs of use, very legible text throughout. Half bound in modern brown leather and marbled paper over cardboard boards, spine with four raised bands, with gold-tooled inscription on fourth segment, "TRACTATUS / THEOLOGICUS," red-green-yellow (decorative) endbands, paper pastedowns at front and rear, contiguous with the first front and rear flyleaves. Dimensions binding 220 x 155 mm., book block 213 x 150 mm.

Rich selection of moralising, theological, and confessional texts, probably copied as a personal handbook for a member of the clergy. It includes influential literary works, notably Albert of Brexia's tale of Melibee, which inspired Chaucer, and the *Visio Philiberti*, a versified debate between body and soul. It also contains treatises on penance and the Mass, including one unidentified that warrants further study. A number of the text are related to the family life and the position of women.

## PROVENANCE

1. A shift in script and watermarks at ff. 36-37 shows that the volume was assembled from two independent, but contemporary parts, likely produced in similar circumstances; the evidence of the script and watermarks suggests both parts were copied in the second half of the fifteenth century, probably c. 1450-75, in present-day Belgium or the Low Countries (or possibly in a near-by region in Northern France).

The fact that this manuscript contains the treatise *De accessu altaris seu praeparatione ad missam*, which is attributed by some to the Polish author Nicolaus Magni de Iawor and found only in manuscripts either produced in Central Europe (Eastern Germany, Bohemia) or held in German libraries, is also of interest; further research is needed.

The contents of this miscellany are quite interesting, since they combine several "popular" Latin literary texts, the *Visio Philiberti* – a very widely copied poem presenting a debate between the body and the soul, and the two popular legends about St. Patrick -- followed by a number of texts related to family life and women, including the Ps. Bernard, *Epistola ad Raymundum*, a citation from Seneca, and the chapters from Albert of Brescia's *Liber consolationis* that include the story of Melibeus and his wife Prudence, notably including a debate on the proper role of women. The remarkable list of reasons why women are more exalted than men on f. 12v, copied in this context, is of particular interest. These texts are followed by a number of texts that surely point to the use of the manuscript by a priest, including texts on the Mass and Confession. The last piece (possibly of independent of origin) addresses how to live a Christian life. Overall, the contents suggest that the manuscript was copied by a priest with pastoral responsibilities, and (possibly) an unusually sensitive attitude towards the role of women.

## 2. Private European Collection.

### TEXT

Now bound incorrectly; correct order: ff. 1-2, 5, 3-4, 6-7, 9-10, 9, 11-12.

ff. 1-5v, *De anima et corpore tractatus*, incipit, "Noctis sub silencio tempore brumali / Deditus quodammodo sompno spiritali ...; [Corpus respondit] ... A sensato quolibet hoc non ignoratur / Tu scis per optime hoc non ignoratur";

*Visio Philiberti*; ed. Wright, 1841, pp. 95-106, and von Karajan, 1839, pp. 85-150. Walter, 1920, pp. 211-214, assembled a lengthy inventory of 132 manuscripts containing this poem. Since then, 35 manuscripts and one incunable have been added to this list (see Cartlidge, 2006, p. 24 and 39 for a summary). No fully researched modern critical edition is available. There was a widespread circulation of medieval translations into English, French, Italian, German and Dutch (for the English translations see for instance Utley, 1972, pp. 845-862). The text is complete, but the folios have not been bound in the right order. Folios 3-4 should follow after f. 5.

This is a copy of a popular thirteenth-century debate in verse between a body and its soul. It is known as the *Visio Philiberti* or *Visio Fulberti*, after the attribution to "Philibertus francigena" in the prologue present in a minority of extant copies. The poem has also been ascribed in a number of manuscripts to Robert Grosseteste (c. 1175-1253), bishop of Lincoln and groundbreaking scientist, theologian and philosopher (see Thomson, 1940, pp. 247-248). It was based upon a twelfth-century Latin poem nicknamed "the Royal debate" after a manuscript copy found in BL, Royal MS 7 A III (see Heningham, 1939). It was printed by Wright, 1841, among the Latin poems of Walter Map (1140-1208/10), a Welsh clergyman and author of Latin works such as *De nugis curialium*. Wright, 1841, p. 95, asserts that the poem was undeniably written in England, but this claim has not been substantiated by critical research. For the sake of clarity, the poem is often referred to by its incipit *Noctis sub silencio tempore brumali* ("In the silence of a midwinter night").

