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Humanist Miscellany including DONATO ACCIAIUOLI, *Letters and Oration*; B. P. PISTORIUS(?), *Orations*; letters between unidentified Humanist scholars; extracts from classical and legal texts, and others  
Latin and Italian, manuscript on paper  
Italy (Palermo; and possibly Florence?), 1420s; c. 1480 (after 1479); c. 1484-1490 (after 1484)

*i + 66 + i folios on paper, five watermarks: ff. 1-8, large pair of open shears similar to but not matching Briquet 3663 (Florence 1447-8 and Palermo 1453); ff. 9-18, gauntlet surmounted by a five-petalled flower nearly identical to Briquet 11,158 (Palermo 1482); ff. 19-28 and 39-55, scale with concave pans within a circle similar to Briquet 2474 (various Italian cities, 1480-82, Venice 1480, Udine 1480, Lucca 1482); ff. 29-38, simple tower with three spiked turrets and peaked window nearly identical to Briquet 15,864 (various Italian cities, 1415-32, Lucca 1419, Pistoia 1415, Udine 1419-22, Rome, 1420-32, Florence 1422-7, Palermo 1422); ff. 56-66, letter 'P' with curled backstroke and three-toed foot, nearly identical to Briquet 8492 (Rome 1484); modern pencil foliation at top recto corner, complete (*i*<sup>8</sup> *ii*-*iv*<sup>10</sup> *v*<sup>6</sup> *vi*<sup>10+1</sup> *vii*<sup>10+1</sup> [singletons in *vi* and *vii* both in last position]), catchword on first quire only, frame ruled by folding, in ink and in graphite with varying dimensions, ff. 28-32 unruled, written in dark brown ink mostly in a fine humanist hand by several scribes (discussed below, Provenance) with some sections at a lower level of execution, long-fingered maniculae on ff. 1v, 2, 59r-v, and 65v, one-line initials, most in dark brown ink with red initials and rubrics in ff. 1-11, some very minor worming, spots, discoloration and fraying at edges, large stain affecting last six lines of f. 14 with no text loss, burn hole c. 3cm in diameter in bottom margin on f. 63 touching last line of text on recto, overall in good condition. (Early?) Modern card binding with two leather thongs passing through covers, no endbands, modern paper flyleaves and pastedowns, last folio loosening from spine, minor and even discoloration with some reddish rubbing at bottom and opening edges, illegible short title in faded brown ink near head of spine, another illegible title down the spine's length in pencil, "637" written upside-down at head of spine in brown ink and again, right-side-up and in pencil on top front cover near spine, overall in very good condition. Dimensions c. 220 x 150 mm.*

Letters apparently from the circle of the Medici, plus extracts from classical, legal, and historical sources distinguish this remarkable Humanist miscellany that illustrates the breadth of humanist literary culture in Quattrocento Italy. This complex manuscript was created in stages by several scribes and possibly even in several cities; it may have accrued material as it passed from one Humanist scholar to another. Study and communication at the height of the Italian Renaissance come to light in this unique and complex witness of humanist learning.

## PROVENANCE

1. Written on paper produced in various Italian cities, for and/or by humanist scholars in stages over the course of the fifteenth century from the 1420s to after 1484, based on the watermarks and completion dates added to several texts.

The oldest section is ff. 29-38v, likely dating to the 1420s based on the watermark, which is found in numerous Italian cities (including but certainly not exclusively Palermo). This is

written by a sprawling and sometimes somewhat illegible hand, likely intended for the writer's own use.

Next oldest, ff. 1-18v, written in the finest hand and with red initials and rubrics, contains mixed paper. The watermark of the gauntlet with flower is a near identical match to a known 1482 example from Palermo, and this section contains several dates in 1479 on ff. 7, 9, 10v, and 13r-v.

The last sections suggest a *terminus post quem* for the manuscript: ff. 19-28v and 39-55v contain texts dated to 1484, e.g., "Die 26 Novembris hora 6, 1484" (f. 44), "Vale vijj Calendas Aprilis 1484" (f. 45v), and "Calends Julias 1484" (f. 52v) closing the letters in the penultimate section. This section was written after this time, but probably before the end of the century. The watermark is not identically matched, but consistent with these dates. Finally, the latest watermark of a 'Latin P' found in ff. 56-66v, is uncommon and a very close match to one witnessed in Rome in 1484.