According to Cartlidge, 2006, p. 24, it was "certainly one of the most widely circulated of all medieval poems." It explores the theological and philosophical antagonism between the ephemeral body and the eternal soul, and the devotional need for contrition before death. The text is presented as a versified dialogue between the body and the soul, whose arguments are announced in this copy by the recurrent rubrics *Corpus respondet* ("the body answers") and *Anima*

*respondet* ("the soul answers"). Two demons (*Demonēs respondēt*), a priest (*Prespiter*), the devil (*Postea dixit dyabolus ad animam*) and an angel (*Angelus respondit*) try to weigh upon the protagonists.

ff. 6-7, *De sancto Patricio episcopo et eius purgatorio*, incipit, "Patricius dum Scotorum regi praedicaret de Christi passione stans autem ... Et post .xxx. dies feliciter abdormiuit etcet. Et sic est finis de sancto Patricio";

*Legends of S. Patrick*; ed. Maggioni, 1998, pp. 321-325.

These folios contain two popular legends about the Irish saint Patrick: the first relates how Patrick banished all venomous beasts from Ireland, the second describes the revelation by God to Patrick of purgatory. The text in this manuscript renders the abridged version of the *vita* or hagiographical account of the life of saint Patrick made by Jacobus de Voragine (died 1298) for his famous compilation *Legenda aurea* (see BHL, p. 941, no. 18).

ff. 7-8, 9-10v, *Epistula beati Bernardi de gubercione familie ad Raymundum dominum castrī sancti Ambrosii*, incipit, "Gracioso militi et felici Raymundo domino castrī sancti Ambrosii Bernardus in senium ductus, salutem in domino, docere petisti a nobis de cura et modo rei familiaris utilius gubernando ... ad quem eam perducant merita sue dampnabilis senectutis";

Ps.-Bernard, *Epistola ad Raymundum de cura rei familiaris*, ed. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 182: 647-651; the folios have not been bound in the right order. Ff. 9-10v should have followed after f. 7. F. 8 contains the final paragraph of the letter, and the beginning of the subsequent text.

This letter to a soldier called Raimundus is often spuriously attributed to Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. It addresses issues about household economy, such as the care for children, wives and servants. In this manuscript copy, the letter is subdivided into smaller paragraphs, each receiving its own heading in a red frame (e.g. f. 7v *De nupciis et sumptibus* [On marriages and expenses]).

f. 8, *Seneca. Mulier quid sit*, incipit, "Quid est mulier nisi hominis confusio, insatiabilis bestia, continua sollicitudo...";

This short quotation of five lines, attributed in this manuscript to Seneca, serves as an introduction to the subsequent text about the nature of women.

ff. 8-8v, 11-12v, incipit, "Cvmque Molekeus [= Melibeus] ad vindictam properaret [sic] Prudencia, uxor illius occurrens ei prius cognitis que ordinata fuerant ... Casta matrona parendo viro imperat, et qui docte seruit partem dominatus tenet";

Albertanus of Brescia, *Liber consolationis et consilii*, ed. Sundby, 1873. Graham, 2000, listed 168 manuscript copies, this one not included; see also Bloomfield, 1979, no. 4976.

This is a copy of chapters two to five from the *Liber consolationis et consilii* by the thirteenth-century author Albertanus of Brescia. The lengthy excerpt tells the tale of Melibeus (*Molekeus* in this manuscript) and his wife Prudencia. The moralising tale became quite popular in medieval literature. Chaucer's *Melibee*, for instance, is based, via a French intermediary translation by Renaud de Louens, on this dialogue.

f. 12v, short unidentified paragraph on the dignity of women, incipit, "Prima quia mulier de costa viri ...; ... mulier ab angelo salutata quam[?] aliquis vir," *Et sic est finis. Et cet.*;