There is nothing known of the scribes or owners, although the texts (as described below), like the watermarks, relate to a range of Italian cities including Florence, Palermo, and Pisa. The scribes themselves are all trained in writing, perhaps professionally, if not for their full-time livelihood. It is possible that the sections were variously copied and/or owned by several generations within the same family or confraternity, or passed down through a few generations of Humanist scholars, perhaps through a group such as Florence's 'Platonic Academy.'

2. There are similarly no clues about this miscellany's post-Renaissance owners: the spine's titles are now worn away. There remain only the legible '637' on the spine and front cover, probably added in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries as a shelfmark, and on the back pastedown at the top corner, '37' in modern pencil.

## TEXT

ff. 1-18v, *Oratio de laudibus laurentii tibernatis Or<m?>an. De pisis*, incipit, "Vellem magnifici aeques ... [f. 3] Quod ut facias te vehementer rogo. *In medicorum collegio Leo si pisis*, Et si huius amplissimi: Dignissimique loci auctoritas ... memores re Regibus me omnino [...?] vulgaris commendum.";

A series of unedited and otherwise unknown short speeches/ public lectures and letters by a "B. P. Pistorius" or "Pisis" on rhetoric, history, and medicine. The texts contain references to historical figures, including Cato, Alexander the Great, and Cicero (f. 2), Lucius Crassus and Marcus Antonius (f. 4v), and Valerius Maximus (f. 7). A public lecture was apparently given on a new interpretation of the latter in December 1479 (f. 7, "iiii nones Decebris M cccclxxviii"). There are also mentions of a "Bernardum oricellarium," "Christophoro pratinieteri," "Stephano mediolanensis," (f. 15v) and "Franciscus Serverinus" (f. 16v).

The author is likewise unidentified, but seems to have been a travelling, or visiting, scholar or lecturer: one lecture was apparently delivered at the Pisan gymnasium (f. 6v, "Pyseum gymnasium") and a letter addressed from Pistoia (f. 13v, "ex pistoriensi gynmasio"). As noted above, this section contains a number of dates in 1479 throughout.

ff. 19-28v, incipit, "Non quam minorem natu maiorem adoptare non posse ... [f. 27] Arminum pluresque italia iuristatis praeclaras prudentissime iudicavit. Benedictus [baraedus?] toti Italiae militavit [f. 27v blank; f. 28] Non Latet Magister profides ... et penitent tanquam lamentes satisfactionem";

A series of notes and excerpts from various sources, beginning with Justinian, *Institutiones*, I.11.4 on adoption. The excerpts were copied in stages, with most sections unrulled, heavily abbreviated, and somewhat difficult to read. Other topics include a legal defense for homicide ("Defensio ab homicidio", ff. 22-23); an oration upon becoming a magistrate ("Oratio in assumptione magistratus", f. 23v); what appears to be an unidentified juridical history of Sicily (ff. 26-27); and finally, notes on confession (f. 28v).

ff. 29-38, "Nisi quando est principium sententiae ... fractum sive vitratum est. Saliris [or saltris] a saltando[?]"

Short excerpts from, or notes about, classical texts and authors, mostly attributed in the margin. Excerpted works include Cicero's *De senectute*, Virgil's *Georgics*, Cicero's *In verrem*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and (as yet) unidentified works by Varro, Sallust, Quintilian, Martial, Titus Livy, Plautus, Juvenal, Terrence and 'Curtius' (Rufus?). This section seems to be notes largely for the writer's own use; many have a moralistic theme, but not all, making the internal logic and particular purpose of this selection unclear.

f. 38v, "Magis et potentis domini ... commissis facio accuratissime Finis";

A short, unedited prayer with attention to humanist virtues, such as benevolence ('benignitate'), justice ('justitia'), and civility ('humanitas').

ff. 39-41v, *MARCI ANTONII*, "Evenuto finalmente queldi : Il quale contuto ilgnore abbiamo ... Adventavit tandem illa dies ... Io fui ego multo exaltato deletina ... [f. 39v] Video te elatum letitia quae ad graviora studia ... [f. 40] Le lectere di nicholo del benino e di Jacopo federighi... Dormientem me ex [.....?] habere nicholai benini Iacobi fiderigi ... [f. 40v] Rallegroni che tu tise pinc desto ... [f. 41] Gaudeo que ex perrectus es ... Che ripare dafare Antonio mio ... [f. 41v] Quid igitur agendum censes mi antonii ... plura his tu Vale et rescribitur";