This is a fascinating list of reasons why women should be held in higher regard than men. The sources of these arguments, and how widely-disseminated they were, are certainly worth investigation. The text states that first, woman was made from a rib, while man was made from mud; secondly, woman was made in paradise, and man was not; third, the Son of God took his human nature from a woman, not from a man; fourth, no woman asked for the death of the Lord, not even the wife of Pilate; fifth, the church stood at the Passion through women, while men fled; sixth, Christ appeared first to a woman, Mary Magdalene; seventh, a pure woman is exalted above the choir of angels; and eighth, the woman greeted by the angel is more excellent than any man.

f. 12v, Short song on the nobility of men, incipit, "Secundum Iohannem Andree in novella / nobilitas hominis est mens deitatis ymago / nobilitas hominis virtutum clara propago ...; ... nature iura tenere";

Printed as one of the anonymous songs of the *Carmina Burana* (see Projekt Gutenberg, Unbekannte Autoren: Carmina Burana); the attribution to the canonist Johannes Andreas (c. 1270-1348), although almost certainly spurious, is interesting.

f. 12v, Four short sayings, incipit, "Humilitas fecit religionem. Religio peperit divitiarum. Divitie suffocaverunt matrem. Matrem suffocata perit et filia"; incipit, "Humilitas eternam plantavit religionem ..."; incipit, "O cras cras quam longam restem fecisti et in baratrum mortis me pertraxisti"; incipit, "Cras vox carmina multis solet esse ruina/ Converti volo cras semper crastinat in cras/ Nolo per cras cras longas tibi ponere metas/ Nam per cras cras cras consumitur etas";

The first saying (Humility makes religion. Religion gives birth to riches. Riches suffocate the mother ...) seems related to one sometimes attributed to St. Bernard, that was quoted by Cotton Mather in the eighteenth century. The last two verses also appear (with the slight variation that in the manuscript described here, they begin with the first person, "I do not ...") in the *Danse Macabre of Women* in Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS fr. 995, f. 38r. See Harison, p. 104: "Noli per cras cras tibi longas ponere metas/ Per cras cras cras omnis consumitur etas" (Do not lay out for yourself distant goals for the morrow, the morrow/ For every age is spent tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow).

ff. 13-20v, *Tractatus de corpore Christi et de preparatione hominis ad ydem corpus sumendum*, incipit, "Ad laudem et gloriam benedictae ac individuae trinitatis patris et filii et spiritus sancti et ad venerationem sanctissimi sacramenti preciosi sancti corporis et sanguinis domini nostri Ihesu Christi ad satisfaciendum uestro pio ac salubri desiderio quod impletum delectet animum nostrum. Et ut magis excitari possit ... Ut videlicet nec plus nec minusque quam oporteat sumat sub certa mensura. Quod nobis et mihi concedere dignetur. Qui est benedictus in secula seculorum. Amen";

Nicolaus Magni de Iawor (?), *De accessu altaris seu praeparatione ad missam*.

This treatise about the sacrament of the eucharist has been attributed to Nicolaus Magni de Iawor (c. 1355-1435), a theologian born in Jawor (south-western Poland). He was professor and rector first at Charles University in Prague, then at Heidelberg University, and is best known for his treatise *De superstitionibus*. The attribution of *De accessu altaris...* to Nicolaus Magni might be spurious. The text has not been included in the standard repertoire of works attributed to

Nicolaus Magni (Franz, 1898), and has never been carefully studied by modern scholars. It appears to have survived in nine manuscript copies, most of which are held at German libraries. Five manuscripts, two of which containing an attribution to Nicolaus Magni, are kept at the Stadtbibliothek Mainz (see List, 1998, pp. 48-49). Three manuscripts are at the University Libraries of Giessen (see Ott, 2004, pp. 168-169) and Kassel (see Wiedemann, 1994, p. 144) and at the Jakobsberg Kloster near Mainz (see Schillmann, 1913, p. 157, no. 210). A ninth manuscript copy, presumably produced in Eastern Germany or Bohemia, is held at the Beinecke Library at Yale University (see Online Resources). The treatise aims to provide guidelines for mass. It explains core rituals of the mass, such as the eucharist, and helps the celebrant to prepare for them, both mystically and physically.