A series of short letters between friends, apparently unedited and thus far unidentified. Each is written first in Italian and then translated immediately after into Latin, suggesting these may be model letters for teaching. The topic is the undertaking of humanist studies (perhaps while away at school). The letters are between two friends, and are primarily laudatory, praising each other's fine writing and knowledge. The title written above the text's opening indicates that one of the writers is a 'Marcus Antonius' (likely a pseudonym). This letter-writer may be a member of the Medici family (see below) and addresses his recipient as Antonio/Antonius (ff. 41r-v) in one of the letters. There is also mention of a Niccolò del Benino and Jacopo Federighi who are "optimo et adolescentulorum" (noble and youthful, f. 40); these two individuals are, as yet, unidentified, but carry the surnames of wealthy Florentine families.

ff. 42-55v, *R. Ca*, incipit, "Superioribus diebus reddite sunt mihi litterae tuae ... [f. 43] Legi libertissime litteras tuas ... Non mediocri teneo admirationis ... [f. 44] Extorsit mihi breviores ... [f. 44v] Quod me tuarum dulci colloquio ... [f. 45v] Miratus sum quod cum iam domini ... [f. 46] Cognoscam inlongum tecum differere ... [f. 47] Reddidit mihi Mattheus senensis ... [f. 47v] Expectatum summon desideria ... [f. 48v] Non possum non satis mirari immutati... [f. 49v] Vale felix et anime dulce decus meae [f. 50] *Querit Iuteum concedendum sit quod deus se genuit* Hic oritur questio satis necessaria ... [f. 51v] filius non est in aliud finium. [f. 52] Cum pisas peteret Genuensis sutor ... Facis tu quiddem per humanitate ... [f. 52v] Scio te fuisse admiratum ... et commandabis Vale calends martii 1483. Redro ad secundo ... [f. 55v] insula sublimis merito [redditur?] et aureum. Littere credentie ad R. Carlem De Medicis ... inoubiam adhibere fidem";

Although written by another scribe (or perhaps the same scribe writing at another time and more carefully), these are a continuation of the letters copied above, although these are entirely in Latin. The title written at the opening of this section of the text, and initials written interlineally between letters, identify the authors as an unknown "R. Ca" and "M. A." (the same 'Marcus Antonius?'). The content continues much in the same vein, but the letters are longer and include more historical details, such as a mention of a Florentine edict at the onset of a spreading sickness (perhaps plague), the gymnasium in Pisa (both f. 42), the wealth and power of Lorenzo de Medici (f. 45), and the impending marriage of 'R. Ca' (f. 45v), which indicates that, despite the name 'Carlo,' this was not Carlo de' Medici, the illegitimate son of Cosimo who became a priest.

Between the letters is an excerpt of Peter Lombard's *Sentences* Book I, Distinction 4 (ff. 50-51v) and an unidentified commentary on Virgil [f. 54r-v]. A 'letter of credit' of an R. Carlo de Medici is added at the end. The repetition of the initials R. C[arlo] here indicate that one of the letter-writers was an unidentified member of the Medici family. The letters in this section are dated to various months in 1483 and 1484; they are not copied in chronological order, as two dated to 1484 (ff. 44 and 45v) appear before two dated to 1483 (ff. 47 and 54) and one to 1482 (f. 52).

ff. 56-65v, "Donatus Acciaivulus pandulpho suo ... [f. 57v] ab humanis miseriis malis que sit iuncta Vale Die xxiii mensis Novembris millo. Cccc Lvi [1456]. [f. 58] *Donatus Acciaiolus Laurentio et Iuliano Medicis* Cum nuper te laurenti tequam Iuliane salutatem ... [f. 62] que est a odest deo cuique constituta Vale Die xxi Ianuarii M cccc Lxxi [1471]. Quam grate debeant esse res publice ... [f. 63v] qui de re publica bene mereantur. Die xx Martii M CCCC Lxiiii [1464]. *Donatus Acciaiolus.* Donatus Acciaiolus Iohanni pontano Salutem ... [f. 64v] super est aliquid ad nos scribe. Vale florentie Die Settembris M CCCC Lxxvii [1477]. *Papiensis* Accepto numpho ut fac desperatae salutis maternae ... [f. 65v] [Datum?] ut [s.s.?] retenta modem";

A selection of letters by Donato Acciaiuoli to Pandolfo Pandofini dated 23 November 1456 (ff. 56-57v), Laurentio and Giuliano de' Medici dated 22 July 1471 (ff. 58-62), and Giovanni Pontano dated to September 1477 (ff. 63v-65v). Between the second and final letters is a speech about Cosmo de' Medici dated 20 March 1464 (ff. 62-63v).

The first letter is a consolation to Pandolfo Pandofini after his father's death and tells about the loss of Donato Acciaiuoli's own father at a young age (see Ganz 1979, p. 15); it is found in five

manuscripts in Italian libraries (Ganz, 1979, p. 343). The second letter, written while he was a Florentine diplomat and serving on a council, or *Balia*, within the Medici's Florentine government (Ganz, 1979, p. 226; 290); other copies of this letter are not yet identified. The speech declares Cosimo de' Medici *Pater Patriae* (father of his country); it is found in three manuscripts in Florence's Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana (Plut. 90.37) and Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale (Naz. 2.2.10 and Filze Rinuccini 19; see Ganz 1979, p. 342; Brown, 1961/1992, Maxson, 2014, p. 31). The final friendly letter to Giovanni Pontano, a renowned scholar from Naples, has not yet been identified elsewhere. At the end is a note, in the main scribe's hand, in Greek.

f. 66r-v, *Mirabilis deus in sanctis suis faciens prodigera*, incipit, "Fertis que vexante demone ... Aequore sulcato vix bene tuta petent"; *Quando itere ad doctors per licentia doctorandi*, "Cum ut praemium ... exportaret puto"; *Post examen Oratio*, "Cum atineris armis cogitassem ... [f. 65v] reduce possim[?]."

This final section includes a short text whose title mentions the wonders of God and the extravagant deeds of the saints, followed by a brief text on obtaining a doctorate and an oration for that occasion. None of these three short texts is yet identified.

Born to a prominent family, Donato Acciaiuoli (1428/9-1478) was a Humanist scholar who served as an advisor, ambassador and podestà for the Florentine Medici government. Acciaiuoli's father died when he was an infant, and his grandfather, Palla Strozzi, and stepfather, Felice di Michele Brancacci, were exiled by the Medici. While this left him without the parentage relied upon by other political men of his time, he was highly successful and much trusted in his career (Ganz 1979, p. ii). As a scholar, he produced commentaries on Aristotle's *Ethics*, *Politics*, *Physics*, and *De anima* (Field 1988, pp. 202-230). A number of his letters survive, both those to and from friends, and related to his political work; a small selection survives in this manuscript.

Epistolography (the art of writing letters) was "perhaps the most extensive branch of humanist literature" (Kristeller, 1960; Constable, 1976, p. 39). Vital to the communication characteristic of the increasingly complex world of diplomacy, letters were also an art form unto themselves. Used to teach grammar, rhetoric, and epistolography, they served as examples of Humanist eloquence, rhetoric, and platonic friendship (Findlen, 2019, pp. 1-3). Letters played a role in the social fabric of the Humanist academies, associations of learned men that sprung up in Italian cities, often at or around universities. Donato Acciaiuoli, as a student of renowned scholar John Argyropoulos, belonged to the "Platonic Academy" (a modern moniker) of Florence (see Hankins [forthcoming]; Field 1988). Several of the anonymous and unidentified/unedited letters and orations in this manuscript mention the gymnasia of Pisa and Pistoia, environments where Humanist scholars developed the lifelong correspondence of the sort witnessed by this manuscript's series by the unidentified R. Carlo de' Medici and "Marcus Antonius."

The complex origin of this manuscript, with the contributions by several scribes across the fifteenth century and connections to a number of different Italian cities, awaits a complete reconstruction. Its numerous unidentified, and very likely unedited, texts offer rich opportunities for further research. The manuscript's apparent origin in a Humanist circle,

tantalizingly unidentified but perhaps with ties to the Medici as suggested by several texts, underline the potential importance of these texts.

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