ff. 20v-27, *Item expositio misse*, incipit, "Item primo inclinacio sacerdotis est dei humilitas. Introitus est desiderium prophetarum. Psalmus est certitudo desideriorum ... Semper recale si magnum dominum in tua domo materiali recepisses etcet. Celi et terre dominum recepisti etcet.";

These folios contain anonymous meditations on the mass. They invite the reader to ruminate on the meaning of certain rituals, words and objects pertaining to mass, such as a priest's garment (f. 22, "*Indumenta sacerdotalia ...*"), a priest's preparation for mass (f. 22, "*Preparacio sacerdotis ad missam*"), different components of the mass (f. 25v, "*Item expositio misse*"), a priest's need for contrition and confession before celebrating mass (f. 26v, "*Ante altaris accessum*") and the meaning of ablution (f. 27, "*Post percpcionem*"). The text is presented in this manuscript as a continuation of the *Tractatus de corpore Christi* on ff. 13-20v. The same collection of meditations is found in MS 368 of the Beinecke Library (see above). Parts of the collection occur independently in other manuscripts. The meditation on ff. 25v-26v, incipit, "Pensa iugiter repone fideliter amplectere suauius ...," occurs in Stadtbibliothek Mainz, MS I 293 (see List, 1998, p. 137) and Munich, BSB, Clm 28601 (see Kudorfer, 1991, p. 230). The origin of the different meditations and their mutual connection is still open to examination.

ff. 27-31, *Nota quaestiones de confessione que secuntur*, incipit, "Qveritur primo si sacerdos habet aliquos subditos surdos uel mutos cecos uel furiosos et scit eos esse in mortali, quid debeat facere ... quarum tanto est magis arduum et difficile quanto anima maior est corpore";

These folios contain anonymous *quaestiones* on the sacrament of confession. The first question (ff. 27v-30v) explores who is allowed to perform and receive this sacrament. The argument is emphasized by quotations from the Bible and from church authorities and illustrated by a number of *exempla* or moralising anecdotes. A short warning is added on f. 30v, *De cautela confessionis*, among others against the perils of recidivism. A very short addition on folios 30v-31, *De modo confessionis*, tells the priest what to say to the penitent.

ff. 31-36v, *Confessio bona et utilis*, incipit prologue, "Qvonia omni confitenti necessarium est generalem confessionem dicere ... Ego magister Andreus Hyspanus romane curie minor penitenciaris Ciuitatis vocatus pauper episcopus ordinis sancti Benedicti"; text, incipit, "Ego reus et peccator maximus confiteor omnipotenti Deo et beate Marie semper virgini ... et locutus fuisti in absencia alicuius hominis si ipse//";

Andreas de Escobar, *Modus confitendi* or *Confessio minor*, here ending imperfectly; the catchword at the bottom inner corner of f. 36v shows that the copy continued on another quire, which is now missing. The copy is therefore incomplete, but it appears only the epilogue by Andreas de Escobar is missing. Bloomfield, 1979, no. 4989, lists 33 manuscript copies, not including this copy; to these should be added five others (see Schoenberg database, nos. 11311, 11451,

11543, 53508, 208397); the text was first printed in Rome by Adam Rot in 1471-74; in total there are ninety-three incunabula editions before 1501 and nine additional editions before 1520 (see ISTC). There is no critical edition.

The *Modus confitendi* or *Manual for confession* by Andreas de Escobar (died c. 1439) is a manual or a guideline for confession. It is the condensed and practical version of another, more theoretical work by the same author: the *Lumen confessorum*. Andreas de Escobar, also known as Andreas Hispanus, was a Benedictine theologian. He studied in Vienna, participated in the Council of Constance, was bishop of Ajaccio and nominal bishop of Megara (Greece). He was member of the apostolic penitentiary, an elite group of monks, at the curia of Pope Martin V.

The manual reads as a general confession (*generalem confessionem*) covering thirteen categories of sins and virtues: sinning in thought (f. 31v) and in speech (f. 31v), the deadly sins (f. 32), the ten commandments (f. 33), the five senses (f. 33v), the works of mercy (f. 34), the twelve articles of faith (f. 34v), the sacraments (f. 34v), three theological virtues (f. 34v), four cardinal virtues (f. 35), seven gifts of the Holy Spirit (f. 35), twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit (f. 35) and the eight beatitudes (f. 35v). According to Michaud-Quantin, 1962, pp. 71-72, the penitent could use the manual as a "checklist" when conducting a detailed examination of his or her conscience. The version of the text found in this manuscript differs slightly from the version in the first edition. As it is a late-medieval manuscript, the relation between this copy and early editions is worth investigation.

ff. 37-47v, beginning imperfectly, incipit, "//vnumquemque Dei paciencia sustentari, quamdiu nondum peccatorum suorum terminum finemque repleuerit, quo consumato eum ilico percuti, nec illi iam ullam veniam reseruari ... Et cum fueris talis, nostri memento, qui te tantum diligimus ut quod presentes prestare non possumus, conferamus absentes, faciendo hec, quisque vitam obtinebit eternam. Amen."

Pseudo-Augustinus or Pelagius (dubium), *De vita christiana*; ed., Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 40, col. 1035-1046; LLT Series A (Online Resources); Tonna-Barthet ed., 1929. Dunphy, 1981, p. 589, indicates he has retrieved "some 250 manuscripts," but does not list them in detail; Duval, 2005, p. 132, mentions the existence of 320 manuscripts, but suspects there are still many more to be discovered in French Libraries.

The authorship of this work has much been debated. It was published by Migne amongst the works of Church Father Augustine of Hippo (354-430), but modern scholarship considers this attribution to be spurious. According to some scholars, the author is the British ascetic Pelagius (fl. c. 390-418) (see Evans, 1962, pp. 72-98; Cannone, 1972, pp. 219-231; Duval, 2005, p. 132), but this attribution too is contested (see for instance Wermelinger, 1987, pp. 205-213). The ongoing debate about the authorship of *De vita christiana* would benefit greatly from a new critical edition.

*De vita Christiana* is presented as a letter addressed to a widow, with instructions on how to live a truly Christian life. The beginning of the text is missing in this manuscript; the copy starts at the middle of chapter four.

## LITERATURE

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## ONLINE RESOURCES

Edition of the *Liber consolationis et consilii* (Albertanus Brixiensis. *Albertani Brixiensis Liber consolationis et consilii, ex quo hausta est fabula gallica de Melibeo et Prudentia, quam, anglice redditam et 'The Tale of Melibe' inscriptam, Galfridus Chaucer inter 'Canterbury Tales' recepit*, Thor Sundby, ed., London, N. Trübner & Co., 1873) :

<http://freespace.virgin.net/angus.graham/Lib-Cons.htm>

Albertano of Brescia Resource Site

<http://freespace.virgin.net/angus.graham/Albertano.htm>

*Die Lieder der Benediktbeurer Handschrift*, DTV Klassik 2063, München, Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1991.

<http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/4492/1>

Andreas de Escobar in *Geschichtsquellen des deutschen Mittelalters*

[http://www.geschichtsquellen.de/repPers\\_100969003.html](http://www.geschichtsquellen.de/repPers_100969003.html)

Catalogues of manuscripts in German Libraries : Manuscripta Mediaevalia  
<http://www.manuscripta-mediaevalia.de>

Andreas de Escobar's *Modus confitendi*, [Rome : Adam Rot, 1471-74], digitized :  
[http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set\[mets\]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00061415\\_mets.xml](http://dfg-viewer.de/show/?set[mets]=http%3A%2F%2Fdaten.digitale-sammlungen.de%2F~db%2Fmets%2Fbsb00061415_mets.xml)

Projekt Gutenberg, Unbekannte Autoren: Carmina Burana:  
website: <http://gutenberg.spiegel.de/buch/4492/1>

*Library of Latin Texts Series A* (available by subscription); in the Brepolis Latin, Library of Latin Texts (formerly CLCLT), including online editions of *Corpus christianorum*:  
[http://www.brepolis.net/BRP\\_Info\\_En.html#](http://www.brepolis.net/BRP_Info_En.html#)

British Library: Incunable Short Title Catalogue (Andreas de Escobar, *Modus confitendi*)  
<http://istc.bl.uk/search/search.html?operation=search&rsid=704092&start=0>

New Haven, Yale University, Beinecke Library, MS 368  
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